

Thayer's Gull
30 Nov 1991
Gray's Lake, Polk Co., IA
*Bob Cecil
IBL 62:55, 70

Record Number: 91-42
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION: Bob Cecil

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:55
Records Committee: IBL 62:70

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Although Thayer's may not have a "window", it should have a dark-light-dark effect on the upper wing and light secondary bar. Were the wing tips dark on the standing bird?

A-D, All essential field marks noted for this species. Underwing coloration and upper surface of bird description consistent with Thayer's Gull. Tail description good also.

A-D, Good details provided for 1st winter Thayer's Gull.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

91-42

#1

What species? Thayer's Gull How many? 1

Location? Gray's Lake, Des Moines, Polk County, IA

Type of Habitat? Lake with some open water

When? date(s): Sat., Nov. 30, 1991 (also Nov. 31) time: 10:30AM to 11:00 AM

Who? your name and address: Bob Cecil, 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA, 50311

Others with you: Mary Michelle Cecil on 31st.

Others before or after you: Not that I know of

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.

I went to Gray's lake to identify the gulls present.

There were perhaps 75 Ring-bills and a few first winter Herrings. I saw one Herring-type sitting on the ice that appeared to have the uniform buffy brown of the first winter Thayer's. I waited for the bird to fly. When it flew, I was able to observe the following:

- Overall uniform "coffee with cream" coloration.
- Slightly darker secondaries, slight darkening towards end of primaries, slightly darker tail band.
- Fairly conspicuous smudge through eye. This is supposed to be a good field mark, but this was the best example I've seen on a Thayer's.
- Conspicuous silvery underwings- almost translucent.
- No noticeable "windows" at base of primaries (as with Herring) when viewed from upper surface.
- Slightly smaller than nearby Herring Gulls.
- Bill and eye dark. Legs pinkish gray.
- Minute scaling (pale feather edging) on back, sec. coverts, tertials - generally all over upper surface of body.
- Overall, a very uniform, non "contrasty" bird. Lighter brown than any nearby Herring.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Herring much more "contrasty", including dark secondary bar, dark tail band, very dark towards ends of primaries. This bird was smaller than 1st winter Herring, as well as paler brown.

--Head more rounded than nearby Herrings - more pigeon-like. Bill appeared slightly smaller.

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

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

Distance ranged from 75 to 250 yards. Partly cloudy, Sun well off to side. 20x Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen a number of 1st winter Thayer's Gulls in Iowa, and lots of 1st Winter Herrings. Have made side by side comparisons on several occasions.

References and persons consulted before writing description:
None

How long before field notes made? At time this form completed? 10 days

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