

accepted

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD  UNUSUAL RECORD 

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: LONG TAILED GULL / Stercorarius longicaudus  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): 5/28/92Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: alternateLatilong: 41 Distribution Code: AC/HIG Habitat Code: LLocality: Chesfield Reservoir Elevation: APPROX. 5000'Nearest town: Denver - Littleton County: DouglasTime(s) observed: 1200 - 1230 P.M.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 30 MIN.

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Joe Roller, ?

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

UNKNOWN

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

LIGHT OVERCASTOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): CELESTEC 25X SCOPE, SWIFT 8.5X BINDistance and how measured: 50 FT. TO 200 YDS. - ESTIMATEDIf photographed, type of equipment and film: N/AWho else photographed the bird: Joe Roller

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

RESTING ON SHORT GRASS IN LIGHT

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field:

APPROX. SIZE OF MEDIUM GULL, LARGER THAN FRANKLIN'S GULL -DIRECT COMPARISON TO BOTH. RELATIVELY SHORT AND THIN BLACK

Description (continued): BILL WIDENING SLIGHTLY TOWARDS TIP WITH SLIGHT HOOK UPPER MANDIBLE, BLACK CROWN, FOREHEAD AND FACE TO A LINE RUNNING FROM BAS OF BILL JUST BACK AT EYE. CAP TAPESTRY OFF FROM REAR CROWN TO UPPER NAPP BECOMING SMUDGY AND ill DEFINED AT EDGES. NECK, THROAT AND BREAST WHITE. UPPERTHIGHS AND FLANKS DARK SLATE GRAY - DARKER THAN LAUGHING GULL'S. DARKER WINGS WITH BLACK TIPS AND BLACK TAIL. LONG DARK TAIL STREAMER APPROX. 4-5 INCHES - ON GROUND THEY APPEARED SLIGHTLY LONGER TO BLACK SECTION OF POMATIES. BELLY AND LOWER FLANKS LIGHT GRAY. thin white L ON LEADING EDGE OF UPPER WING VISIBLE IN FLIGHT. WINGS LONG, THIN AND POINTED  
Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

SILENT

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

ON OPEN SHORE OF LARGE RESERVOIR.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

TAIL STREAMER white line on POMATIES LACK OF BREAST ISLAND  
ELIMINATE POMATIES & PARASITIC JAGGERS.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

I HAVE LIMITED EXPERIENCE WITH PARASITIC & POMATIES -  
IMMATURE PLUMAGES ONLY.

List books, illustration, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) At time of observation: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOC. FIELD GUIDE "BIRDS OF N. AMERICA"

b) After observation: ARMSTRONG, "BIRDS OF ALASKA", BENT, "LIFE HISTORIES..."

This report was written from reports made during ✓, after observation       , from memory       

Date and time report was written: 9/7/92

Reporting observer: MARK NIKAS Signature: M. NIKAS

Address: 840 MARTIN ST., LONGMONT, CO 80501

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
CITY PARK  
DENVER, CO 80205

Species: Long-tailed Jaeger  
(Vernacular name)

22-92-18  
Accipice

Stercorarius longicaudus  
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 5/28/92 Time Bird Seen: 2:15 pm to 2:35 pm  
2:50 pm to 3:30 pm

Locality: Chatfield S.R.A. (area of the Plum Creek delta)  
Littleton, Douglas Co., Colo.  
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 10x40 binoculars, Bushnell Scope (15x-45x)

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: (Jaeger was photographed by Joe Roller)

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unknown Plumage: Adult, light morph

Light conditions: Bright sunlight

Distance from bird, and how measured: From 50 or 60 ft. to 1/3 mile or more (estimated)

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Bird was observed standing on the shore near a flock of gull (mostly California), flying, and setting on the water. When the Jaeger flew near a group of sitting gulls, they would all take flight. Jaeger would fly with the flock of gulls for a few minutes keeping them "stirred up".

