

Parasitic Jaeger  
29 Sep 1988  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
\*S. Dinsmore  
to 30 Sep; IBL 59:13, 77

Record Number: 88-25  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Steve Dinsmore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:13  
Records Committee: IBL 59:77

VOTE: 6-A-D, 1-abstain

A-D. This documentation is greatly enhanced by the observers before and after sightings of Pomarine Jaegers.

A-D. The details, although all somewhat subjective, all seem to point to Parasitic.

A-D. Details as written acceptable as Parasitic Jaeger especially as compared to two Pomarine Jaegers.

A-D. While subjective, experience of observer and immediately prior and subsequent sightings of Pomarines allows for convincing ID. Features differentiating the 2 species were seen (less white in wings, flight characteristics).

SENT TO: Steve Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

2-5-88

88-25

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Parasitic Jaeger

How Many? 1 juv.

Location? Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-south end of lake

Habitat? flying over large reservoir

Date? 29-30 Sep 1988

Time? 4:46-5:14 p.m. on 29 Sep and 10:15-10:35 a.m. on 30 Sep

Observers Name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others who saw bird: Bery Engebretsen, Jim Sinclair

Description of bird: On 29 Sep, I was birding from Sandpiper Beach when I noticed a dark, gull-like bird flying down the lake. The bird was dark brown colored and had a small, white crescent at the base of the primaries on each wing. I knew I was looking at a jaeger, probably a Pomarine or a Parasitic. I thought the bird was probably one of the two Pomarine Jaegers I had seen an hour earlier near the dam, 3 miles down the lake.

The bird flew past the beach and landed near some Ring-billed Gulls. On the water, the bird seemed smaller and slimmer than the Ring-billed Gulls. The bill appeared dark, and was similar in shape to the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. The bird was entirely dark brown colored, with some darker barring on the belly and undertail. The head was slightly paler than the rest of the bird. At this point, I began to notice that the bird wasn't nearly as bulky or large as the Pomarine Jaegers I had seen earlier. After a few minutes, the bird began to fly around again. This time, I noticed that the bird flew very erratically, and had very fast wing strokes. The bird did not have the lumbering flight of a Pomarine Jaeger. The wings were long and pointed, and seemed quite different from the broader, more rounded wings of a Pomarine Jaeger. Also, the white on the wing was much less distinct than the white on the wings of the two Pomarine Jaegers. The white area was much less extensive, and it was difficult to see much white on the underwing. The bird did not have any visible tail streamers. Note that before and after this sighting I saw two juvenile Pomarine Jaegers near the dam of the reservoir.

On 30 Sep, Jim Sinclair, Bery Engebretsen, and I saw a jaeger off Cherry Glen Rec. Area that we identified as a Parasitic Jaeger. The bird was chasing gulls over the lake, and flew with very rapid wing strokes. The bird seemed to be no bigger than a Ring-billed Gull. We watched the bird for almost an hour from the shore and from my boat before the bird flew north and we lost it. A half hour later we observed two Pomarine Jaegers resting together near the dam.

Similar species and how eliminated: The dark color and white patches on the wings eliminates all larids except jaegers. The noticeable amount of white on the wing, visible on the underside of the wing, eliminates Long-tailed Jaeger. The small size compared to a Ring-billed Gull, less prominent white on the wing, smaller bill size, and more rapid wing strokes eliminates Pomarine Jaeger.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were very good with the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 200 yards on 29 Sep, and as close as 100 yards from my boat on 30 Sep. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope and Bausch and Lomb 8x40 binoculars.

Previous experience with species: I have seen numerous Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers off the East Coast, plus one Parasitic and two Pomarine jaegers in Iowa.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made? written while watching bird on 29 Sep and after observations on 30 Sep

How long before this form was completed? written on 29 Sep - updated on 30 Sep

The bird flew past the boat and landed near some floating logs in the water. The bird appeared smaller and darker than the Ring-billed Gull. The bill appeared dark, and was similar in shape to the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. The bird was entirely black above, with some darker barring on the belly and undertail. The head was slightly paler than the rest of the bird. At 09:15, I began to notice that the bird wasn't really as dark as I had thought. Pomarine jaegers I had seen earlier. After a few minutes, the bird began to fly around again. This time, I noticed that the bird flew very erratically, and had very fast wing strokes. The wings were dark, and the underwing light of a Pomarine Jaeger. The wings were dark and pointed, and seemed quite different from the previous bird. I also noticed the white on the wings of the two Pomarine Jaegers. The white was much less extensive, and it was difficult to see white on the underwing. The bird did not have any dark streaks on the underwing. Note that before and after this sighting, two other juvenile Pomarine Jaegers near the rest of the reservoir. On 30 Sep, Jim Sinclair, Gary Engstrom, and I saw a Pomarine Jaeger near the reservoir. We identified it as a Parasitic Jaeger. The bird was chasing gulls over the lake, and flew with very fast wing strokes. The bird seemed to be no bigger than a Ring-billed Gull. We watched the bird for almost an hour from the shore and took many photos. The bird flew north and we lost it. - Half hour later, we observed two Pomarine Jaegers feeding together near the dam. Similar species and how eliminated: The dark color and white on the wings eliminated all other except jaegers. The bill shape and white on the wing, visible on the underside of the wing, eliminated the Ring-billed Gull. The small size compared to a Ring-billed Gull, less prominent white on the wing, smaller bill size, and more rapid wing strokes eliminated Pomarine Jaeger.