

Iceland Gull
7 Feb 1993
Davenport, Scott Co., IA
*J. Fuller
second-winter; IBL 63:49, 64:69

Record Number: 93-05
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [11/27/93]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 63:49

Records Committee: IBL 64:69

VOTE: 5 A-D, 2 NA

A-D, Description is minimum for acceptance, lacking details of mantle, wing, especially primaries, pattern, and coloration. Size and whitish coloration suggest Iceland Gull.

A-D, Description of back would have helped in aging this bird, but size and coloration seem to clinch it as Iceland.

A-D, Iceland Gull detail is lacking to separate this gull from the first-winter described the previous week.

NA, The description is suggestive but a second-winter Thayer's is also a possibility.

NA, Too much is left out here. There is no description of the upper and lower wing surfaces. Aging on the basis of the bill is not reliable, especially in late winter. Most second-year birds by February would have a gray mantle. The faint tail band and size, along with the assumed wing appearance suggest Iceland Gull, but the evidence for aging is not strong.

A-D, To call this a second winter bird without seeing some light gray in the back area, not just white color overall, is not enough to make it a second winter bird. I would accept this as a first winter bird as the documentation is written.

REVOTE: 4 A-D, 3 NA

NA, I agree with NA's that Thayer's Gull, not just Glaucous Gull, needs to be carefully considered whenever documenting an Iceland Gull. Failure to do so casts doubt on the record. I was hesitant to accept on the first vote, and am more so now.

A-D, A marginal description, but description of the pale color and size rule out Thayer's.

A-D, Assuming wing primaries are white.

NA, This was probably an Iceland Gull but without a description of the wing surfaces, I can only make inferences. After the struggle to accept the Iceland Gull record two years ago, it seems curious that we have become so cavalier about subsequent records. As one reviewer commented after the '91 record, almost any gull could be an Iceland. Our problem is to answer the question -- but is this one?

NA, Again, I don't think Fuller has presented the evidence to age this bird. Although, my gut reaction is that this is an Iceland, I find it hard to accept with no description of the wings.

A-D, One NA review indicates that most 2nd year birds in Feb. would have gray in the mantle but failed to discover that in late winter, ie. Feb., a 1st winter bird could have a bill as described and also the whiter coloration cited in the documentation is consistent with a worn or molting plumage bird in late winter.

DOCUMENTATION OF UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Iceland Gull (Second-Winter)

LOCATION: Below Centennial Bridge, Mississippi River, Scott County.

DATE & TIME: February 7, 1993 (2:55-3:00 PM).

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHER OBSERVERS: Jim Scheib

DESCRIPTION: This bird was sitting on the Mississippi with a Ring-billed Gull no more than a hundred feet from the seawall. It was a little larger than the Ring-billed. It was generally an off-white color, but seemed to be whiter than first-winter Iceland Gulls that I had seen at Iowa City and Davenport in the previous one-three weeks. It was especially white when it flew, but it did appear to have a very faint tail band. The bill, however, was different from that of a first-winter, as it was a flesh color in the basal two-thirds with a dark tip. The head and bill did appear to be relatively small in comparison to body size. Eye color was dark, but leg color was not seen. When flying directly at us, it did appear to be heavy bodied, but when flying more or less at right angles to us, it seemed to be rather slim.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This bird was much too small for a Glaucous Gull, and the generally whiter cast and two-toned bill would suggest a second-winter, compared to first-winter Iceland.

VIEWING CONDITIONS & OPTICS: The bird was viewed with both a KOWA TSN-4 telescope (20-60X), and Swift Audubon 8.5 X 44 binoculars at distances of less than a hundred feet. The afternoon was overcast, with a light fog.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I had never seen a second-winter Iceland previously...only first-winter and adult Kumlien's.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Notes were made about two hours later at home, and this report was typed on February 11, 1993. Harrison's Seabirds was checked.