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Lake and lake shore

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address)

Joe Roller, Joey Kellner, Warren Finch, Joe Himmel  
(Golden, Co) (Littleton, Co) (Lakewood, Co) (Greatney, Co)

The Jaeger was first ID'd by Joe Roller and Mark Nikas on 5/28.

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

When first observed, the jaeger was ~~not~~ adjacent to a small flock of gull (mostly California Gulls). The jaeger was much smaller and slimmer than the gulls, appearing almost tern-like by comparison. Bill had very sharply defined black cap extending in a straight line from the tip of the bill around the nape, and ~~extended~~ <sup>came to</sup> just below eye-level. Bill was black with a slight grayish spot near the base of the upper mandible. Lower half of throat and breast were white and there was a white collar around the back of the neck. Back was dark gray without brown tones (darker than the mantle of California gulls). Folded wings were same, dark gray with obvious black primaries. Belly was lighter gray beginning just in front of legs of this bird, and appeared to become darker gray toward the tail. Tail was black (both upper and lower sides) and a single long, flexible rectrix extended 5 or 6" beyond rest of tail. This ~~last~~ feather was very slender and ended in a point. Legs were gray (not black). Eye was dark. On the water, bird appeared buoyant, floating quite high. There was no ~~heat~~ of a breast band.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

None heard.

Most distinctive feature of flying bird was upperwing surface. The black primaries and trailing edge of secondaries contrasted with gray of rest of wing and body. There was a distinct white line along the forward edge of the primaries created by 2 white feather shafts. Underside of wings uniformly dark - no white "flash" at List similar species and how you eliminated them: ~~of primaries, flight was buoyant.~~

Only possible confusion is with other jaeger species.

Backs and upperwing surfaces of both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers are dark brown rather than gray and do not show contrasting black primaries and trailing edge of secondaries. Breeding light morph Pomarine and Parasites generally show at least a trace of a dark breast band, and both show a white "flash" on underside of wings at base of primaries. Both also show more white in primaries on upper surface of wing. Pomarine's tail streamers are wider, twisted, and rounded at the ends. Both Pomarine and Parasites are "bulkier" birds.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Have some experience with all 3 jaeger species, but have only seen one other Long-tailed (pelagic trip, Monterey Bay, CA, 10/84). Have seen Pomarines in CA, FL, and CO; and Parasites in CA.

• This report was written from notes made during  after  observation; from memory

NAME (print): Dick Schottler

Mailing address: 25 S. Indiana Pl., Golden, CO 80401

Signature: Dick Schottler

Return to:

~~Highway 85~~  
~~Box 1000~~  
~~One mile from Street~~  
~~Denver, Colorado 80206~~

22-92-18  
Accepted

SPECIES: Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

DATE: May 28th, 1992

TIME OF OBSERVATION: 14:30 - 17:00

LOCATION:

On and around the Plum Creek delta at Chatfield Reservoir State Recreation Area.

NEAREST TOWN: Littleton

COUNTY: Jefferson

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

Warren Finch, 455 Dover St., Lakewood, CO 80226; (303) 233-3372

Joe Himmel, 1848 14th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631; (303) 352-0288

Joe Roller, 13040 W. 16th Dr., Golden, CO 80401; (303) 233-4476

Dick Schottler, 25 S. Indiana Pl. #1A, Golden, CO 80401; (303) 278-8035

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT:

Zeiss 10X40 Binoculars and Bausch & Lomb Criterian 4000 reflecting spotting scope (40X)

WEATHER CONDITIONS:

63F, partly cloudy, wind West 3mph.

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION:

During a vast majority of the time the sun was to our backs as we observed the bird.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 20 - 200 yards (estimate)

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: one (1)

SEX: Undetermined

PLUMAGE:

Light phase bird. Appears to be very near adult plumage based on the dirty white sides of the neck, breast and belly. Also lacked any yellow on sides on neck and nape. This bird could possibly be an adult in basic plumage changing to alternate plumage.

