

348-01-1999

THAYER'S GULL

Larus thayeri

Location: Presque Isle Bay

Date: February 4, 1999

Time: 10:30 to 11:00 AM

Weather: Viewing conditions good.

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 at variable power

Viewing distance: about 200 yards

Details of sighting and description:

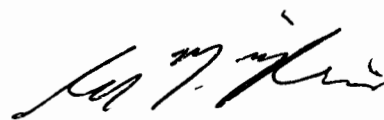
There were thousands of gulls concentrated off the tip of Leo's Landing. Many were feeding and others were perched on the ice near open water. I spotted a gull in flight showing only a thin black line on the trailing edge of the undersides of the outer primaries. I immediately suspected that it was a Thayer's Gull. It was similar to an adult Herring Gull showing light grayish rather than black ventral outer primaries. When it banked showing the dorsal surface I could see blackish outer primaries with the black being more reduced than any of the numerous Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*). I had seen that morning. The gray across the mantle and forewings of this bird appeared to be equal in tone to the gray across the mantle and forewings of Herring Gulls. This characteristic eliminated the very similar Iceland Gull (*L. glaucoides kumlieni*) which is always a paler gray across the mantle and forewings than Herring Gull. The nape, head, and upper breast were white with moderate brown streaking. As I studied the gull, I was able to obtain additional field characteristics. The ventral surface of the primary tips were grayish with a large white mirror showing through near the tips of the outer two most primaries. The only black visible was near the very tips (the tips of the primaries were white) of the outermost primaries forming a thin dark submarginal line and along the outer web of the outermost primary. On the dorsal surface of the primaries, black was limited to the outer webs of the outer primaries (appearing as black fingers) except where the black narrowly crossed over the inner web bordering the white primary tips. There were two large mirrors about 2/3 way up on the outer two primaries. When the bird perched next to several Herring Gulls of the same age I could see that the legs were a brighter pink, especially the feet. The head on the Thayer's Gull was rounder and not blocky shaped like the Herring Gulls. The bill was slightly

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shorter and thinner and the red spot at the gony appeared to be brighter or perhaps larger than the Herring Gulls. The eyes appeared black. I could see the pale eyes of the Herring Gulls of the same age standing next to the Thayer's Gull. I could easily compare the gray mantle colors as well and the Thayer's Gull mantle color was equal to or perhaps slightly darker than the Herring Gulls.

I saw another adult bird that was in alternate definitive plumage on February 28, 1999.

I am quite familiar with Thayer's Gull, since I have seen many along the Niagara River in Canada and many in Presque Isle Bay. Jon Dunn and I had identified at least two adult Thayer's Gulls along the Niagara River this past fall.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Dunn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 4 February 1999 to 4 February 1999

Location: ERIE

County: PRESQUE ISLE BAY

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

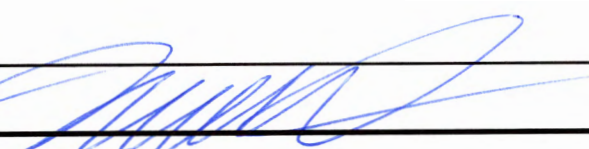
Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Couchman			X					
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes			X					
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1/0

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 5/6/01