

Jaeger species

4 Sep 1966

Rice Lake, Winnebago Co., IA

B. E. Sutter

Sutter 1966

Record Number: 93-EM

Classification: A-D

REFERENCE

Sutter, B.E. 1966. Parasitic Jaeger in Winnebago County. IBL 36:109-110.

VOTE: 1 A-D Parasitic, 4 A-D Jaeger sp.

A-D, The bird appears to have been an adult based on black cap and gray back, but the white underparts are not described. I agree that the white in the wings of an adult would distinguish between Parasitic and Long-tailed. The author does not even consider Pomarine. It also seems a bit unusual that Herring Gulls would be present at that date. I trust that the author would have recognized a Pomarine Jaeger as being larger, and vote for Parasitic partly based on a much greater probability. I could easily have voted A-D for jaeger species. /thk

NA for Parasitic, A-D for Jaeger sp., I'm reluctant to vote based upon probability here. The observers were evidently impressed by the "great amount of white color" in the wings; a field mark more comparatively suggestive of a Pomarine than a Parasitic. /ric

Sutter, B. E. 1966.  
Parasitic Jaeger in  
Winnebago County. Iowa  
Bird Life 36:109-110

**Parasitic Jaeger in Winnebago County.**—On Sunday, September 4, 1966, about 6:00 p.m. (DST), my brother Mark and I were sitting on the shore of Rice Lake finishing off the plums we had picked while hiking through the refuge. Mark had just mentioned something about the graceful flight of a bird, and I looked up expecting to see one of the many Ring-billed or Herring Gulls that had been in evidence all afternoon. As the bird flew closer, however, I was struck by a general impression—Parasitic Jaeger. Closer and closer it came as I eagerly noted the details—hooked jaeger bill, black cap blending into gray back, central tail feathers extending two to three inches. These details were easily viewed through binoculars as the bird flew past. However, even before I had been able to see the bird well with binoculars, one characteristic had been very noticeable—the great amount of white color that flashed as the bird flew, both on the upper- and undersides of the wings. At the time I did not realize the importance of this detail, but I recorded it along with my other field notes as I knew from past reading that distinguishing between Long-tailed and Parasitic Jaegers could be tricky.

The bird flew on down the lake until nearby vegetation blocked it from view. Boiling with excitement we ran down the trail in an attempt to get

another view, but though we searched for 30 to 45 minutes, we were unable to find the jaeger again.

Realizing the importance of our observation, I questioned Mark closely about what he had noticed when the bird had flown by. He had not been using binoculars, but his description included "black cap, long tail, and lots of white in the wings."

Looking into the literature on jaegers, I found a most excellent article by Robert Dickerman of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History in the June, 1959, issue of *The Flicker*. He reviewed the early records of jaegers in Minnesota and stated that most of the sight records must be regarded as "jaeger species" only, because the observers had relied too heavily on the length of the central tail feathers as the distinguishing characteristic. As the length of the central retrices in the two species often overlap, this character alone is not infallible. He says of the Long-tailed Jaeger, ". . . it has little or no white on the underside of the wing;." Since the individual that Mark and I had seen had exhibited so much white on both sides of the wings, I concluded that the bird we had seen had been an adult Parasitic Jaeger in light phase. There are three published previous records of the Parasitic Jaeger in Iowa.—BARTON E. SUTTER, Hanlontown.