

Thayer's Gull

30 Nov 1986

Saylorville Res. Polk Co., IA

*S. Dinsmore (6 birds doc separately)

2 seen on 1 Dec, see also 86-11; IBL 57:17, 56, 78

Record Number: 86-22

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore, 23 Nov-10 Dec, 30 Nov, 30 Nov, 30 Nov, 30 Nov,
1 Dec, 1 Dec (7 documentations)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 57:17, 56

Records Committee: IBL 57:78

VOTE: a: 2-II, 4-III, 1-V; b-f:1-2, 3-III, 1-III, 2-V (g: 1-IV)

II, This is same documentation (and same vote) as previous record 86-11, also documented by others. My vote of II applies to "Gull #1--described above--a light tan bird." 22a: III, convincing description of many key field marks. 22b,c,d,e,f: V, possibly correct, but insufficient evidence to judge. These 5 "documentation" forms are identical computer printouts except for changes in dates and numbers. This is not sufficient evidence to enable judgement of individual birds. For example, 86-22d is of a bird seen on 30 November and 86-22e is of a supposedly different bird seen the next day. Yet, every detail of both observations is identical? This is not believable and is unacceptable.

V, These late notes are impossible for me to judge. Steve reports things as definite that I find very difficult to judge.

III, This is very confusing, it appears that some of the documentations were mislabeled by Dinsmore as listed on cover documentation. As far as I could tell he did not separately document each of the different birds as listed. What I saw was many copies of the same documentation. It was hard to evaluate them all separately when they were essentially all copies of the same documentation. Otherwise documentations do describe Thayer's Gull and eliminate other possibilities.

III (all), Evidently #6 on first page became #3 in documentations. Sure wish I could have seen documentation on the 7th gull.

86-22 #1 = first page--"light tan colored bird" III. I like this (rather sketchy) description. Seems to eliminate Kumlein's. 86-22a thru 86-22f IV. These may all be Thayer's Gulls, or Kumlein's. Chances are they are all Thayer's Gulls. I would like to see original notes. Long time until written up bothers me. Although Kumlein's unlikely, I would like to see better details eliminating Kumlein's. Sameness of documentations disappointing. 'III, Contrasting head color (as in #6) ... but possible. Birds 1,2,3,4,5,7 get III, 6 gets IV.

REVOTE (at meeting, 30 May 1987): b-e: 3-III, 3-IV, 1-V; f: 2-III, 4-IV, 1-V

36-22
Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

86-22
by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Thayer's Gull (6 birds)

DATE SEEN: 11-30-86

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Saylorville Res.

OBSERVERS: S. Dinsmore

DATE OF REVIEW: 5-30-87

METHOD OF REVIEW: Vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: The committee felt that while these birds were probably correctly identified the confusion caused by the series of almost identical documentations which were submitted late without original field notes was enough to cause doubt to the extent that a Class IV for the sightings was seemingly more justified than a Class III.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?at least 7+ first year birds were present

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co. (Oak Grove Beach and near dam)

Habitat?seen resting on beach and flying over water near dam

Date?23 Nov-10 Dec 1986

Time?variable

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Bob Myers, Beth and Mark Froescholdt, m.ob.

Description of bird:I first noticed the bird as it hovered in the wind with several first winter Herring Gulls and two first winter Glaucous Gulls because of its smaller size and pale appearance. Upon closer examination, the bird was about midway in size between a Ring-billed Gull and a Herring Gull. I noted the following marks on the perched bird: bill dark and smaller than a Herring Gull's bill, legs pinkish, eye dark, head, mantle, and underparts a uniform beige color, wings the same color as the back except that the wingtips appeared slightly darker, tail brownish with a darker tip, undertail coverts faintly barred. In flight, the wing pattern was as follows: upperwing light brown (same color as mantle) with outer primaries slightly darker than the rest of the wing, underwing a uniform silvery white with no darkening of the primaries and no dark trailing edge. In flight, the tail was light brown above (the same color as the back), darkening slightly towards the tip. Compared to several first winter Herring Gulls, this bird was smaller, had a shorter, thinner bill, and showed a lighter, more uniform body color. In flight, the birds wing pattern was lighter and less contrasting than a Herring Gull's wing pattern.

