

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

8 February 2001

Mark McConaughy
P. O. Box 486
Harrison City, PA 15636-0468

Dear Mark,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Trumpeter Swan at Wildwood Lake in July 1997, the Thayer's Gull at the Mcville Hawk Watch on 25 October 1998, and the European Goldfinch at Port Taverton in July 1997. After careful review, the committee regrets that it cannot accept the swan and the gull as formal record.

The swan and the goldfinch were placed in Class 5: "The record is correct, but the bird represents an escapee or an introduced species not established in Pennsylvania."

On the gull, five members voted against acceptance mainly because they felt that the bird was more likely a Kumlien's Gull, considering the light mantle. A third- or fourth-winter Thayer's would be as dark gray as -- or even slightly darker than -- a Herring Gull. The members also thought that Thayer's identification requires more time for careful study and a closer observation to separate it conclusively from Kumlien's or a Thayer's x Kumlien's intergrade.

The committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean that the bird was not the species reported, but rather that the committee believes the documentation submitted does not support the identification conclusively. We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you may find in the future.

Finally, the committee apologizes for the unacceptably long delay before all members were able to vote on the record. Circumstances beyond our control caused the problem, and we believe that we are back on a timely track.

Sincerely,

For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

P.S. Beginning this year observers will receive postcards acknowledging that the committee has received their documentation. In addition, whereas observers formerly were notified only when reports were not accepted (in disappointing or irritating letters like this one), they will now receive cards announcing that their records *have* been accepted.

Records #105-01-1997, #348-02-1998, #892-01-1997

348-02-1998

26 October 1998

Nick Pulcinella
210 Welcome Ave.
Norwood, PA 19074

Dear Nick:

I had a light-mantled gull fly down the Allegheny River at McVile Hawk Watch in Armstrong County on October 25, 1998. I first spotted it in my binoculars at about 11:04 AM while I was scanning for migrating hawks and was able to view it flying down river until I lost it about 11:20 AM. It was flying above the eastern river bluff and the background was grayish-white clouds -- the latter was probably why I had not picked it up with my naked eye as it was flying toward me from up river. When I spotted the gull, I assumed it was going to be a Herring or Ring-billed Gull which I've had before. As I studied the gull in my binoculars trying to pick up field marks so I could tell which species it was, I found I couldn't see any real markings. At first I figured the marks were just blending into the cloud background and I'd see them once it cleared the cloud cover. However, once it got out of the cloud cover into blue sky it became apparent that this was a very white gull and I still could not pick up any field marks in my binoculars. I quickly got my scope on the bird, which by then past me and heading down the river. I got a good look at its back, wings and tail.

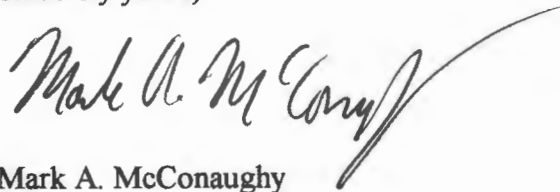
The bird was a medium to large, light-mantled gull with a pure white tail (a crude sketch of what I saw is enclosed). The tail was a brighter white than the mantle, but the mantle was still an off-white color. It did not have a grayish mantle like a Herring or Ring-billed gull (I never got a really good look at the head and bill). The underside of the bird was also white. The lack of any splotching or other markings on the body indicated this was an adult gull. Light-mantled gulls seen in Pennsylvania are Glaucous, Iceland and Thayer's Gulls. In my scope I was able to pick up a faint dark-gray trace around the wing tip primaries forming a > shape. I could not pick up any white "windows" in this gray, though. Glaucous Gulls should have a very light mantle and white wing tips. This gull did not have totally white wing tips lacking any dark gray "fringe", thus, Glaucous Gull can be eliminated as the species I saw. That leaves Iceland and Thayer's. Iceland gulls should have a noticeably large white wing tip or "window" at the wing tip with the dark gray forming more of a] shape across the wing just in from the tip. It should not outline a sharp > shape wing tip as in the bird I saw. That leaves Thayer's. However, Thayer's should also have some small white "windows" in the dark gray around the tip of the wing that I did not see. I attribute my not seeing these to the distance and angle I was viewing the gull in flight and the rather thin trace of dark gray that I did see. I believe it was an adult Thayer's gull in winter plumage.

