

332A-02-2001

Jaeger species

Stercorarius pomarinus or parasiticus

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

Date: December 24, 2001

Time: 8:30 to 8:35 AM

Weather: cloudy, wind WSW to about 15 mph.

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 at about 30X.

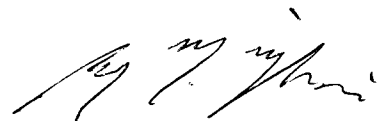
Viewing distance: as close as ¼ to ½ mile off shore.

Viewing conditions: very good

Details of sighting and description: I was conducting my waterbird count at Sunset Point when I spotted a blackish gull-like bird flying west about one mile off shore. The flight behavior was jaeger-like, swooping up above the horizon and then dipping back down out of sight below the waves only to reappear again above the horizon. It continued flying west until I lost sight of it below the horizon. After a couple of minutes I saw the jaeger flying directly towards us getting closer and closer until it again disappeared below a wave. I assumed it had landed on the water, so I resumed my count by scanning from east to west across the lake. On about the third or fourth scan the jaeger appeared again, but was much closer than before. It flew on stiff strongly arched wings with slow steady wing beats. After it got to within a ¼ mile or so from shore it veered off to the west and was not seen again. At its closest approach I was able to see the following characteristics. The wings were pointed and angled back and curved downward. The upperside and underside of the jaeger were entirely blackish with a prominent patch of white at the base of the under primaries. The tail was not seen well, but was definitely short showing no obvious central tail projections so I suspect it was an immature bird. Because of my distance away from the jaeger I could not get an adequate look to see if the under primary coverts were white giving the double white patch look typical of Pomarine Jaeger.

I suspect the jaeger was most likely a Pomarine Jaeger based upon the heavy looking body, rather short broad-based wings, slow wing beats, and extensive white in the base of the under primaries. In addition to that, Pomarine Jaegers are more likely to be seen this late in the season than Parasitic Jaegers. There were no gulls nearby to make a size comparison.

Even though I am fairly familiar with identifying Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, especially at a distance, I can't identify all of them all of the time.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Jaeger species (Stercorarius species)

Date of Sighting: 24 December 2001 to 24 December 2001

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: EIRE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

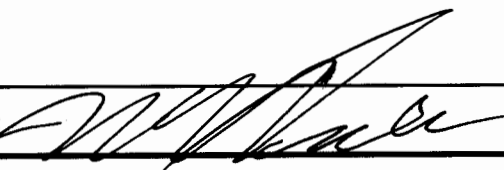
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Heathcote								
P. Hess			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman			X	X				
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6					
DECISION								

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

2/5/03