

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2020-12-27 09:40:30
Observer's Name	Zachary Millen
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Phone	7177231279
Observer's Address	101 Bridle Path New Holland PA 17557 United States
Names of additional observers	Zachary J Millen
Species (Common Name)	Parasitic
Species (Scientific Name)	Jaeger
Number of individuals	1
Observation Date and Time	08-29-2020 12:00 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	https://ebird.org/checklist/S72966233
County	Lancaster
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Washington Boro
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Conejohela Flatas
GPS coordinates of sighting	39.9743445,-76.4653158
Habitat	Susquehanna River
Distance to bird	A few hundred meters
Viewing conditions	Clear
Optical equipment used	Swaro/Vortex spotting scopes

Description

About 20 minutes after Ross left ~1159am a dark jaeger appeared to our north. Jason called it out first and we both got on it with the scopes. I don't know jaegers very well, but have seen all 3, a fair number of Parasitics and one darker immature Long-tailed on the Atlantic. It alighted on the water for about a minute farther upstream, enough time to call Ross who was just getting to shore, and send out an RBA text before it started flying at us again. It briefly alit once or twice more as we watched it approach in the scopes. Probably viewed at about 500m, or halfway to shore from our vantage. There were about 100 RBGU on the mud bars which I fully expected the jaeger to approach. Unfortunately, it never did but just kept on moving southbound. Overall impression was a somewhat chesty bird, certainly not near a Pomarine. That was easily ruled out. Jason called out somewhat broad based wings, a shorter-tailed appearance with short tips to central rects protruding, and a "smaller" headed appearance based on body size. We discussed these points as we viewed BOC photos in the field. The only thing possibly inconsistent with Parasitic was the amount of white in the primary shafts. This was difficult to view in the field. White visible in this area is very obvious on the outer 2-3 primaries (hard to tell exactly how many), but inside that detail is lost. This is a typical look on both Long-tailed and Parasitic, where some Parasitic are bright white on the outer few and less so on the inner few. This region is highly variable. White patch at base of underside of primaries appears wider than typical thin comma look of Long-tailed, but was not observed in the field, and again is variable. Consistent in Long-tailed photos online is a tail projection equal to the width of the wing base, while Parasitic is shorter, often 80%. My photos appear to show this proportion, and Jason commented in the field on the bird's short-tailed appearance. Something we didn't notice it in the field, but later in photos there appears to be a slight warmish brown cast to the body, where Long-tailed is colder browns and grays. Overall, everything we can and could determine pointed to Parasitic which is the "expected" species, despite the rarity of all 3 in the state. I believe Long-tailed can be ruled out by Jason's solid fist impression, the bird's overall proportions, body color and rarity level.

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

Migrating downriver, sat on the water upstream from us several times then continued straight past us southbound. Unfortunately didn't bother to come check out the gull flock near us.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

See description

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

Yes, as near as we can be.

After

Sibley, Macaulay Library photos, others I don't remember

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



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