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR:

The jaeger was first observed as it stood on a mud flat with a couple of ring-billed gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) and many California gulls (*Larus californicus*). The back of this jaeger was noticeably darker gray than the backs of the surrounding California gulls. The jaeger also appeared smaller than the California gulls (although optics may be to blame because the California gulls were behind the jaeger and I was using my scope (farther objects can appear larger when viewed through optics)). The body seemed slender, more like that of a tern, rather than robust like a gull.

After a period of time (30 minutes) the bird flew up and circled several times before landing on a small peninsula opposite the Plum Creek delta near the dam. (When the bird flew, all the gulls on the mud flats rose up and circled, too. The gulls did not seem to mind flying or sitting with this jaeger but did not want to be caught on the ground while he was in the air.) The bird sat here for approximately 30-45 minutes. We could easily see this bird's white nape and black cap from this distance but the body color blended in with the surrounding rocks.

We then went over to the tip of the large sand "hook" that protects the marina and noticed the bird sitting on the water out about three quarters the distance from us to the dam.

Joe Roller arranged for a boat to take us out to see the bird closer and to photograph it. We approached the bird twice, the second time to within 60 feet or less! The first time the bird flushed from us he flew toward the Plum Creek delta and once again all the gulls on the mud flats flew up and circled. When the jaeger flushed the second time he flew a short distance and landed on the water and we decided not to disturb him more. (Joe Roller should have some good pictures of this bird.)

#### HEAD & NECK:

Dirty white cheeks and nape, not yellow as pictured in National Geographic Society (NGS), Second edition (See Figure #1 and Figure #4); BLACK cap starts at the bill extends under the eyes and tapers to a point on the back of the head/neck (See Figure #2 and Figure #3); No light colored feathers were seen at the base of the upper mandible.

#### EYES & LORES:

Black eyes located in the black of the cap (it very difficult to see the eyes because the cap was so dark); Lores black.

#### LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES:

- Small bill was uniform in thickness the entire length except for the "bulbous" tip on the upper mandible and the small hook on the lower mandible.
- Small hook on the tip of the upper mandible.
- The bill was all black with a small light colored patch on the base of the upper mandible. (See Figure #1 and Figure #4)

#### LEGS & FEET:

Legs dark gray (not as dark as primaries on standing bird); Feet not seen during observation.

#### UPPERPARTS:

Back and rump "slate" gray (very dark gray).

## UNDERPARTS:

Breast white from a distance, but upon closer examination from the boat the breast appeared smudged with light gray and was truly dirty white; No brown was seen on the chest (eliminating an immature bird); Belly and sides white turning light gray just before the legs on a standing bird (See Figure #4) and continued back to the undertail coverts.

## RETRICES:

"Slate" gray like back and rump; The bird appeared to have only one long central retrice (in flight it did not appear to be missing any central retrices though. Maybe the second streamer broke off leaving the base of the feather in place thus making it appear to have all its retrices); The one long streamer appeared as long as the length of the primaries on the standing bird (See Figure #4).

## WINGS:

Wings long, slender and pointed in flight. In flight the wings appeared shorter than the wings of the California gulls that were flying around with the jaeger.

Underwings: Appeared uniformly medium gray; No white "flash" was observed at the base of the primaries.

Upperwings: Black secondaries; Secondary coverts same color as back and rump; Black primaries and primary coverts; A thin white streak was visible in flight on the outer ONE or TWO primaries. This streak appeared to be on the shafts of the primaries and extended to a little more than half the distance of the primary feathers (from base to tip) and did not reach the tips of the primaries (See Figure #3).

VOCALIZATION: No vocalizations were heard during observation.

## ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

All gulls - Gulls that would be confused with this jaeger have hoods not caps on their heads; gulls do not have hooked bills; Gulls do not have tail streamers.

