

Jaeger species
29 Oct 1989
Algona, Kossuth Co., IA
Kenne
IBL 60:14, 61:85

Record Number: 89-34
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Matthew Kenne

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:14
Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: First of all, this was an excellent description of a flyover. The question: were they first year Herring Gulls? A direct size comparison would have been helpful if available. The description is necessarily pretty subjective - the only hard evidence is the lighter color at the base of the primaries, and perhaps the hooked bill. Softer, but supportive is the very pointed wings, and perception of raptor-like flight. While Herrings have a "window" at about the same location as the light color seen on these birds, it is indistinct. From the description, these were pretty obvious.

A-D: Jaeger sp. description fit Pomarine Jaeger best 1) Heavy black hooked bill. 2) White in the outer primaries. 3) Large size at first thought to be Canada's. 4) Skipped only an occasional wingbeat.

A-D: Accept as jaeger sp., good description.

A-D: A nice find. In future documentations it would be helpful to be more specific on the time the bird was seen (how many seconds or minutes estimated) and distance the bird was seen. Does "close" mean 25 feet or 50 yards?

A-D: I find nothing to object to in this description.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-34

What species? Jaeger Species immatures How many? 2

Location? Riverview Cemetary Algona, Ia.

Type of Habitat? Fly-over hill overlooking Des Moines River valley

When? date(s): Oct 29, 1989 time: 11:15 to estimate

Who? your name and address: Matthew Kenne 709 N-Phillips Algona, Ia. 50511

Others with you: None

Others before or after you: None

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.

2 birds came out of the north wingtip to wingtip. I first thought they were Canadian geese, but with binocs I realized they were smaller and closer without long necks. They looked like gulls, but dark brown.

They flew with steady falcon-like wingbeats, shallow to medium, and somewhat stiffly. They didn't glide into a very light south breeze, but did skip an occasional wingbeat. Their bodies seemed to rise and fall a little with each stroke.

The wings were thrust forward, and heavily angled or bent back at the "wrists". They were long and slightly narrow and very pointed. The birds were dark brown overall with the base of the outer primaries lighter colored from below. The tails were average-medium length and folded. I could detect no lengthened central tail feathers.

their bills were not overly large, and not short, but strong looking with a thicker hooked tip darker than the "shaft".

Similar species; how eliminated: Wrong color for a gull, no terminal tail bands, no gray, no white except for the lightness at the base of primaries, no darker primaries (black wingtips). Bill was gull-like, but hooked nail different. May have been exaggerated by darker color than basal portion. Flight was direct and strong, a "confident" feel I get from birds of prey.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NA
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: stillness before approaching cold front + snow
give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.

Heavy overcast with light haze, fog. 8X36 B+L Custom I followed them with glasses from appearance to departure, nothing to measure distance against.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: 2-3 "trees" high (guess) 45° angle up from ground CLOSE

none moderate experience with gulls

References and persons consulted before writing description:

none

How long before field notes made? none this form completed? 2 hrs.

OVER
→

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

then they flew south into the haze —

THE END

If I had to pitch a wild guess with no experience to back it up, I'd have to say Parasitic Jaeger.

I saw a bird like these last fall from 2 blocks away without binocs flying low over Algona a couple of days before the jaegers were found at Saylorville. Fun to think about?

~~Matt Kenn~~