

Thayer's Gull

3 Dec 1988

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

\*S. Dinsmore

also 30 Nov (see 88-28), 7, 23, 25 Dec; IBL 59:52, 77

Record Number: 88-37

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Steve Dinsmore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:52

Records Committee: IBL 59:77

VOTE: 2 A-D, 4 NA, 1 abstain

NA. Dark brown bird with tail darker than mantle doesn't quite seem to fit for Thayer's.

NA. I have reservation concerning the dark brown back, head, wing & tail. The dark brown color seems in conflict with my reference materials which describe and appear to show brown and grayish upperparts. However, the best field marks the whitish silvery underwing secondaries and primaries, and short black bill were noted. Possibly a comment from a California observer, where this sp. is more abundant, would be in order.

NA. I can't accept the same description for multiple sightings. When I use a word processor to write a documentation, I do not save the file, thus preventing future alteration or reuse.

A-D. Thayer's Gull should finally be classed as regular in Iowa.

NA. Most identifications points support Thayer's Gull but not beyond doubt. Dark brown upper body causes me some concern and therefore I cannot vote to accept this record.

A-D. While I have a slight problem with the color descriptions, overall pattern satisfactory for Thayer's. Is tail really darker than mantle? Paleness of under primaries is convincing along with dark bill.

SENT TO: Steve Dinsmore

## DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1-3 1st-winter birds

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-north of Jester Park

Habitat?feeding in river channel with thousands of other gulls

Date?30 Nov, 3,4,7,23,25 Dec 1988

Time?1:38-2:55 p.m. on 30 Nov

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames

Others who saw bird:m.ob.

Description of bird:On 30 Nov, I was looking over the gulls that were feeding north of Jester Park when I noticed a dark gull with very white underwings. The bird would alternately feed in the river channel and rest on the ice along the edge of the channel. I watched the bird on and off for over an hour and took the following notes.

The bird was roughly the size of a Herring Gull. The bird was dark brown colored, including the body, head, tail, and wings. The wings, seen in flight, were dark brown above with darker primaries. The wings were the same color as the back, except for the darker primaries. There was no lighter "window" on the inner primaries. The underwing pattern was as follows; the flight feathers were silvery white, with dusky tips to the outermost primaries, and the rest of the underwing was light brown. The tail was dark, darker than the mantle. The bill was black and seemed to be shorter than the bills of the Herring Gulls it was with. The legs were pale, similar in color to the legs of a Herring Gull. I could not see the eye color. I concluded that the bird was a 1st-winter Thayer's Gull.

Over the next month, at least three 1st-winter Thayer's Gulls were at the reservoir. The peak of three occurred on 4 Dec.

Similar species and how eliminated:The bill and leg color and size eliminates all gulls except Herring, Thayer's, and Iceland gulls. The uniform dark color of the wings, lack of a lighter "window" on the inner primaries, and the silvery color of the underside of the flight feathers eliminates 1st-winter Herring and Iceland gulls.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were good with the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 400 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen several Thayer's Gulls in Iowa, and I am familiar with both Herring and Iceland gulls.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made?made while watching bird on 30 Nov

How long before this form was completed?5 hours after first sighting