All terns - Terns do have caps like this jaeger but they do not have hooked bills like this jaeger or tail streamers.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) - Large jaeger; wings relatively wide; Strong, powerful flight, not tern-like flight; has dark patchy chest band; Pomarine jaegers have a noticeably 3-toned underwing; Base of underwing primaries are very obviously white on a Pomarine; The upperwings on a Pomarine show white at the BASE of SEVERAL primary feathers; Pomarines tail streamers are usually "bulbous" on the ends; Pomarines do not show a very noticeable black trailing edge to the secondaries.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) - Relatively large jaeger; more robust than long-tailed; usually has a gray, sometimes brown chest band; Base of underwing primaries are once again very obviously white on a Parasitic giving the impression of a 2-toned underwing; The upperwings on a Parasitic show white along the shafts of SEVERAL of the outer primaries not just one or two like a Long-tailed; Parasitic jaegers do not show a noticeably black trailing edge to the secondaries; The dark cap can lighten near the base of the bill on a Parasitic, this is usually not the case for a Long-tailed jaeger.

22-92-18

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*):

Have seen only once (summer 1991) at Barr Lake State Park.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*):

Have never seen one.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*):

This is the only one I have seen.

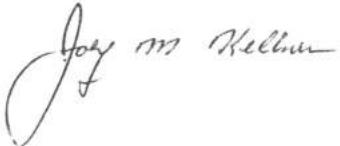
BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

National Geographic Society "A Field Guide to the Birds of North America"  
second edition.

COMMENTS:

This report was written from discussions with other observers and notes taken in the field while observing this bird.

NAME: Joey M. Kellner

SIGNATURE: 

