

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

2nd year

Record Number: 91-33
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS:

Ann Johnson 25, 28 Nov, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211
Thomas H. Kent, 27 Nov, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

REFERENCES

Field Reports: 62:15
Records Committee: IBL 62:70

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, I think this description fits Thayer's Gull. The gray mantle, scaled rest of body and lightness at the base of the bill point to second/winter Thayer's Gull according to Kaufman.

A-D, Sounds good for a Thayer's Gull.

88-1A

91-33

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Thayer's Gull - second winter

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

Habitat: Gravel bar and open river

Date: 25 November 1991
28 November 1991

Time: 16:10 to 16:50
Time: 13:50 to 14:05

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

Other observers: Unknown

Description of bird: This gull was with a group of Ring-billed and Herrings feeding and roosting below the dam. It was slightly smaller than Herrings and considerably larger than the Ring-billeds. The general appearance was that of a washed out first winter Thayer's and the bird's general color was gray. The mantle was nearly all gray with very little mottling. The rest of the body was gray with whiter feather edgings, giving the bird a somewhat scaly appearance. From above the coloring was fairly uniform with the exception of a bit darker gray tailband and secondary bar. The outer webs of the outer primaries nearly matched the color of the tailband and secondaries. From below the bird was about the same gray color with dark wing linings and nearly white flight feathers. The bill appeared all black when I first observed it, but it was a bit closer on the second occasion and I could see a bit of lighter color at the base. The legs and feet were bright pink.

Similar species and how eliminated: Herring Gull was eliminated by the light and uniform body color, pale gray primaries, secondaries and tailband, lack of a window from above, and lack of any color to the underside of the primaries. The bird certainly had the overall coloration of a first year Iceland Gull. However, Iceland Gull was eliminated based on the darker secondaries, complete gray tail band, and the darker webs to the outer primaries from above.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): Viewed at distances of 50 to 150 yards through binoculars and scope at about 25X. On the date of the first observation, the sky was clear and the sun was setting behind me and was obstructed by the dam. On the second observation, the sky was overcast with some light mist falling periodically.

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. This would be the first second-winter Thayer's I have seen.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Notes taken during observation. Grant's Gulls consulted upon return home.

How long before field notes made? during observation How long before this form completed? Three days after last observation

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Thayer's Gull. *Number:* One 2nd-winter.

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

Date: 27 November 1991. *Time:* 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., also in p.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: Jim Fuller, Dick Tetrault, Tim Schantz (p.m. only) with me.

Habitat and circumstances: Below dam swimming, standing, and feeding with about 3,000 other gulls. More gulls were in water above dam, but we could always find this bird easily below the dam.

Description of bird: I notice the overall lightness of this bird as it fed and swam in water.

The folded primaries were a very pale brown, but darker than the other parts of the bird except for the tail band. In flight the under part of the primaries and secondaries were a translucent white and the under wing coverts were a very light shade of brown. On the upper wing, the darker (light brown) outer web of the outer primaries was very easy to see. There was a lighter inner window on the inner primaries. The secondaries from above gave the impression of a faint bar. The upper wing coverts were much lighter than the outer primaries, but darker than the inner primaries. The bird was consistently smaller in flight and when standing than the many Herring Gulls present and distinctly larger than Ring-billed Gulls. The bill was dark on the out one-half to one-third and lighter, more flesh-colored proximally. The demarcation was not sharp. The eye was dark (compared with yellow of nearby Herrings). I did not notice a prominent facial smudge. The head, neck and body were a light creamy brown and appeared smudged. None of the feathers had the delicate feather edging of a first-winter Thayer's Gull. With Jim's Kowa at close range, the back was a clear light gray and this may have involved the upper scapulars also. The tail band was light brown and occupied about one-third of the tail. Legs were a bright pink.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: There were many first and second year Herring Gulls present for comparison. This bird was paler and more washed-out appearing than the first-winter Thayer's I have seen before and very pale in comparison to the Herring Gulls. Most of the second-winter Herrings had more extensive gray in the mantle than this bird. In fact, we did not notice the gray mantle at first. The bicolored bill and lack of vermiculations bothered me, so I looked for the mantle graying. After writing the description I looked at Grant and noted that 2nd-year birds are paler and more washed-out than first-winter birds.

Any one have reservations?: No.

Light: Light overcast. *Distance:* 25-100 yards. *Optics:* 10x binocular. 20x scopes.

Previous experience: I have seen several first-winter birds.

References before/after viewing: Looked at Grant next day.

Time of notes: 3 hours. *Final typing:* 1 day.