

THAYER'S GULL

348-03-2000

Florence, NJ / Tullytown-Penn Manor, PA  
22 November 2000

I arrived at Florence NJ around mid-day on 22 November 2000 to look at gulls. After scanning for only a couple minutes I spotted a first-winter (juvenal-plumaged) Thayer's Gull sitting in the river with many, many hundreds of other gulls. Over the next 10-15 minutes I watched it very slowly drift downriver and swim about in the mass of birds, occasionally flap, and fly a short distance once. The bird spent most of its time a bit closer to the PA shore of the river than to the NJ side, but it did appear to be on the NJ side a little bit as well

I identified the bird as a Thayer's very quickly. It was a "classic" first-winter (juvenal) bird, and I have seen 500+ Thayer's in my life, many of them first-year birds. I have studied Thayer's since the late 1970s, authoring the ID article on this species that was published in BIRDING magazine in 1980, and have given several talks on the ID of this species at meetings, etc. This does not necessarily mean that I couldn't mis-identify one (!!), especially given the problems with dark "Kumlien's"...but that species would have paler primaries that don't typically show the pale chevrons (tips), more pale mottling to the tertial and tail, a weaker or lacking (usually) secondary bar, and less obvious dark smudge through eye.

Description copied from my field notes written the day of the sighting:  
"A first-winter bird—in juvenal plumage—mostly resting with main mass of gulls in river straight off the park, and in very good light. Spent almost all the time resting and preening on water, briefly got up and stretched a few times, and flew once a short distance. Overall a pale tan or coffee-and-cream color, just slightly paler tan-brown and warmer than most juvenile Herrings nearby. Bill shorter than Herring's, entirely black, and with gentler culmen and little gonydeal angle. Darker (dusky) wash through the eye. Back and wing coverts a nice marbled pattern of rounded dark-centered feathers with fairly broad tan-white fringes (dark far more extensive than light). Primaries at rest a solid medium-to-dark brownish above, paler than Herring Gulls', and with distinct pale tips to the outer primaries (chevron-shaped); contrastingly pale underside to primaries. Both tail and tertials (except for pale and barred fringe) a solid lighter (medium) brown, lighter than primaries, as well as lighter than same feathers in Herring Gull. When upperwing was outstretched, it showed brownish outer primaries, pale inner primaries, and brownish secondary bar. Legs a medium pinkish. Dark eye. Overall size approximately same as a very small Herring, or, slightly smaller than virtually all the surrounding Herring Gulls.

I gather that two or three days later several other observers, including Evan Obercian, visited this site and reported one or two first-winter (juvenal) Thayer's.

Paul Lehman  
PO Box 379  
Cape May, NJ 08204

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Ballot - Round One**

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 22 November 2000 to 24 November 2000

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Paul Lehman

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Paul Lehman

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

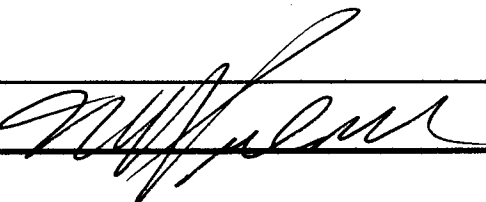
Recording: No

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					
J. Stanley			X					
B. Reid				X				
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			5	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments:

5/1/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

5/13/02