22-92-18

Long-tailed Jaeger

Chatfield Reservoir

May 28, 1972

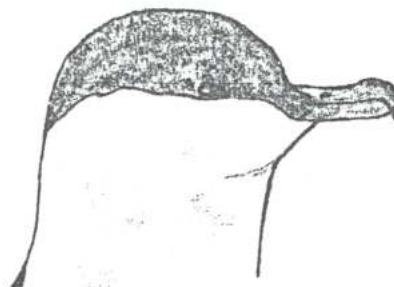


Figure #1



Figure #2

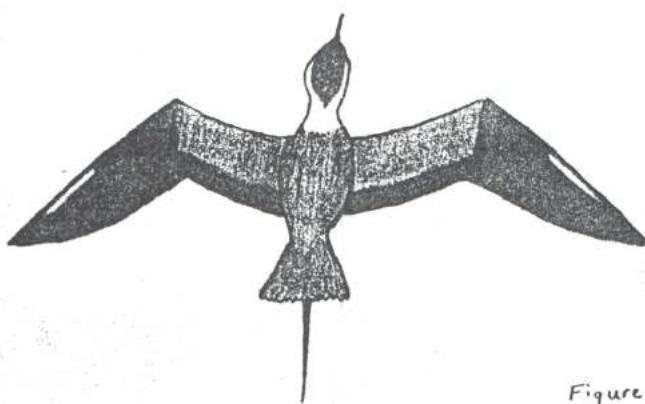


Figure #3

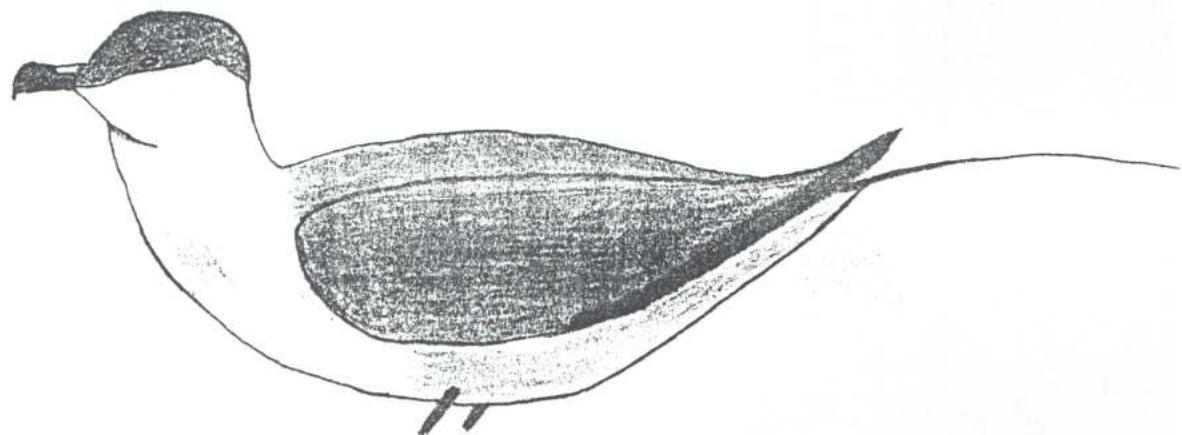


Figure #4

22-92-18  
Accepted

SPECIES: LONG-TAILED JAEGER  
(Vernacular Name)

STERCORARIUS LONGICAUDUS  
(Scientific Name)

DATE(S): 5-29-92

TIME OF OBSERVATION: 4:20-4:45 TO 4:45 PM

EXACT LOCATION: CHATFIELD STATE RECREATION AREA - PLUM CREEK DELTA

NEAREST TOWN: LAKEWOOD, CO

COUNTY: JEFFERSON

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

KARL STECHER, MARK JANOS

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: BUSHNELL 8X40 BINOCULARS, BAUSCH & LOMB DISCOVERSCOPE

WEATHER CONDITIONS: WARM, OVERCAST, NO WIND

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: SUN OBSCURED BY THE CLOUDS

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: FROM PLUM CRK DELTA TO CONCRETE TOWER ON OTHER SIDE

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: UNKNOWN PLUMAGE: LIGHT PHASE ADULT

BEHAVIOR AND Demeanor: I FIRST OBSERVED THE BIRD SITTING IN THE WATER PREENING ITSELF AND SPLASHING. AFTER A WHILE A BOAT FRIGHTENED IT, AND IT FLEW IN A STEDY LINE ABOUT 3' OFF THE WATER TO OVER BY THE OTHER BOAT CAMP. IT REMAINED OUT OF SIGHT.

HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.): BLACK CAP ON THE HEAD. THE DARKEST BLACK ON THE BIRD WAS THE CAP. IT EXTENDED FROM THE BASE OF THE BILL <sup>AT</sup> AN ANGLE UP JUST BELOW THE EYE TO THE BACK OF THE NECK. THE NECK APPEARED AS A BRIGHTER WHITE "COLLAR". FROM THE BACK THE CAP APPLIED TO EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): THE ENTIRE EYE WAS IN THE BLACK CAP. EYE COLOR INDISCRIMINABLE AT THAT DISTANCE.

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): COULD NOT SEE BILL COLOR OR SHAPE AT THE OBSERVED DISTANCE. IT APPEARED DARK, AND WAS NOT AS LARGE AS SAY A CASPIAN TERN'S BILL. THE BILL SEEMED TO BE IN PROPORTION WITH THE HEAD.

UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): FROM THE WHITE COLOR ON THE BACK OF THE NECK TO THE END OF THE TAIL WAS A UNIFORM DARK GRAY/BLACK COLOR. SUBTLE VARIATIONS WOULD NOT BE NOTICEABLE AT THE OBSERVED DISTANCE. I DID NOT NOTICE ANY WHITE COLORATION ON THE UPPER PARTS (EXCEPT THE NECK)

UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): FROM THE CHIN TO THE END OF THE BELLY, AND THE SIDES, WERE WHITE. IT WAS A FAIRLY UNIFORM WHITE WITH NO OTHER MARKINGS.

