

PA Rare Bird Report

<b>Submission Date</b>	2015-01-08 13:16:25
<b>Observer's Name</b>	Andrew Keister
<b>E-mail</b>	akeister110@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	570-337-3802
<b>Observer's Address</b>	Street Address: 110 Hawk Ridge Road City: Bloomsburg State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 17815 Country: United States
<b>Names of additional observers</b>	none
<b>Species (Common Name)</b>	Thayer's Gull
<b>Species (Scientific Name)</b>	Larus thayeri
<b>Number of individuals</b>	1
<b>Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)</b>	1st or 2nd cycle
<b>Observation Date and Time</b>	12-31-2014 1:30 PM
<b>Did you submit this sighting to eBird?</b>	Yes
<b>Link to eBird checklist</b>	<a href="http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S21099444">http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S21099444</a>
<b>County</b>	Lebanon
<b>Location (City, Borough, Township)</b>	North Lebanon Township
<b>Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)</b>	Lion's Lake Park
<b>GPS coordinates of sighting</b>	N 40 21 30.47, W 76 27 11.65
<b>Habitat</b>	man-made impoundment
<b>Distance to bird</b>	250'
<b>Viewing conditions</b>	Overcast, no precipitation
<b>Optical equipment used</b>	Nikon 10x42 binocs, Cabelas spotting scope, variable power
<b>Description</b>	Herring Gull sized bird, cream/tan shades overall, faded out primaries (not black), light cream underneath wings, broad dark brown band on tail, rounded head shape, sloping forehead, nearly all black bill, pinkish legs.

**Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)**

I observed the bird for 1 hour 15 minutes. Most of that time, it spend resting on the water, preening and occassionally feeding on items on the water's surface. Three or four times, the gull along with all other gulls on the lake were flushed by a red-tailed hawk that made repeated passes over the lake. In flight, I was able to view the tail, underwing, primaries and secondaries.

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)**

Too large for Ring-billed, too small for Greater Black-backed. Color of primaries (above and below) eliminated Herring and Lesser Black-backed (leg color also eliminated LBB). Body color was too dark for a typical Iceland Gull so that left either Kumlien's or Thayer's. ID'd as a Thayer's based on dark primary and secondary color versus body color along with the dark band on top of it's tail.

**Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:**

On 12/26, Jack Cochran took a photo of a gull at the nearby landfill that he ID'd as a Thayer's Gull. I've attached his photo. After studying my gull for over an hour I'm convinced that I was watching the same bird. My photos are washed out (taken through a scope with my Samsung Note), but the bird was very buffy in color overall.

Following my observation, I sent my photos along with a description to Steve Hampton at <http://www.tertia.us/gulls/gulls.htm>. He runs a Gull ID website that includes a scoring system for Kumlien's vs. Thayer's Gull. I preliminarily scored my gull as 25 out of 28 and sent my info to Steve. My email and his response is included below.

From: "Steve Hampton"  
Date: Jan 6, 2015 5:22 PM  
Subject: Re: Thayer's Gull?  
To: "Andy Keister"  
Cc:  
Andy,

Yes, I would definitely call this a Thayer's Gull in Calif. Even better, I think it qualifies as a Thayer's Gull even using more strict East Coast definitions.

On Tue, Jan 6, 2015 at 1:25 PM, Andy Keister wrote:  
Steve,

I found your excellent website while researching a recent gull observation. The attached photos were taken in Central Pennsylvania during the last week of December. The poor photos of the gull on the water were taken by me with my cell phone and scope and the photo of the bird on the ground was taken by another birder a few days earlier within a couple of miles of the same location. After studying my bird for about an hour in the field, I believe that they are the same. Both Thayer's and Iceland (Kumlien) have been reported at this location recently. I've tentatively ID'd this bird as Thayer's after my observations on the water and in flight. The bird had a relatively dark brown (as contrasted with body color) tail band and dark secondaries. I've scored this at about a 25 on your scale but I'd be interested in your thoughts.

Thanks for your help.



Andy Keister

**Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)**

Yes based on a review of photos during and after my observation along with consulting with gull ID professionals.

**During**

Sibley's Guide (phone app), Googling photos of Thayer's vs Kumlien Gulls

**After**

various websites including Steve Hampton's referenced above

**Supporting evidence (check all that apply)**

Photograph

**Upload images, audio, video or drawings**



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[Jack Cochran Photo 12-26-14.jpg](#)