

## DOCUMENTATION FORM

ACCEPT 7-0

Species: Parasitic Jaeger

Number: 1 light morph adult

Location: Windsor Reservoir, Weld Co., Colorado

Habitat: large lake

Date: 18 October 1999

Time: 9:38-10:06 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird(s): m. ob.

Rec 1/26/99 upl

Description of bird(s): I was looking over the hundreds of gulls resting in the middle of the lake when they suddenly took flight. I initially assumed they were reacting to an aerial predator, probably a falcon. Less than a minute later, I saw a dark, gull-like bird chasing gulls near the south end of the lake. I immediately recognized the bird as an adult jaeger. I spent the next half hour studying the bird from the northwest and southeast ends of the lake. The bird was very active and spent most of its time harassing gulls. In flight, the bird was clearly smaller (I estimated roughly 10% smaller) and more narrow-winged than a Ring-billed Gull. At a distance, the upperwings appeared dark and there was a small white "flash" visible on the underwing, at the base of the primaries. The elongated central rectrices were also visible and appeared pointed. Otherwise, about all I could discern was that the bird appeared dark with a pale throat and underparts. At about 10 a.m., the bird made a circuit of the northwest arm of the lake, and briefly landed on the west shore. At this time, I estimated the bird was at a distance of about 300m. At this distance, the bird was easily identified as an adult on the basis of the dark cap, pale nape, incomplete breast band, and long central rectrices. The bill was black and very slender. The bird had a neat, black cap that included the eye. The nape was pale. The underparts, including the throat, breast, and belly, were pale except for an incomplete dark breast band (broken in the center of the breast). The breast band was not crisp, but instead appeared as a mottled smudge on either side of the breast. The undertail coverts were pale brown or gray (the exact color was hard to see). The mantle and folded wings were dark-colored. The rectrices were also dark-colored, and the central feathers projected at least an inch beyond the other feathers. The central rectrices were very slender and pointed (not blunt-tipped). The legs were dark. In flight at close range, I was able to discern a small amount of white on the upper surface of the wing. Specifically, the white color was restricted to the bases of the outer 4-5 primaries, but was most visible on only the outer two primaries. I also noted that on the upper surface of the wing, there was no contrast between the flight feathers, their coverts, and the mantle. The underwing was dark except for a conspicuous white patch at the base of the primaries. I did not note the exact extent of this patch, but I can say that it was more extensive than the white on the upperwing. On the basis of the pale (not yellow) nape and faded breast band, I concluded the bird was an adult in basic plumage. The pale underparts indicate the bird was a light morph adult.

Similar species and how eliminated: The general coloration, dark cap, elongated central rectrices, and white color at the base of the primaries identified the bird as an adult jaeger. The combination of size (noticeably smaller than a Ring-billed Gull), shape of the rectrices, less extensive white in the primaries, lack of a second white patch on the underprimary coverts, and smaller bill eliminate Pomarine Jaeger. The combination of white color on the undersides of the primaries, lack of contrast between the upper surfaces of the flight feathers and the mantle, shorter central rectrices, a thin bill, and the presence of a breast band eliminates Long-tailed Jaeger.

Previous experience with species: I have seen numerous jaegers of all three species at sea off the East Coast, especially North Carolina. I also have limited experience with all three jaegers species from the Midwest.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were generally good with overcast skies. Estimated viewing distance was mostly >500m, although the bird was as close as 300m on a few occasions. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America  
Olsen and Larsson (1997). Skuas and Jaegers.

How long before field notes written? none written

How long before this form completed? written 18 October 1999