

Thayer's Gull
24 Oct 1991
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
*Johnson
IBL 62:15, 70

Record Number: 91-32
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:15

Records Committee: IBL 62:70

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Most if not all the required field marks were sighted making a strong case for a first/winter Thayer's Gull.

A-D, The details and descriptions that are given make this sound like a "classic" 1st winter Thayer's Gull.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Thayer's Gull - first winter

Location: Below dam, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., IA

Habitat: Gravel bar and open river

Date: 24 October 1991

Time: 16:50 to 17:15

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

Other observers: None

Description of bird: This gull, when sitting on the sand bar, appeared larger than Ring-billed Gulls in the same vicinity and slightly smaller than Herrings. It differentiated itself from the Herrings by its uniform creamy buff color. The mantle and wing coverts had some lighter feather edgings which gave the bird a scaly effect. The bill was black and a bit less massive than the Herrings, the legs were pink and the eye was dark. The head was colored similarly to the rest of the body and was rounder, giving the bird a gentler look. From above in flight the inner primaries and outer secondaries were the same color as the body, lacking the window effect of the Herring Gulls. The outer primaries had milk chocolate brown edges and a similarly colored tail band and incomplete secondary bar. The tail was just a shade lighter than the body. From below the bird showed light, colorless and translucent flight feathers with contrasting darker wing linings.

Similar species and how eliminated: Herring Gull was eliminated by the light and uniform body color, brown as opposed to blackish primaries and tail band, lack of a window from above, and lack of any color to the underside of the primaries. Iceland Gull was eliminated based on the darker secondaries and wide, brown tail band.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): Viewed at about 100 yards in overcast skies through scope at about 25X.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have observed several Thayer's Gulls in the past few years and have had several opportunities recently to compare Thayer's with Herrings.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Notes taken during observation. No references consulted.

How long before field notes made? during observation How long before this form completed? Two days