

Thayer's Gull

20 Dec 1986

Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co., IA

*S. Dinsmore, *R. Cummins

1 ad., 2 1st yr.; IBL 57:46, 56, 77

Record Number: 86-27

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore

Ray Cummins

REFERENCES

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 57:46

Field Reports: IBL 57: 56

Records Committee: IBL 57:77

VOTE: Adult: 1-II, 4-III, 2-IV; 1st yr: 1-II, 5-III, 1-V

III, Very good descriptions touching on the key field marks.

IV on adult, V on 1st yrs. Adult: Dinsmore does not describe the wing tip and Cummins only describes them at rest. Neither describe the iris. Although probably correct, these two observers should provide much more detailed descriptions of the key field marks. Immatures: chocolate brown birds darker toward the wing tip sound like Herring Gulls to me.

III, Adequate descriptions from both documentations to describe Thayer's Gull.

III on 1st yrs. IV on adult, Mantle of Iceland adult is not necessarily lighter than Thayer's. I'm not convinced ad. bird wasn't an Iceland.

III, All birds are adequately documented, particularly with regard to primaries and comparison with Herring Gulls. Degree of black in primaries not conclusive (see both observers' comments), but Dinsmore concluded that indeed black was present.

REVIEW (at meeting, 30 May 1987): both accepted, no formal vote.

6-27
Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

86-27

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: *Thayer's Gull*

DATE SEEN: 12-20-86

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Rathbun Res

OBSERVERS: S. Dinsmore, R. Cummins

DATE OF REVIEW: 5-30-87

METHOD OF REVIEW: Vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS:

Very good descriptions touching on the key fieldmarks.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

86-27

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?1 ad. and 2 1st-winter

Location?Rathbun Reservoir, Appanoose Co. (Island View East and West Areas)

Habitat?sitting on ice and feeding on open water with other gulls

Date?20 Dec 1986

Time?10:05-10:30 A.M. and 1:30-1:54 P.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Ray Cummins

Description of bird:Both of the first-winter birds were seen in the morning near the dam. Both birds were slightly smaller than nearby Herring Gulls and had smaller, rounder heads than Herring Gulls. Both birds were mostly chocolate brown colored, had slender, dark bills, and had pink legs (these marks indicate they were first-year birds). The eyes appeared dark. The head, mantle, and underparts were a uniform chocolate brown color on both birds. In flight, the upperwing was chocolate brown becoming darker towards the wingtips (there was no light "window" on the inner primaries like a Herring Gull shows). The underwing, seen in flight, was a uniform silvery-white color with no dark color in the primaries or near the tips of the feathers. In flight, the tail was brown with a darker terminal band.

The adult bird was only seen in the afternoon at the Island View East Rec. Area. I first noticed the bird because of the largely white wingtips and smaller size as compared to Herring Gulls. While perched, the bird was slightly smaller than Herring Gulls in direct comparison. The legs were a brighter pink color than a Herring Gull's legs. The head was white with some brown streaking on the sides and a dark smudge around the eye. The head also was smaller and more rounded than a Herring Gull. The bill was yellow with a red spot near the tip and was shorter and slimmer than a Herring Gull's bill. The underparts and tail were white. The mantle was light gray and about the same color as the mantle of a Herring Gull.

Similar species and how eliminated:The first-year birds were separated from first-year Iceland Gull by the distinct tail band and the darker primaries and from first-year Herring Gull by head shape, bill size, more uniform body color, and the silvery-white underwing. The adult bird was separated from an adult Iceland Gull by size, bill shape, and more black (still not too much, though) in the wingtips and from an adult Herring Gull by head shape, bill size, and paler wingtips.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with a mostly clear sky and the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 30-75 yards for the first-year birds and 80-100 yards for the adult bird. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen several Thayer's Gulls in Iowa this fall.

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

How long before field notes were made?immediately

How long before this form was completed?3 days

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What Species? Thayer's Gull (Adult) How Many? 1

Location? Lake Rathbun near Dam

Type of Habitat? On ice near open water

When? date(s): 12-20-86, 12-21-86 (3:15-3:45) time: 1:30 to 2:00

Who? your name and address: Ray Cummins 609 S. Main St. Centerville, Iowa 52544

Others with you: Steve Dinsmore, Randy Strough

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

Size, shape, and coloration generally the same as Herring gull. This bird was not larger than the Herring gulls, close by. The head and bill were proportionally smaller than the Herrings, an quite noticeably smaller. The bird could be located by searching through gulls at rest for a bird with more white and much less black on the wing primaries. The primaries of this gull at rest had a thin line of (4) black and white dots, where as adult Herrings had a thick all black area. the underwing primaries seen much better the second day had black dots at end of the (4) outer primaries, the outer most dot running 3/4th of the way up the outer primary feather. The legs were pinkish and showed more pink than most of the Herrings. Both days it was with Herrings but kept several feet to itself. The second day a winter plumaged adult Herring gull harrassed it several times each time it moved away.

Similar species how eliminated: Kumlien's iceland gull would have a lighter mantle.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain: Steve mention Kumlien's Iceland Gull several during the first obseration.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. overcast light good, 150 to 250yds both days, 20x spotting scope
Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Reference and persons consulted before writing description:
National Geographic's Field Guide to the Birds of North America was consulted during the first sight and Seabirds by Peter Harrison between sightings.

How long before field notes made? 1 min this form completed? 36 hrs