

332/333-01-1990

Jaeger (Pomarine-Parasitic)
Erie Co., PA

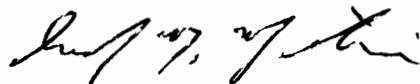
PORC

On Sunday, September 30, 1990 I spent the morning standing on Gull Point at Presque Isle State Park watching the lake for birds to fly in from Canada. It was cloudy (stratus) with light winds from the northwest early in the morning increasing to approx. 15 to 20 MPH by late morning. It rained continually throughout the morning with occasional heavy downpours. Viewing conditions were poor most of the morning with conditions becoming fair at best. At approx. 9:00 or 9:30 AM Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) began flying in from the east feeding briefly and then continuing on along the lake shore in a south-westerly direction. At 11:50 AM while searching through the passing Bonaparte's Gulls for rarities I spotted a dark spot flying directly toward me which could have been more than a mile away. As it approached from the east flying possibly 100' above the water it began to take shape. I could see its wings at this point so I could see the bird alternately flap and glide. At this point it was close enough to see that it was all dark holding its wings below the horizontal plane when gliding. This wing position is typical of falcons. As it approached feeding Bonaparte's and Ring-billed (*Larus delawarensis*) Gulls I could see that it was large enough to be a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). However, as the bird continued to come closer, but still several hundred yards away from me, it angled away a little revealing an all dark gull-like bird with white primary bases on the underside. I immediately identified the bird as a jaeger by this plumage characteristic. Within moments of seeing the white flashes I observed the bird pursue an adult Ring-billed Gull. It chased it for only a second or two and then abandoned the chase to continue east towards Gull Point. The jaeger appeared to be as big if not slightly bigger by weight and length as the Ring-billed Gull. The jaeger came within approx. 200 yards of the shoreline before turning north to pass the point. At this point the following field marks were noted. The bird looked heavy with slow wing beats compared to the faster wing beats of the Bonaparte's. It looked like a very dark gull, though its behavior was more like a falcon than a gull. The entire upper side of the bird was very dark (darker than basic I plumaged Herring Gulls) with a trace of white at the base of the primaries. The under side was heavily barred (indicating the bird was a juvenile or an immature) especially on the upper breast and less so, but still very distinctively barred on the belly. The wing coverts were barred with the primaries appearing dark grey with a distinctive white patch at the base. The upper side and the lower side of the tail was uniformly dark and wedge shaped. Because of heavy rain and distance of viewing, the central tail projections could not be seen. I watched the bird continue in a northerly direction. At this time only 2' or 3' from the water until it disappeared flying in a northwesterly direction. It followed the shoreline, but never closer than 300 or 400 yards away after the closest approach of 200 yards or more earlier. The entire time I watched the jaeger fly away it never stopped flapping its wings.

The wing beats were always slow, but powerful enough to keep the bird flying ahead of the gulls.

The jaeger may have been a Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) which the behavior and size of the bird would suggest, but because of the poor viewing conditions the bird should remain as a jaeger (*S. pomarinus*-*S. parasiticus*). I have seen 5 Parasitic and 1 Pomarine Jaeger on P.I. with all but 1 Parasitic at Gull Point. I have also seen Parasitic Jaegers off of Ocean City, Maryland. I was using a 10 X 40 Zeiss Binocular and a 25X Bushnell Spotting Scope.

Jerry McWilliams



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Jaeger Sp.**

Date of Sighting: **September 30, 1990**

Observer(s): **Jerry McWilliams**

Date of Submission: **1990**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman							
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS			6				
DECISION			X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

B. Haas

Date:

3-24-91