Gull #1-described above-a light tan colored bird

Gull #2, #3, #4 & #5-all chocolate brown-seen together many times

Gull #6-chocolate brown with distinct white color on the head

Gull #7-medium brown

Similar species and how eliminated:The darker body plumage and dark tail band eliminate Iceland Gull (Kumlien's form). The smaller size, smaller, more delicate bill, more rounded head, silvery white underwing pattern, more uniform body color, and more uniform upperwing pattern eliminate first winter Herring Gull.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with a cloudy sky and the sun directly behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 50 yards at closest on the beach and 200+ yards near the dam. I used a Buschnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen one other Thayer's Gull in Iowa (Dec 1985).

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

86-22

Bendorf, C. 1986. Identification of First-winter Thayer's Gull. IBL
56:71-73

How long before field notes were made? immediately

How long before this form was completed? 8 hours after initial sighting
and updated after each sighting

8622a

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull
How Many?1 1st winter (dark bird #1)-seen with birds 2,3,4
Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?30 Nov 1986
Time?approx. 2:00 P.M.
Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Paul Martsching-with me

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even chocolate-brown coloration of the entire body. The head, underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even chocolate-brown color. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the chocolate-brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw one distinctly different bird on 23-27 Nov at this same location, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America
How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4 P.M. on 30 Nov

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 1st winter (dark bird #2)-seen with birds 1,3,4

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?30 Nov 1986

Time?approx. 2:00 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Paul Martsching-with me

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even chocolate-brown coloration of the entire body. The head, underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even chocolate-brown color. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the chocolate-brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw one distinctly different bird on 23-27 Nov at this same location, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4 P.M. on 30 Nov

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 1st winter (dark bird #3 with white spot behind eye)-seen with birds 1,2,4

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?30 Nov 1986

Time?approx. 2:00 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Paul Martsching-with me

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even chocolate-brown coloration of the entire body. The underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even chocolate-brown color. The head was also chocolate-brown colored except for a white smudge just behind the eye. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the chocolate-brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw one distinctly different bird on 23-27 Nov at this same location, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4 P.M. on 30 Nov

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 1st winter (medium brown bird #4)-seen with birds 1,2,3

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Folk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?30 Nov 1986

Time?approx. 2:00 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Paul Martsching-with me

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even medium-brown coloration of the entire body. The head, underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even medium-brown color. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw one distinctly different bird at this location on 23-27 Nov, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4:00 P.M. on 30 Nov

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting

DOCUMENTATION FORM

86-22e

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 1st winter (dark bird #5)-seen with three other all-dark birds(1,2,6)

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?1 Dec 1986

Time?approx. 3:30 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:none with me-others on other dates

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even chocolate-brown coloration of the entire body. The head, underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even chocolate-brown color. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the chocolate-brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw up to four different birds at this same location in late Nov, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4:15 P.M. on 1 Dec

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 1st winter (dark bird #6)-seen with three other all-dark birds(1,2,5)

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?feeding and resting on large reservoir

Date?1 Dec 1986

Time?approx. 3:30 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:none with me-others on other dates

Description of bird:Bird was observed for over one hour as it fed and rested with hundreds of Ring-billed and Herring gulls and three other Thayer's Gulls. The most obvious feature of this bird was the overall even chocolate-brown coloration of the entire body. The head, underparts, mantle, and uppersurface of the wings were an even chocolate-brown color. In flight, the bird showed several other distinct characteristics. The flight feathers on the undersurface of the wing were entirely pale with no dark markings. The uppersurface of the wing was entirely dark with no paler "window". And finally, the chocolate-brown tail had an obvious darker terminal band about 1-2 inches wide. These last three features were seen numerous times on the flying bird. Leg color was not seen well, but appeared to be pale(not dark). Three other features of this bird(seen well as the bird rested on the water) also support the identification of Thayer's Gull. First, the dark bill was slimmer and less bulbous than the bill of a Herring Gull. Second, the forehead was rounded, not flat like the head of a Herring Gull. And third, the bird was noticeably smaller than nearby Herring Gulls(Thayer's Gulls tend to be smaller than Herring Gulls). The bird was aged as being in 1st winter plumage on the basis of dark body color and all-dark bill.

Similar species and how eliminated:1st winter Herring Gull eliminated by the pale undersides of the flight feathers, thinner, less bulbous bill, rounder head, more even body coloration, lack of a light "window" on the uppersurface of the wing, and by the smaller size. 1st winter Iceland Gull eliminated by the dark tail band and overall darker body coloration.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun directly behind me on a partly cloudy day. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw up to four different birds at this same location in late Nov, plus a 1st winter bird at Red Rock Reservoir in Dec 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?notes written at approximately 4:15 P.M. on 1 Dec

How long before this form was completed?this form written on 1 Mar 1987 from field notes taken at time of sighting