

Thayer's Gull

6 Nov 1989

Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA

Johnson

IBL 60:15, 61:85

Record Number: 89-42

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Ann Johnson

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:15

Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Good document.

A-D: Adequately described to convincingly eliminate other possibilities. Johnson's description (albeit a brief glance) of the body color of sitting bird as being about the same as the other larger (presumably Herring) gulls doesn't sound quite right but descriptions by both Johnson and Proescholdt of size, bill shape, and wing patterns are sufficient.

A-D: Thorough, convincing documentation.

A-D: Excellent detail in this documentation suggest this observer is familiar with Thayer's and knows what to look for when observing a first winter bird.

A-D: Documentation adequate for Thayer's Gull. Description of upper surface secondaries not described, but enough for this documentation.

A-D: Good description of Thayer's Gull.

A-D: Not as convincing as 89-41, but probably a Thayer's, based on the description of the underwings. A borderline A-D.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Thayer's Gull - 1st winter

Location: North Overlook Beach, Lake Red Rock, Marion Co, IA

Habitat: Sandy beach on man-made reservoir

Date(s): 11/6/89

Time: 10:30 am to 10:35 am

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

Other observers: 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, under-tail, legs, feet). Also mention behavior and voice.

While scoping a group of gulls, primarily ring-bills, which were sitting on the beach, I noted one of the "herrings" appeared a bit smaller. This bird had a rounder head than the others and its black bill was smaller, less bulbous. The legs were pink and the body was generally the same color as the other larger gulls scattered on the beach. Before I could study the sitting gull any further, it took flight and circled in the general area for about five minutes before moving further onto the lake. The first impression of the bird in flight was of a gull which was uniformly colored above. The head, mantle, saddle and wings were all a medium brown with very little shading variation. The wing coverts had lighter, narrow feather edgings. The primaries were the same medium brown but the outer primaries had chocolate brown tips to them, very narrow but distinct. The rump and tail were a shade lighter, perhaps best described as a mottly light brown, and the complete tail band on the rounded tail was a medium brown, looking just a bit darker than the rest as the body. As the bird banked, the underside of the wings were well seen several times. The wing linings were grayish-brown and created a stark contrast with the light-colored silvery gray primaries and secondaries. The flight feathers were uniformly colored with no dark edgings.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Iceland Gull - basically eliminated by darker color and narrow chocolate edges to outer primaries. Kumlien's - presence of tail band would seem to eliminate
Herring - eliminated by combination of: structure and size of body and bill; shape of head; more uniform coloration above, especially lighter colored primaries; light flight feathers from below contrasting with darker wing linings; lighter color of tail band

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Overcast. Observed at an estimated 50-150 yards through scope at 25x-40x and 7x26 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Very little with identified Thayer's but considerable years of experience with other gulls.

89-42

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None prior to field notes; National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Peter Harrison, Seabirds, and Carl J. Bendorf, "Identification of First Winter Thayer's Gull", Iowa Bird Life 56:71 consulted prior to completion of this form.

How long before field notes made? During and immediately after observation How
long before this form completed? 12 hours