

## PA Rare Bird Report

<b>Submission Date</b>	2016-11-06 21:53:08
<b>Observer's Name</b>	Thomas Ford-Hutchinson
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<b>Phone</b>	215-919-2734
<b>Observer's Address</b>	United States
<b>Names of additional observers</b>	Tony Ford-Hutchinson
<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>	Adult in basic winter plumage.
<b>Observation Date and Time</b>	11-06-2016 11:50 AM
<b>Did you submit this sighting to eBird?</b>	Yes
<b>Link to eBird checklist</b>	<a href="http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S32400778">http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S32400778</a>
<b>County</b>	Bucks
<b>Location (City, Borough, Township)</b>	Haycock
<b>Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)</b>	Nockamixon SP--Marina
<b>GPS coordinates of sighting</b>	40.469352, -75.224875
<b>Habitat</b>	Docks on a large lake
<b>Distance to bird</b>	40ft
<b>Viewing conditions</b>	Sunny, clear

**Description**

I immediately called this bird out as a Thayer's to my father, but then convinced myself it was just a rather worn Herring Gull and promptly completely forgot about it. Looking back and seeing the photos now on my computer this looks like a classic adult winter plumaged Thayer's Gull.

In comparison to the Lesser Black-backed Gulls this bird is only slightly larger and it does not appear as bulky as would be expected for a Herring Gull. The black primaries are restricted to the outer three primaries, with only a black margin on the forward edge of the outer primary with a white bar on the trailing edge. The next primary appears to be missing, but the following two show the classic large white apical spots. The underside of the wing shows the classic narrow trailing edge of black along the outermost primaries. On a Herring this would show as a large black smudge covering the majority of the primaries. Sibley illustrates a pale Herring Gull, but according to references even these birds would show more extensive black primary tips on the first 5-6 outermost primaries and would also show more extensive blackish coloration on the under-wing. The bird has a yellow eye, smudgy brown streaks on the hood, a slim yellow bill, and bright pink legs. Kumlien's Iceland Gull would present a much lighter set of grey primaries.

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

Loafing/Roosting on the dock with dozens of Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

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

Herring Gull (Pale)- An extremely pale Herring Gull can be confusingly similar to Thayer's but I believe these birds would show more extensive black primary tips on the first 5-6 outermost primaries and would also show more extensive blackish coloration on the under-wing.

Iceland Gull (Kumlein's)- The primaries are much too dark for any Iceland in the spectrum of what is Kumlein's. The bill and bird as a whole look too bulky for the more petite look of an Iceland.

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

My gull reference books are not with me, and I'm not sure if Howell and Dunn's Gulls of the Americas would shed any further light on the variation among pale Herring Gulls. I will be reunited with my bird-related reference books in the near future though, so feel free to contact me with any further questions.

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

Mostly, but I have learned that gulls are both extremely variable and prone to hybridization.

**After**

Dunn & Sibley.

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

Photograph

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



[5W5A6336 \(1\).jpg](#)



[5W5A6345.jpg](#)



[5W5A6352.jpg](#)



[5W5A6353 \(1\).jpg](#)



[5W5A6357 \(1\).jpg](#)



[5W5A6358.jpg](#)

[5W5A6381.jpg](#)



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