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):  
THE RETRICES WERE ALL THE SAME UNIFORM GRAYISH/BLACK. THERE WAS ONE  
LONG TAIL STREAMER EXTENDING WELL BEYOND THE EDGE OF THE REST OF THE  
TAIL. IT APPEARED TO BE A GOOD 6" LONGER BY ESTIMATE.

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): UPPER AND UPSIDES OF  
THE WINGS APPEARED UNIFORM GRAYISH BLACK. THE WINGS WERE LONG, SLNDER, AND  
POINTED. I DID NOT NOTICE ANY WHITE ON EITHER SIDE. WHEN SPREADING THE WINGS APPEARED  
SLICITLY CURVED ~~BACK~~ TOWARDS THE BACK ~~OF~~ OF THE BIRD.

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):  
NO VOCALIZATION.

HABITAT: RESERVOIR.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THE ONLY SIMILAR BIRDS I COULD THINK OF WOULD BE A TURN, OR THE OTHER  
JAEGERS. THE ROYAL & CASPIAN TURNS HAVE MUCH LIGHTER UNDERWINGS, FORDED  
TAILS, AND THE BLACK CAP DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE BASE OF THE BILL. ALL OTHER  
TURNS WOULD BE TOO SMALL; THIS BIRD HAD A BODY THAT WAS PROBABLY A LITTLE BIGGER  
THAN A CASPIAN TURN. THE OBSERVED BIRD DID NOT HAVE A DARK CHEST BAND THAT THE  
POMARINE & PARASitic JAEGERS EXHIBIT. THERE WAS NO WHITE ON THE UNDERWING.  
THE FLIGHT WAS MORE BUOYANT THAN THAT OF A POMARINE, AND THE BIRD WAS NOT  
NEARLY AS "CHUNKY" LOOKING IN THE BODY. THE STREAMER ON THE TAIL EXTENDED OUT  
MUCH FURTHER THAN I WOULD EXPECT ON THE OTHER TWO JAEGERS.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

I HAVE SEEN SEVERAL CASPIAN TURNS IN BRODING PLUMMAGE IN COLORADO,  
AND THE ONLY OTHER JAEGER I HAVE EVER SEEN WAS THE POMARINE  
JAEGER AT BAKER LAKE LAST YEAR.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

ADVANCED BIRDING - LAUFMAN

BIRDS OF N. AMERICA - NAT. GEO

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING ~~AFTER~~ OBSERVATION; ~~FROM~~ MEMORY

NAME: STEVE STACHOWICK

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 5-30-92

22-92-18

*accepted*

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

LONG-TAILED JAEGER

Stercorarius longicaudus

Location: Chatfield Reservoir; Denver; Douglas County, Colorado

Date: May 29, 1992

This bird was found by Mark Nikas and Joe Roller. It was seen by several Colorado birders.

Setting:

I searched for this bird on the afternoon of May 29, 1992. I went straight to the Plum Creek Delta area and scanned the lake with my binoculars (10X42). I was unable to locate the bird and tried the southwest arm of the lake. As I drove back to the Plum Creek area about 4:20 p.m. I saw a bird soaring in the sky high over the area of the marina. It was the Long-tailed Jaeger. I observed the bird in my binoculars but it soared very high and I lost it against the high thin clouds. I returned to Plum Creek Delta and met Karl Stecher and Steve Stachowiak there. They both had seen the soaring bird. Steve had discovered the jaeger on the water against the rock face of the dam and they had both observed it for several minutes until a boat caused it to take flight. It flew off and then began to soar, which was the point at which I had seen it. They had lost the bird as well.

