

332A-02-2005

Parasitic/Pomarine Jaeger  
*Stercorarius parasiticus/pomarinus*

Location: Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Pa.  
Date: November 22, 2005  
Time: 9:30 to 10:05 AM and 11:00 AM  
Weather: Partly cloudy, wind northerly  
Observer: Jerry McWilliams  
Optics: Kowa TSN 4 with eyepiece set at 40X  
Viewing distance: several hundred yards offshore.  
Viewing conditions: good

Details of sighting and description: Details of today's birds were almost a carbon copy of the single bird I had fly past Sunset Point two weeks ago today. There were a total of four jaegers observed this morning with three off Sunset Point and one off beach 11.

I was surveying waterbird movement over the lake when a fast flying dark bird appeared flying in a westerly direction some distance from shore. It only took about a minute or two for the bird to pass to the west and out of sight. About fifteen minutes later another flew past in the same westerly direction, but was somewhat closer to shore. At 10:05 AM a third jaeger zoomed past Sunset Point also in a westerly direction.

I recognized all birds as jaegers by their overall dark appearance, mid-gull size, falcon-like flight, and white flashes at the base of the primaries. Because of the great distance from me, I could not obtain precise details though I strongly believe they were all Parasitic Jaegers. As they flew I could see that the wings were angled sharply back and quite pointed. There were a few Bonaparte's Gulls flying around, but the jaegers ignored them. I could see that the uppersides were dark brown and that their underparts were medium brown to golden-brown depending on how the light hit the feathers. The white patch at the base of the under primaries were quite distinctive, even at this range. All three behaved the same way, flying fast and direct low over the water dropping down and out of sight between the waves and then reappearing above the waves gliding in a shallow arch with wings curved back and down before dropping out of sight again between the waves. Long-tailed Jaeger was ruled out because of their broad-based wings, stout body, and amount of white at the base of the primaries. It is also much later in the season than you would expect a Long-tailed Jaeger.

The fourth jaeger was seen over Gull Point as I looked across from beach 11 around 11:00 AM. It circled the point and put up all of the gulls before flying relatively high over Thompson flats and then Thompson Bay before disappearing in a westerly direction. It was almost close enough looking through the scope to see the central rectrices, but not quite. The fact that there were no protruding central tail feathers and the belly was brown and barred it could be determined that it was an immature bird. The white at the base of the under primaries was distinctive. It did not appear to show any white on the under primary coverts. The field marks, size, and behavior seemed to be consistent with Parasitic Jaeger.

I am quite familiar with Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers and have seen many conducting the waterbird counts at Sunset Point as well as seeing many on the Atlantic Ocean. Even with the experience I have with this group, separating Parasitic and Pomarine can be a challenge especially when viewing them from great distances.

Jerry McWilliams

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Parasitic/Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus/pomarinus*)

Date of Sighting: 22 November 2005 to 22 November 2005

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2005

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

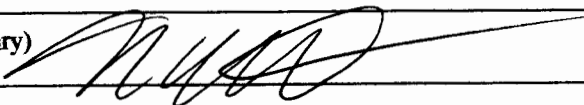
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut								
A. Guarente			X					
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
J. Heller			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date: 7/28/06