I observed the bird fly down the eastern side of the river past Logan's Port and head down toward Lock and Dam #6 at Clinton. I don't know if it actually made it there, but it

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was headed in that direction. I would expect it might keep flying down the Allegheny and hopefully others will see it and report it.

Sincerely yours,

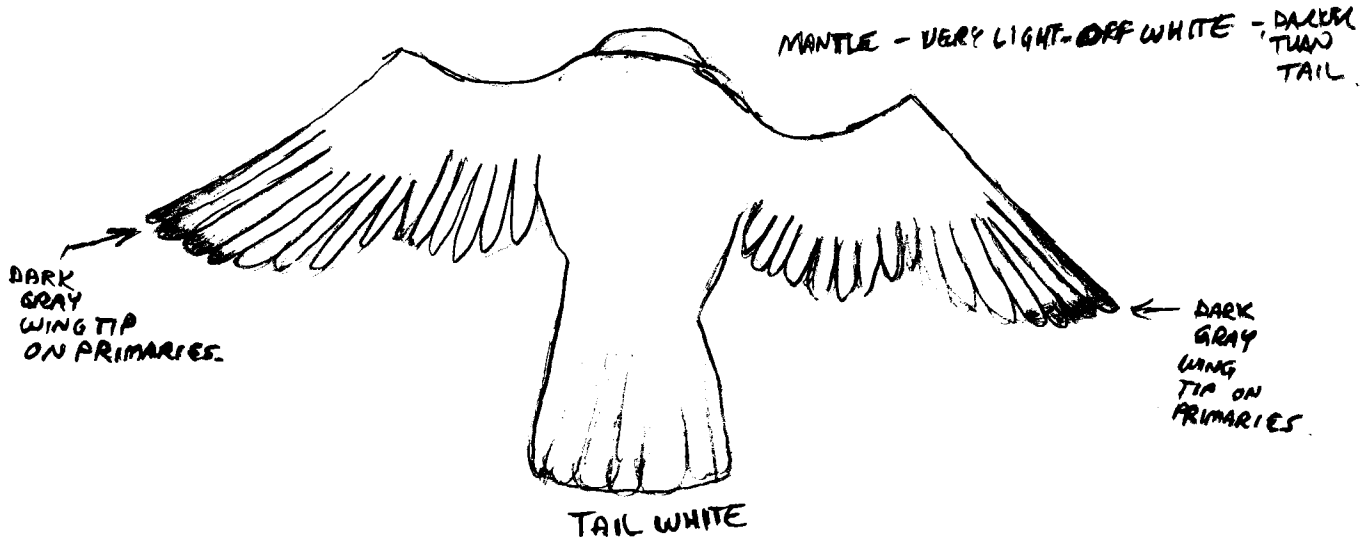
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark A. McConaughy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Mark A. McConaughy
3787K Logans Ferry Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15239-3910
TimeTraveler@email.msn.com

348-02-1998

MEDIUM TO LARGE
LIGHT-MANTLED GULL - THAYER'S GULL.
10/25/98 McVILLE HAWK WATCH ~ 11:04 -
11:20 AM.

REAR VIEW



NOTE: NO. OF FEATHERS NOT ACCURATE -
JUST DRAWN IN TO SHOW MARKINGS

Mark A. McLaughlin

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 25 October 1998 to 25 October 1998

Location: MCVILLE HAWK WATCH

County: ARMSTRONG

Observer(s): Mark McConaughy

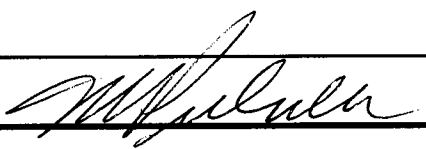
Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Mark McConaughy

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION ~~NES~~ PHOTO NO SPECIMEN NO RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman						X		
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess			X			X		
R. Ickes			X					
J. McWilliams						X		
B. Reid					X			X
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS			1		2	3		1 X
DECISION						X		

Comments: 1/5/1

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 9/28/00