

Thayer's Gull
8 Nov 1989
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
B. Proescholdt
IBL 60:15, 61:85

Record Number: 89-43
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Beth Proescholdt

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:15
Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 5 A-D, 1 NA, 1 abstain

A-D: Well documented.

A-D: Adequately eliminates other species with description of overall color, wing and tail pattern, size, and bill.

A-D: Close look (30'), good detail during flight and the direct size comparison to Herring Gull make this a strong documentation.

A-D: Convincing description.

Abstain: I feel as the only other observer of the gull I should abstain.

N-A: Description is lacking in detailed analysis of the shades of brown rather than to start with "uniformly colored gull of tans and lights browns" and then using the terms slightly darker. Each area (upper surface contrast, upper wing detail, rump/tail contrast and detail). More is needed to be sure of this hard to identify gull.

A-D: A rather casual description, but also probably a Thayer's. Maybe the same bird as 89-42, moving south. I am a little bothered by the phrase "silvery underwings" which should have additional comment eliminating possible tricks of lighting.

REVOTE: 6 A-D, 1 NA

A-D: Acceptable document.

A-D: Regarding the first round NA comments, I feel that detailed analysis of each shade of brown would be great. However, general description of patterns combined with structural information is probably sufficient.

A-D: I appreciate NA's problem. One 1st year Thayer's Gulls, I have heard them described as light brown, frosty brown, beige, tan, and the color of my file cabinets, to name a few. However, I don't know how to give a "detailed analysis of the shades of brown" without a color chart. Regardless of our general inability to describe "brown" in writing, I feel the rest of this description is solid. Uniformity of color, darker at the distal portion of tail, primaries slightly darker, etc. support ID.

A-D: The detail and color comparisons seem to adequately describe what was seen. I see nothing that doesn't say Thayer's Gull. The slightly darker primary tips and trailing edge sufficiently eliminate all likely gulls except dark form Iceland Gulls.

NA: Yes the overall "feeling" of this bird from the documentation is Thayer's. I still think that detail is lacking to conclusively say that what was described was beyond a

reasonable doubt (from the documentation) was indeed a Thayer's Gull. We need to, as a committee, require a beyond reasonable doubt documentation from observers. We can not afford to relax our standards because a species has shown a pattern of becoming more common. Especially a very hard to identify species such as the Thayer's Gull.

A-D: A good description of a Thayer's Gull.

A-D: I still feel this is a weak documentation, but adequate to eliminate Herring Gull. Direct comparison is convincing.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

89-43

What species? Thayer's Gull, 1st winter How many? 1Location? Red RockType of habitat? below damWhen? date(s): November 8, 1989 time: 8:50 to 9:00 AMWho? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscoomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdtothers before or after you: ??

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 voice and behavior.

This quite uniformly colored gull of tans and light browns was a bit smaller, and lighter colored, than the immatures Herring Gulls, & larger than the Ring-bills. The trailing edge of primaries ^{above & below} were slightly darker, as was tip of tail. The underside of primaries & secondaries were silvery, unlike Herring Gull with dark in its primaries. The bill was black, smaller than the Herring Gulls'. It had bright pink legs & feet, & a dark smudge through eye area. We concluded it was a 1st winter Thayer's Gull, as we watched it fly & land on a sand bar.

Similar species and how eliminated: It was lighter & more evenly colored than a Herring Gull, larger than Ring-billed, too dark for an Iceland, too small for a Glaucous. Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

clear skies, sun behind us, 8X30 Nikon binoculars & 22X scope. It was from 30' to 200' approximately.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen 4 Thayer's, many Ring-billed & Herring, 4-5 Glaucous.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic guide, Carl Bendary's article which we had with us.

How long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Nov. 25, 1989