

DETAILS FOR UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Thayer's Gull (Adult).

LOCATION: Mississippi River, Lock & Dam #15, Davenport,
Scott County.

DATE: January 9, 13, and 17, 1992.

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa,
52240.

OTHERS: Tom Kent on 1/17/92

BACKGROUND: On the three dates listed, I saw what I thought was an adult Thayer's gull flying below Lock & Dam # 15 in Davenport. Virtually all Thayer's gulls reported in the state have been first year birds, but it seems reasonable that other plumages should also appear. The bird was always seen flying, never standing, and in the same location on all three occasions. An independent report to the Iowa Birdline by Bob Cecil described an adult Thayer's gull at the same location on 1/16 and 1/17.

DESCRIPTION: I could not tell any size difference between the numerous Herring gulls and this bird. What made it different from the adult Herring gulls were: (1) It was a little lighter in general, with a lighter gray mantle and upper wing. (2) The dark area at the wing tips was not as extensive and showed more white than did that of the Herring gulls. (3) The underwing was entirely light, as compared to that of the adult Herring gulls, which was dark to the same extent that the upperwing was. In addition, on the 1/13 observation, the bird flew very close to me, and even with binoculars I could see a dark eye. Adult Herring gulls exhibit a light (yellow) eye.