

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE  
613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380

29 January 2003

Matt Sharp  
7135 Bryan St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Matt,

Here is a roundup of four Thayer's Gull records from Tullytown that you submitted in 2001 and were not accepted by the committee.

1. An individual on 13 January, which apparently was not observed as being definitely present within Pennsylvania.
2. Another individual on 13 January, which was not accepted on a vote of two in favor and three not in favor (besides your and George's abstentions). The main reason listed by those voting against acceptance were that the bird was not fully described on its own, but merely compared with the other bird documented that day.
3. An individual on 3 March, which went two rounds and was not accepted on a vote of one in favor and five not in favor (besides your abstention). Four of those voting against the record placed it in Class IV-A and one in Class IV-B.
4. An individual on 10 March, which also went two rounds and was not accepted on a vote of two in favor and four against (again with your absence). Three of those voting against placed it in Class IV-A and one in Class IV-B.

You saw the first-round comments on the last two birds, and nothing was added in detail on the second-round comments so I won't summarize them here.

After our e-mail discussion about Thayer's a few days ago, I want to add an item to the meeting agenda to discuss our Thayer's policy. I'm still ambivalent, but I am beginning to doubt the value of evaluating Thayer's based on a written description alone. I just don't know how to make a basic judgment about plumage that lies on a gradation from what both of us would consider "good" Thayer's to the other extreme of a "good" Kumlien's, without seeing for myself what the bird really looked like.

Best regards,



P.S. This is a personal and conversational version of the standard, more formal letter I send out for non-accepted records.

Record Nos. 348-02,03,04,05-2001

348-04-2001

Adult Basic Thayer's Gull  
March 3, 2001. Florence NJ

This bird was seen from the park in Florence (not the boat ramp) at approximately 12:30. It was first seen sitting in the middle of the Del. River. It floated downriver for about 10-15 mins. before taking off and flying out of sight on the PA side of the river. It was seen in direct comparison with adult and first winter Herring Gulls (HEGU). Sky was 95% overcast. The bird was viewed with Leica APO televid with 32x eyepiece

Other observers: Evan Obercian, Ward Dasey

#### DESCRIPTION

Overall size and Shape: This bird was as large as some of the adjacent HEGU. Due to the more slender bill, and perhaps also, because of the dark eye, exaggerated by the dark streaking, it had a "softer" or "gentler" look. At some postures the head also appeared more rounded than on HEGU, but in other postures the crown looked more flattened with a peak at the rear similar to HEGU.

Bill: Two-toned, outer 1/3 yellow like HEGU, rest duller yellow. The bill appeared as long as HEGU bill but noticeably more slender.

Eye: Iris appeared dark

Head and Upper parts: The head was moderately streaked brown. The streaking was densest around the eye giving the bird a "black-eye" look. The streaking went down the neck and ended as large blotches at the sides of the upper breast. The streaking was a warmer brown in tone than on nearby HEGUs.

The mantle, scapulars and upper wing coverts were blue-gray, apparently the same shade and tone as on HEGUs. The secondaries were likewise blue-gray with broad white tips. The tail, tail coverts, and rump were white

Underpants: White.

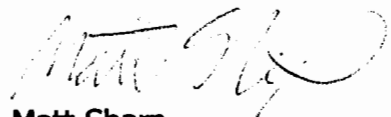
Wings: There were 4 white apical spots visible past the tertials; these were taken to be primaries 6-9. The apical-spots were larger than on adjacent HEGUs, they also increased in size inwards being smallest on P9 and larger on the inner primaries. A black sub-terminal bar bordered each apical-spot. On P6 there was what looked like a dark spot along the primary shaft on the rear edge of the apical-spot. The black in the wing appeared as dark as on the adjacent

348-04-2001

HEGU regardless of the angle of the bird to the observer. The undersides of primaries were very pale with a "ghost image" of the dark marking visible on the upper surface. The bird took flight directly away from me allowing only a brief view of the primaries in flight making it difficult to see the dark in the wing-tips on the spread wing, however the amount of dark pigmentation in the wings was obviously less than on a HEGU.

Discussion: After looking at photos of Thayer's Gull on the web I interpret the dark mark on P6 as being the sub-terminal bar framed by the white on the inner web of P7 making it look like a black spot on P6. About 20-30 minutes after this bird was last seen Evan found another adult basic bird with what, at first, appeared to be equally dark wingtips, and a dark iris. This bird was eventually identified as probably a dark extreme Iceland Gull or possibly an ICGU x THGU. This second bird differed from the first in almost completely lacking head streaking, having a smaller and more rounded head, and a shorter bill. After an extended look and with direct comparisons to HEGU at all available angles the dark in the wingtips was judged to be a dark charcoal gray, slightly paler in tone than on HEGU and so different in tone from the Thayer's Gull.

This description was written a few hours after the bird was seen and based on field notes made immediately after the observation.



Matt Sharp  
7135 Bryan St.  
Phila. PA 19119

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Tabulation Form - Round Two**

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 3 March 2001 to 3 March 2001

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Matt Sharp, Evan Obercian, Ward Dasey

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Matt Sharp

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

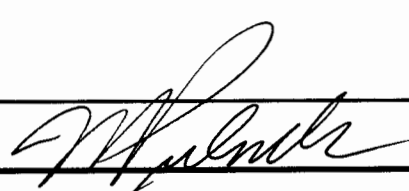
Specimen: No

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. Heathcote				X				
P. Hess					X			
J. Stanley				X				
B. Reid				X				
<del>R. Lebowitz</del> <del>P. Reinwald</del>				X				
M. Sharp								X
TOTALS			1	4	1			1
DECISION				X				

Comments: 1/5/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/28/02

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Tabulation Form - Round One**

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 3 March 2001 to 3 March 2001

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Matt Sharp, Evan Obercian, Ward Dasey

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Matt Sharp

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

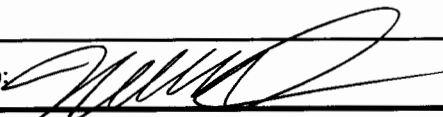
Specimen: No

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	X			
<del>B. Lebcuman</del> <del>P. Rodewald</del>			X					
M. Sharp				X				X
TOTALS			3	1	2			1
DECISION					X			

Comments: 3/3/1 - GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

1/14/02