

Thayer's Gull  
24 Nov 1989  
Lock & Dam 19, Lee Co., IA  
Cecil  
also 25 Nov; IBL 60:15, 61:85, P-0399

Record Number: 89-44  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Robert Cecil

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, 25 Nov, P-0399

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:15

Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 6 A-D, 1 abstain

A-D: Excellent

A-D: Color, wing and tail patterns sufficiently eliminates Herring and Iceland Gulls.

Abstain: Tom Kent has excellent photos of these birds.

A-D: The described uniformity of upper and under wing coloration and no darkening at all toward the wingtips suggest the possibility of Iceland Gull. The bill color "darker toward the tip" also seems to support Iceland. However, the frosty brown color (too dark for Iceland), the posterior eye smudge, and the darker terminal tail band sufficiently rule it out in favor of a lighter Thayer's.

A-D: Good description of this hard to identify species.

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A-D: These birds were closer to Iceland than 89-41,42,43 above, especially in "frosty" appearance and doubt that primaries were any darker than rest of bird. Ruling against Iceland however was "wide, slightly darker terminal band" on tail. I am a little surprised observer did not consider Iceland as a likely alternative. What was ID by Kent and Moore?

REVOTE (29 Jul 1990 with photos): 7 A-P



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DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-44

What species? Thayer's Gull How many? 2 1st winter  
Location? Behind Lock and Dam 19 at Keokuk in Lee County, Iowa (Iowa side)  
Type of Habitat? River (Mississippi)  
When? date(s): Nov 24 - 25, 1989 time: 11:05AM to 11:30 AM  
Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil 1315 41st St. Des Moines, IA 50311  
Others with you: John Cecil on 24th. Tom Kent and Francis Moore on 25th  
Others before or after you: None to my knowledge

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. (The following is from filed notes taken on Fri., Nov. 24)

At Keokuk riverfront, I noted two frosty brown gulls among primarily Ringbills with some Herrings, including a first year or two. I noted the following features:  
--Overall, a uniform frosty (light) brown coloration over entire body. Wings, undersides, saddle, and head were, in the overall impression, this same frosty brown.  
--In contrast to first year Herings, the entire upper wing surface was the same color - no dark trailing edge was visible. The underwings were also uniform in color, appearing whitish overall. Upperwings may have been slightly darker than rest of bird. There was no noticeable darkening at the wingtips, either above or below.  
--The birds both showed finely mottled or perhaps scalloped back and undertail coverts.  
--Legs were pink.  
--Tail showed a wide, slightly darker terminal band. Tale base was more pale.  
--Head was slightly flatter (less dove-shaped) than accompanying Ring-bills. Could not make comparison with Herrings.  
--Although difficult to view, all views of the eye suggested they were dark. A short, narrow smudge trailed the eye.  
--Bill may have gotten slightly darker towards tip, but this was not conspicuous. Overall,

**Similar species; how eliminated:**

(cont. on next sheet)

Only probable similar species is Herring, which has contrasty wings - dark trailing edge and darker wingtips. The Thayer's were obviously a lighter shade of brown than any Herrings present. I judged these birds to be somewhat smaller than any Herring.

I could not totally rule out first year Glaucous-winged. According to NGS, Glaucous-wing has less mottling or scalloping. The Keokuk birds were obviously mottled.

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

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. 24th, views were as close as 50 yds under generally clear skies, sun overhead. 25th views were as close as 25 feet (all distances were estimated). Used 10x40 binocs and 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen several first year Thayer's at Keokuk and elsewhere in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None, except normal conversation with Kent and Moore on 25th.

How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? 72 hours.

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

Thayer's Gull

Bill(cont.) the bill was dark.

--Overall size judged in comparison to Ringbills while on the water with them. Length was perhaps 3 to 4" longer while at rest on the water (estimate). Did not get any good side-by-sides with Herring Gulls, but the Thayer's appeared smaller. Overall, the Thayer's were bulkier than accompanying Ringbills.