

Parasitic Jaeger 1
3 Sep 1990
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
S. Dinsmore
IBL 61:20, 62:21

Record Number: 90-30
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Stephen J. Dinsmore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 61:20
Records Committee: IBL 62:21

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Good bird.

A-D: Very nicely described and good details on features needed to help separate from other jaegers. Previous experience with these kinds of birds is very apparent.

A-D: Good job of eliminating other species.

A-D: Convincing documentation. Rufous coloration and other well described marks confirm documentation.

A-D: The rufous tinge to the mantle, size comparison to Ring-billed Gull, and no white on the underwing coverts seem to eliminate Pomarine and Long-tailed Jaegers. Previous photographic evidence of both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers from this location add additional support to this sight record.

A-D: Excellent documentation. Eliminates any other species.

A-D: Nice descriptions and a good documentation.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Parasitic Jaeger

Number: 1 juv.

Date: 3 Sep 1990

Time: 4:22-4:51 p.m.

Location: Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-off Cherry Glen Recreation Area

Observer(s): Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames

Other observer(s): Scott Rolfes, Polk City

Description of bird(s): At approximately 2 p.m. on 3 Sep, I received a call from Scott Rolfes about a possible jaeger at Saylorville Reservoir. He had briefly seen the bird from the mile long bridge as it flew south down the lake. I arrived at the lake at 2:40 p.m. and quickly checked both Oak Grove and Sandpiper beaches without success. I then moved down the lake to the dam, again without any success. Finally, I drove to Cherry Glen Recreation Area to look through approximately 50 gulls near the parking lot. I finished looking over the gulls when I noticed several gulls and a darker, gull-like bird flying over the lake about 200 yards off the parking lot. Even with binoculars, it was quickly apparent that the darker bird was a jaeger. The bird was dark chocolate brown with a hint of rufous color, particularly on the mantle. The underparts were also dark brown with clear dark barring, except that the breast was paler. The mantle and wings were dark brown with pale edges to feathers on the mantle. The mantle had a distinct rufous tinge to it, unlike the rest of the bird. The bird was the same size and structure as the Ring-billed Gulls it was with. At the base of the primaries there was an obvious but narrow white crescent. This white crescent was less obvious on the underwing. The shape of the wings differed slightly from those of the Ring-billed Gulls; they appeared proportionately longer and more pointed. The rump was dark brown, the same color as the back and wings. The tail was brown and squared off at the tip. I saw no evidence of any tail streamers. I also noted that the head was proportionately the same size as the head of a Ring-billed Gull. The bill was dark, and was clearly more hooked at the tip than the bills of the nearby Ring-billed Gulls. The bill was not particularly heavy or stout, such as the bill of a Pomarine Jaeger or a skua. Based on the brown body color, light feather edges on the mantle, and dark barring on the underparts, I identified the bird as a juvenile jaeger. I think this was a light phase bird because of the paler breast.

Similar species and how eliminated: The color and wing crescent eliminates all larids except skuas and Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers. Skuas are easily eliminated by their larger size, heavier bill, and more prominent white patches on the wings. Long-tailed Jaeger is eliminated by the presence of a

white crescent on the upper surface of the wing. Pomarine Jaeger can be eliminated by its larger, heavier body size, more prominent white crescent on the wing, presence of white greater underprimary coverts, larger-headed appearance, heavier bill, and general lack of rufous color on the body.

Optical equipment and viewing conditions: Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun mostly behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 200 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

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

Previous experience with species: I have seen both Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers in Iowa. I am also familiar with all three species of jaegers and both species of skuas from two months spent in the Atlantic Ocean.

How long before field notes written? written immediately after sighting

How long before this form completed? 3 hours