

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-155

NEW STATE RECORD _____

UNUSUAL RECORD X

rec'd 1/29/02

Species: Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

Date: 8 October 2000

Number seen: two

Sex: ?

Plumage: Juvenal

Locality: Bonny Res.

Elevation: about 3600'

Nearest town: Idalia

County: Yuma

Time observed: early morning

Duration of observation: one bird (the second one) only for about 50 seconds, the first bird off and on for a total of about 12-15 minutes

Description: Larry Semo and I were birding around Bonny Res. and were at the northeastern arm at the campground there. I was sorting through geese with my scope when Larry yelled out, "Jaeger! Pomarine Jaeger!" Of course, I kept scanning through geese. Of course I did not. I immediately looked where Larry indicated and saw a big, strong-flying, all-dark juvenile jaeger flying out of the arm toward the main part of the lake. Since the bird had flown toward the dam, we left the campground, at some speed, and headed up onto the dam road. When we got there, we quickly found the bird flying back north along the dam, but about 150 meters out from the base of the dam. We were both watching it when another dark bird passed it going the other way. We both yelled out something like, "second jaeger!" I followed the second bird as it flew south along the dam and determined that it was yet another dark-morph, juvenile Pom, and one that did not look very different, at all, from the first bird (though, now, of course, we did not really know which bird was the "first" one). After less than a minute, I went back to watching the first one, as it was closer; the second one had flown out toward the middle of the lake. The first one eventually, also, flew out toward the middle of the lake and at some point, began soaring at fairly high altitude. While it was soaring, one of us would watch it and the other would scan the lake to look for the second bird; we never saw that one again. Eventually, we got tired of watching this distant, soaring Pom and resumed our course around the lake. Below, I describe both birds as one, as, in my views, I did not really see any differences in plumage between the two and since we did not get really good views of either bird and, thus, could not discern much in the way of fine plumage detail.

These birds were typical dark-morph juveniles, as have been ALL of the young Poms that I have seen in Colorado. The bird's head was very dark, being as dark as or slightly darker than the back. The bill was bi-colored (dark distally, pale proximally) and the eyes must have been dark, as they certainly did not stand out on the dark head. The upperside was a medium-dark brown, without the rufous cast that young Parasitics usually show. The upper and undertail coverts were strongly marked with alternating blackish and white bars and the tail was wholly dark with the central rectrices being not obviously elongated (but the birds were not close). The underparts (except for the aforementioned undertail coverts) were about the same coloration as the upperparts, though the flanks were barred darker-and-paler. Even though the first bird was high when it was soaring, I could discern that the wings were strongly patterned underneath, with obvious white flashes formed by the white bases of the primaries and

of the primary coverts. The tips of the primary coverts were dark, forming a vague bar that about split the white underwing patch in two. The undersides of the secondaries were barred blackish and tan. The axillars were much paler and contrasted strongly with the adjacent body. This pattern was created by black-and-white barred axillars that I could see on the initial sightings of both birds.

The bird flew with strong, deep wingbeats that were typical of this species, which is the jaeger species of which I have the most experience. In flight, I could see that the wings were wide-based, with the bases of the wings being more than half the length of the bird from bill tip to tail tip (excluding the R1s).

Similar species eliminated: Parasitic is easily eliminated by underwing pattern and the lack of rufous tones to the upperparts. Long-tailed, the species most similar in plumage pattern in juvenile dark morphs, is ruled out by the bulk of the bird(s) and by the wide-based wings.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >500 of Pomarines, >75 Parasitics, and >45 Long-tails.

Light conditions: sun behind me

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: except for the initial sighting and for a few minutes at the beginning of the second sighting, the first bird was usually >600m away, but came as close as about 175m; the second bird range from about 175m to 750m or more

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Larry Semo

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

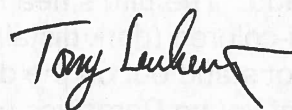
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: Written mostly on 12 April 2001 (with some small details completed on 29 January 2002) from notes written on the evening of 8 October 2001