

332A-01-1998

Jaeger species

Stercorarius pomarinus or parasiticus

Location: Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Pa.

Date: November 30, 1998

Time: 8:30 to 8:45 AM

Weather: Variably cloudy, wind 10 mph from the southwest .

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 and Kowa TSN 4 at about 30X.

Viewing distance: perhaps 1/2 mile off shore.

Viewing conditions: good

Details of sighting and description: I was conducting my waterbird count at Sunset Point. There was little bird activity over the water this morning especially waterfowl, but there were 300 or more Bonaparte's Gulls feeding outside the breakwaters. There were also a few Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls flying over the lake. At 8:30 AM, I spotted a fast flying blackish bird coming from a northeasterly direction towards land. It continued to get closer until I was able to confirm my suspicion that it was a jaeger. It made many acrobatic maneuvers as it chased a Bonaparte's Gull. After unsuccessfully getting the Bonaparte's to regurgitate any food it settled on the water. After a few minutes of preening it flew again and resumed chasing Bonaparte's Gulls. The blackish plumage and flight of the bird were the first clues to its identity. It would fly on stiff strongly arched wings with strong powerful wing beats similar to a Peregrine Falcon. It frequently banked giving me good views of its underside. Its lower breast and belly were white with some dusky feathers. There was a dusky breast band that separated the pale lower breast from the whitish throat. The wing linings were pale with heavy barring and a prominent large white patch was at the base of the primaries. The wings were pointed and always angled back and curved downward giving the bird a rather arched profile especially when viewing the bird head on. The flanks and undertail coverts were heavily barred. The tail was solid dark brown and was wedged shaped with no central tail projections. The bird was not close enough to determine the shape of the central rectrices. The upperside was entirely dark brown with a hint of white at the base of the primaries. It had a rather distinctive pale nape. I have observed both immature Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers with pale napes in the past. Most of the time when the bird was in view, it was by itself so size was difficult to discern. However, when pursuing the Bonaparte's Gull it was clearly larger than the Bonaparte's and was always flying faster than all of the other gulls scattered throughout the lake that

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were flying in the same direction. The bird appeared to be too large and heavy and the wings too broad based to be a Long-tailed Jaeger. The wings seemed too narrow and the body not heavy enough to be a Pomarine Jaeger. The bird never got close enough to see if there was a double white patch at the base of the primaries which is usually more typical of Pomarine than Parasitic Jaeger. However, the wing beats seemed too slow and the bird seemed too large to be a Parasitic Jaeger. The amount of white at the base of the undersides of the primaries seemed more extensive than on most Parasitic Jaegers I have seen in the past. If the bird had been at least 100 feet closer I could have seen the shape of the central rectrices, or if the bird had landed close enough to study bill size, and plumage, I could have identified the bird to species. \

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. J. [unclear]".

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Jaeger species (*Stercorarius pomarinus* or *parasiticus*)

Date of Sighting: 30 November 1998 to 30 November 1998

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

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	
D. Couchman			X					
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes			X					
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid			X					X
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			6					1
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 9/28/00