

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 abstention). 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

348-05-2001

Adult Basic Thayer's Gull
March 10, 2001. Florence NJ

This bird was first spotted in flight with a group of Herring Gulls (HEGU) and Greater Black-Backed Gulls (GBBG). The bird was seen in flight for approximately 5 minutes as it competed for a food item with the other species and also on its own as flew up and down river looking for a place to land. It gave good views of the upper and under surface of the wings. Eventually it landed on the water in the middle of the river and was viewed for another 15 minutes or so as it drifted upriver on the tide. The bird was viewed with Leica APO televid with 32x eyepiece and Leica 8x32 binoculars from the boat ramp.

Other observers: Ward Dasey

DESCRIPTION

Overall size and Shape: This bird was as large as some of the adjacent HEGU, (assumedly females) but smaller than others. The head appeared intermediate in shape between Iceland Gull and HEGU but leaning more towards HEGU being rather blocky with a flat crown and slight peak towards the rear. The bird did not have as "fierce" an expression as on a HEGU possibly owing to the dark eye accentuated by the smudgy dark streaking around the eye in combination with the slightly slimmer, straight-sided bill.

Bill: Pale yellow with dark red mark on gonys. The bill was duller than adjacent HEGU, which were showing bright orange-yellow bills. The bill appeared as long as HEGU bill and slightly more slender and parallel sided, top and bottom, without the more obvious gonydheal bulge of a HEGU bill.

Eye: Iris appeared dark

Legs: The legs were seen reasonably while the bird was in flight; they appeared more deeply colored and darker than the pink legs of HEGU. I would call the color a reddish-pink.

Head and Upper parts: The head was lightly streaked brown. Compared to the apparent Thayer's seen the week before this bird's head and neck were less heavily streaked, but similar in the tone and pattern. The streaking was densest around the eye giving the bird a "black-eye" look. The mantle, scapulars and upper wing coverts were blue-gray, apparently the same shade and tone as on HEGUs. The tail, tail coverts, and rump were white

Underpants: White.

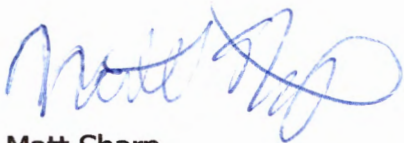
348-05-2001

Wingtips on sitting bird: 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. The black in the wing appeared as dark as on the adjacent HEGU regardless of the angle of the bird to the observer. The undersides of primaries as seen on the opposite wing were very pale with a "ghost image" of the dark marking on the upper surface. The secondaries were blue-gray like the mantle and wing-coverts with broad white tips.

Wingtips on flying bird: From below, the wings were almost entirely pale with a thin black trailing edge on the outer primaries. From above the black on the tip of the wings was obviously less extensive than on HEGU with the gray of the rest of the upper wing intruding into the black of the wing tips on each primary feather. While the bird was in flight it was possible to see that P10 was marked with a large white apical spot.

Discussion: On first seeing this bird in flight I thought it was a Herring Gull with exceptionally pale primaries. This impression was based mainly on the apparent size of the bird and its aggressiveness with the other 2 larger species it was first with. After studying the bird on the water it became apparent that it was slightly smaller and imparted a gentler jizz than HEGU. I interpret the apparent intrusion of gray into the black on the wingtip as being due to the black being restricted to the outer web of each primary and so bordering the gray of the inner web of the adjacent primary.

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



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Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round Two

Species: Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)

Date of Sighting: 10 March 2001 to 10 March 2001

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Matt Sharp, 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				
B. Lehmann P. Rodewald			X					
M. Sharp								X
TOTALS			2	3	1			1
DECISION				X				

Comments: 2/4/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

12/28/02

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)

Date of Sighting: 10 March 2001 to 10 March 2001

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Matt Sharp, Ward Dasey

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Matt Sharp

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

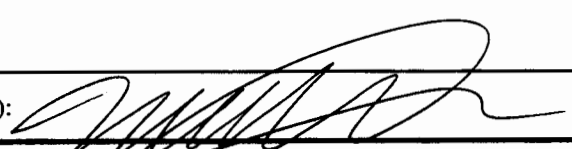
Specimen: No

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			
P. Rodewald Bieburner			X					
M. Sharp								X
TOTALS			3	2	1			1
DECISION					X			

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

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

