

Iceland Gull
17 Apr 1993

Record Number: 93-13
Classification: NA

near Des Moines R., not stated Co., IA

*Jim Sinclair

IBL 63:75, 64:69

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Sinclair, 810 North B St., Indianola [11/27/93]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 63:75

Records Committee: IBL 64:69

VOTE: 1 A-D, 6 NA

NA, The broad, milk-chocolate tail band and dark trailing edge of the primaries seem to indicate Thayer's Gull. Without a description of the size of the bill, or shape of the head, it is difficult to say this was definitely Thayer's either.

NA, First, it is refreshing that not everyone feels that they must conclusively identify every different gull that flies by. Unfortunately, it leaves me in the difficult position of trying to identify a bird that the observer was unsure of. I believe that the observer is correct that this was either an Iceland or a Thayer's but I feel uncomfortable trying to be more specific. Zimmer ("Birding", Oct. '91) has several illustrations of second year Icelands, etc. Even Zimmer has trouble with their identification and considers some to be possible intergrades.

NA, Iceland Gulls are generally smaller than Herring Gulls not larger. Other details such as bill size and shape are not mentioned and make it hard to eliminate Glaucous Gull.

NA, More complete description of primaries and secondaries is necessary to separate second-year Iceland and Thayer's. The milk chocolate tail band does not necessarily preclude Iceland since the whiter rump in a second year bird creates greater contrast. The observer is probably correct in his determining this is a Iceland-Thayer's type; but at 150 to 350 yard distance, this is one to be left unidentified to species.

NA, The tail, bill, and body are consistent with Thayer's. I'm confused about the wing tip -- "did not show any black on the primaries when the bird was sitting." Was it brown? Trailing edge of primaries dark in flight doesn't fit anything.

NA, The description sounds like a combination of both a Thayer's Gull and Iceland Gull and does not attempt to eliminate one or the other species. It does appear to be a 2nd year bird based on the field marks given. Light brown in back and mantle and milk chocolate broad tail band more suggestive of Thayer's with little to lead me to conclude that this was an Iceland Gull.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species Thayer's - Iceland type gull, second year?
 Location _____
 Habitat small lake adjacent to T. M. River
 Date(s) 4/17/93 Time 11:45 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
 Name and Address Jim Sinclair, 810 North 13 St, Indianola
 Other observers _____

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, under-tail, legs, feet). Also mention behavior and voice.

Large gull, directly compared with Ring-bill Gulls and indirectly with Herring Gulls - at least as large as Herring Gull. The bird did not have the husky gizz of a Glaucous gull. Basal 3/4 of bill light, distal 1/4 dark. Head, neck, very upper breast and upper back pure white. Back and mantle uneven mottled gray and very light brown. Wings did not show any black on primaries when the bird was sitting, however, the trailing edges of the primaries appeared very dark when the bird was in flight. Breast and belly appeared extensively but lightly mottled. Tail and rump white with very faint mottling with a broad tail band the color of milk chocolate.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Appeared much paler than second year Herring Gull.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: 150 - 350 yds - estimate

light cloud cover - mediocre viewing conditions
10x42 binocs - scope at 30X

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have stared at too many gulls

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Brief look at NBS guide

How long before field notes made? 2 hours. How long before this form

completed? 3 hours