

Thayer's Gull
15 Dec 1991
Lock and Dam 15, Scott Co., IA
*Brain Blevins
IBL 62:49, 55, 71

Record Number: 91-44
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION: Brain Blevins

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:55
Christmas Bird Count: IBL 62:49
Records Committee: IBL 62:71

VOTE: 2 A-D, 5 NA

NA, Of the two birds described here, the first (presumably a first winter) had more characteristics of an Iceland than a Thayer's. This was probably the same bird myself and others tentatively identified as Iceland. The extremely pale mantle and no darkening at the wingtips supports Iceland. The second bird appeared to be either Ad. Iceland or Thayer's, but sufficient detail not given. Gray rather than black spots at wingtips suggest Iceland.

A-D, First-winter Thayer's only. The length and comparative nature of these sightings make misperception unlikely, and therefore I am voting AD for first-winter Thayer's Gulls. However, the adult gull description seems to fit Kumlien's Iceland Gull better than Thayer's. Thayer's would be expected to have as dark or darker mantle than Herring Gulls and black upper primaries not dark gray. Kumlien's Gull would have lighter mantle and dark grey on it's upper primaries.

NA, Two birds should have been documented separately. Although I have no reason to doubt these two records (I may have seen the same birds), the details are not complete enough to be accepted by a records committee.

NA, On immature bird description of extremely light mantle and light brown color continuous all the way throughout the wingtips not enough to say conclusively that this is a Thayer's Gull. An adult Herring size gull with lighter mantle or a lighter nature of color than other gulls nearby and gray spots on the primaries instead of black not enough of a description to conclusively say that this is a Thayer's Gull. Maybe it was an Iceland or a light colored Herring. A combination of several other field marks are needed for both of these birds for them to be accepted as Thayer's Gulls.

NA, Insufficient details provided for both immature and adult to properly evaluate them. Please continue to document gulls and other birds and give us more details to analyze. Provide details on bill color and shape, leg color, tail coloring, underwing and upperwing coloring and patterns, and head shape and coloring.

@ Coor Davenport

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

91-44

What species? Thayer's Gull How many? 2

Location? Lock & Dam 15 on Mississippi River

Type of Habitat? Mississippi River Flyway just below the Dam

When? date(s): Dec. 15, 1991 But Birds stayed for about time: 3:15 PM to 3:45 PM

Who? your name and address: Brian Blevins - 2003 E. 12th St., Davenport, Iowa

Others with you: Corey Blevins, Lewis Blevins

Others before or after you: Peter C. Petersen (Birds stayed for about 2 weeks)

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Two birds were seen below the dam feeding on shad with a myriad of other gulls (Herring, Ring-billed, Glaucous). We picked out the immature immediately with the extremely light mantle. What seems so obvious is that these immatures do not show darkened wing tips which gives a window appearance.

The adult was picked out of the hundreds of Herring Gulls that were milling around us. The lighter mantle is first picked out by eye then rechecked with Binocs. The mantle showed a lighter nature than the Herring's so we checked the wing tips. They too, showed Thayer's qualities with a few grey spots instead of the black spots found on the Herring's.

Similar species; how eliminated: Herring Gull → Immature - eliminated by the the light brown color continuous all the way throughout the wingtips, thus there was not a darkening towards the wing tips.

Adult - eliminated by the light mantle getting lighter towards the wingtips, with just a few grey spots on the Primaries.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NO
If yes, explain:

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

Bright Sunny, Closest (15 feet), average 35 to 50 yds.

7x35 Binocs 10x50 binoc: 15 to 45X scope
8x40 Binoc:

Previous experience with species and similar ones: We usually see a couple over the duration of the winter here along the river.

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

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

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).