

Thayer's Gull
18 Feb 1989
Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA
*A. Johnson
IBL 59:52, 61:85

Record Number: 89-10
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Ann Johnson

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:52
Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D. I would prefer less reliance on "typical small, dove head" as the main feature on birds in flight. Head shape is extremely variable in gulls and is not alone a conclusive feature in identification.

A-D. Another sketchy documentation by Johnson. While she emphasizes the same field marks I questioned in 89-08, she used them in conjunction with color comparison with 1st year Herring Gulls, also present. The uniform light brown is to be expected on a first winter Thayer's and is, in my opinion, the best field mark.

A-D. Against 1) No reference to bill size 2) viewing time very short. However, other sighting in area in this time frame support this bird as a first-winter Thayer's Gull.

A-D. The combination of head shape and wing pattern is sufficient to eliminate Herring Gull and Iceland Gull. Observer should be cautious about using head shape as the main field mark to identify Thayer's Gull.

A-D. Head shape very difficult and subjective, especially on flying bird. Other features much more reliable.

A-D. Color contrasts of upper body and head areas would have been helpful.

A-D. Very similar type of documentation to 89-09, i.e., by itself prob. not acceptable, but bird probably present based on 89-09.

SENT TO: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211 [5/31/89]

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-10

Species: Thayer's Gull - first winter

Location: Mississippi River, Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA

Habitat: seen from shore just south of I80 in area of cabins

Date(s): 2/18/89

Time: 12:42 pm to 12:42 pm

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.

This first year, medium-sized gull was briefly seen as it flew near the river bank. It had the typical small, dove head with a black bill. The body was pretty much a uniform light brown. The brownish tail band was slightly darker than the the rest of the body as were the tips of the primaries on the upper side. Underside of the wings were extremely light colored with no dark tips or edges.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The primary identification was done through the size and shape of the head. The bird was lighter in color than the first-winter herring gulls in the same area and the wing pattern on both upper and lower sides eliminated herring, ring-billed and Iceland gulls.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

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

Mostly cloudy. Observed at an estimated 500' through 7x26 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

First year of experience with Thayer's. Many hours of observation of other species of gulls.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None

How long before field notes made? immediately How long before this form completed? 1 week