A few minutes later, I searched alone on the Delta. I walked to the point on the west side of Plum Creek and visited with a birder (I don't know his name). As we talked, the Long-tailed Jaeger appeared, flying rapidly about 50 feet over the lake. It was easily smaller than the Ring-billed Gull that it briefly hassled in flight. The bird flew around the main body of the lake with rapid, flicking wingbeats, most similar to a small falcon. I was surprised to see that it spent much time soaring stiff-winged, like a Buteo. The bird flew, soared and sharply swung upward on stiff pointed wings. As we watched it flew down towards the water surface and went full speed. It flew with rapid wingbeats towards a rocky point in the northeast corner of the lake. As it swung around the back side of the point, about 50 Ring-billed Gulls put up, though the jaeger chased none of them. It flew around for a short distance and then landed on the surface of the lake, where it floated like a gull, about 500 yards away. We had observed the bird for about 5 minutes at various angles in flight at distances between 200-500 yards.

I walked back to the point and met Karl Stecher, who had re-appeared and was scanning the lake with his 50X scope. I borrowed his scope and put it on the floating bird from several hundred yards. We observed it (along with 2 other ladies) for about 20 minutes as it floated on the water. It spent most of its time turned slightly away from us or turned to the side. I never observed the bird on the water from the front. Total time spent observing the bird was about 30 minutes, from about 4:30 - 5:00 p.m. When I left, the bird was distant, and floating in the northeast corner of the lake.

Description:

The bird was a small, slender jaeger with narrow, slender, pointed, knife-like wings. It flew rapidly, like a small falcon and often soared on fixed wings. It was about 16" long with another 6" of trailing pointed tail streamers. (I assumed that there were two, although it just looked like a single long whip-like streamer behind). It was in breeding plumage. It was slender, dark above and white below with a distinct black cap.

The upper surface (wings and back) and underside of the wings was a uniform dark grey. At the distances that we observed the bird it did not appear to have any brown tones to the plumage. I could observe no white wing flash in the distal portion of the wing, above or below. From above, the outer wing and secondaries were darker than the greyer secondary coverts. From below, the wing was evenly dark grey. The tail was blackish. Protruding from the center of the tail was the long (about 6"), spiky, trailing tail streamer. I saw that this streamer waved and bent in flight when it briefly pursued a Ring-billed Gull. The crown was jet black, forming a black cap that included the eyes but did not extend down on the face. It formed a straight line against the side of the face where it met the white cheeks. The cap did not form a full "hood". From the rear, the white of the face circled back, forming a narrow white collar bordering the black cap. The cap was clearly delineated against the white cheeks and nape. The undersides were white as far back as the area of the legs. The undertail and lower abdomen were dark grey. This dark area came forward and contrasted very sharply with the pure white lower belly. The lower face, chin, throat, chest and breast were immaculate white, right up to the axillaries. There was no collar across the breast. It had a rather small head and bill compared to the body. I could not make out any meaningful details of the bill, such as shape or color.

22-92-18

Similar Species:

Size, coloration, black cap, long pointed wings, gull-harassing nature indicate jaeger. Pomarine Jaeger (and Skuas) would be much larger, more powerful with a barrel-chested body and big wide-based wings. The Pomarine Jaeger would show a distinctive white flash in the wing, even at a distance. It would be primarily brownish in tone, would lack the two-toned upper wing, would have a breast band and would lack the long spiky pointed central tail streamers. The cap of the Pomarine Jaeger would extend lower onto the face, especially in the malar region. The underwing would be more two-toned than the Long-tailed Jaeger. Similarly the Parasitic Jaeger, though it could have central tail streamers approaching this length, would have overall brown tones, a distinctive white flash in the wing, would lack the two-toned upper wing, and would have a dark breast band. The cap of Parasitic Jaeger would be less black, especially forward of the eye and the underside of the wing would look two-toned.

Experience with Species:

I have seen several South Polar Skuas and all three jaeger species. I have seen both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger in light phase breeding plumage. I have seen about 4 Long-tailed Jaegers but all were subadult or juvenile birds and all were observed at sea. The most recent was September 1987.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.

*Mark Janos*

Mark Janos  
10 Sedium Ct.  
Pueblo, CO 81001