

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Thayer's Gull How many? 1

Location? Tailwaters, Red Rock Res.

Type of Habitat? Tailwaters/River

When? date(s): Nov. 13, 1993 time: afternoon to

Who? your name and address: Bob Cecil 1315 41st St. Des Moines, IA

Others with you: Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault

Others before or after you: Dont' know

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We were looking for the alleged Mew Gull behind the dam when I observed a 1st winter Thayer's Gull and alerted Kent and Tetrault. I noticed the overall "coffee with cream" coloration characteristic of the species. This uniform color included the head, back, wings, and underparts. Upon closer observation, we observed a somewhat darker terminal tail band, and very slightly darker secondaries. The bird appeared to be approximately the same size as some of the 1st Winter Herring Gulls flying around in the same immediate area.

We also noticed the silvery underwings of this bird. While I do not consider this a rock solid field mark, it was unusually conspicuous in the case of this bird. Consistent with this field mark, there were no evident windows at the base of the primaries as in Herring.

Similar species; how eliminated: 1st winter Herring Gull has a very dark secondary bar, often has lighter head, and generally has a much more "contrasty" appearance involving darker and lighter shades of brown. Overall, the 1st winter Herring is darker brown.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? Kent finally came around. If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Perhaps 200 yards. I don't really recall viewing conditions except that they were good and allowed good views of the bird. Optics: Nikon 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:  
Seen and identified at least 10 in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description:  
NONE

How long before field notes made? none this form completed? 3 days

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).