

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Unusual Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Thayer's Gull - adult

Location: Below Red Rock Dam, Marion County, Iowa

Habitat: Open river with gravel bars

Date: 24 December 1993

Time: approximately 11:20 to 11:30

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other Observers: Ray Cummins

Description of bird: This gull was larger than nearby Ring-bills and more near the small end of the spectrum of Herring Gull. The bird had pink legs, bright yellow bill with an extremely bright red spot on the lower mandible, medium gray mantle, dark primaries with white mirrors, very smudgy head, neck and breast and white underparts. It looked similar to a Herring Gull with the following notable exceptions:

- Eye was dark
- Bill was less bulky and did not have a severe gonydeal angle
- Head was rounder

The bird flew when an eagle passed over but I was unable to pick it out in flight.

Similar species and how eliminated: Dark eye and head/bill structure eliminated Herring Gull.

Viewing conditions (light, distance, optics): Optics consisted of 7X26 binoculars and spotting scope with 15X60 zoom eyepiece. Sky was overcast. The bird was observed at approximately 150 yards.

Previous experience: Adult Thayer's was studied this past summer in Churchill.

References consulted during observation: NGS Guide

References consulted before completing documentation: NGS Guide

Field notes made: On return home

Documentation completed: Same day