

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Josh Engel

Date of review: 3/29/16

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: U-I

Comments: Despite my previous vote to accept, I am changing my vote. I agree with Geoff that there are no details presented in support of the assertion that the bird was a young bird. It's important to get out of some of the circular reasoning that birders have relied on to identify jaegers in Illinois—especially the species' likelihood and time of year tropes—and rely on photos and excellent details for identification purposes. Unfortunately, these are lacking here, thus I am changing my vote to not accept.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Matt Fraker

Date of review: 04/01/16

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: U-I

Comments: RE:

“Overall coloration was a dark, warm brown (suggesting PAJA over POJA) — **agreed**, upperwing almost uniformly brown excluding a noticeable white wing flash (eliminating Long-tailed Jaeger), underwing was overall fairly dark with a very noticeable white wing flash — **not helpful for PO/PA**. Other plumage features were difficult to note due to distance — **this is to me a very telling observation about the confidence level that can go with this sighting — more below**, but simply this is enough to tell it is a Parasitic/Pomarine Jaeger. Shape was gull-like, but more aerodynamic. Size was about the same as a Ring-billed Gull that it attacked while flying over the lake, which pretty much confirms Parasitic Jaeger (along with shape appearing too slight for a Pomarine)” — **having seen Jaegers in flight at great distance, I think accurate size estimation would be tough.**

“Pomarine Jaeger ruled out by overall coloration (**which is, of course, inconclusive**), shape not being bulky enough (**again, wouldn't rule it out on this alone**), and size in comparison to the Ring-billed Gull it harassed, Pomarine would be notably larger — **I think w/o a picture, this is tough a call**. Time of year is also supportive of PAJA — **this doesn't really help at all in my opinion.**”

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Greg Lambeth

Date of review: May 22, 2016

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: U - I

Comments:

Three committee members (including myself) voted U – I in the first round for similar reasons with Geoff providing the most extensive reasoning. I believe that this bird was either a Parasitic or Pomarine Jaeger, but the documentation provided is not sufficient to rule out Pomarine Jaeger.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: McMullen

Date of review: 3-24-16

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: A-S (written)

Comments: Details seem to be sufficient for a Parasitic. Timing wise, Parasitic is most likely. Observer adequately eliminates Long-tailed.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Douglas Stotz

Date of review: 23 March 2016

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: A-S(1)

Comments: This again comes down to how much uncertainty we are willing to accept in our records. Seems like I am willing to accept more than some others. The observer is very competent and experienced with Jaegers (at least by Midwest standards). All of his description is consistent with Parasitic and would make me lean against Pomarine. The timing is more consistent with Parasitic. I think Parasitic is clearly much more common than is Pomarine overall. I can't see any reason not to accept it as a Parasitic.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Paul Sweet

Date of review: 3/28/16

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: U-I

Comments: After reading the comments from other members, I see no reason to change my vote on this one. The characters used to separate Pomarine from Parasitic don't seem sufficient, especially given the distance.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2012-050

Name of bird form: Parasitic Jaeger

Committee member name: Geoffrey A. Williamson

Date of review: 11 March 2016

Circulation number: 2nd

Vote: U-I

Comments:

The Committee seems settled on this either being better left as Pomarine/Parasitic or happy enough to settle with Parasitic. I took a look at the eBird comments (checklist is at <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S11688854>). These are

Seen flying S. Overall darkness, shape, flight style, and wing flash (and it attacked a RBGU) made it a jaeger. Flight style, noticeable wing flash, shape, and overall warm brown coloration ruled out LTJA. Shape was very wrong for POJA, and it was almost the same size (appeared slightly smaller) as a RBGU it chased. Warm brown coloration also suggests PAJA over POJA

The IBET (Illinois birding email listserve) post referenced in the documentation seems to be that made by the documenter's brother Aaron Gyllenhaal, made on 30 Sep 2012 at 12:54 PM, and reads in its entirety as

At 12:45 a Parasitic Jaeger flew past Gilson. It had a noticeable wing flash, it was about the same size as a ring billed that it attacked, and it appeared to be a warm brown color. Ethan spotted this. It headed south.

Hence I believe one can conclude that the description given in the documentation is not taken much beyond the notes recorded closer to the time of the observation (I think only the remarks about the underwing are in addition to what was recorded on IBET and eBird).

Josh Engel notes that "Despite the difficulty of jaeger field identification and lack of photos, the description is pretty good and the observer is aware of ID pitfalls, so I'm voting to accept." This is a fair enough statement, but I am less confident of the extent of field experience of the observer at this time of this observation in sorting out the identifications. My sense is that the description lacks detail that would ascertain age, doesn't note features such as relative contrast darkness between adjacent body parts, and so on that one would want to have been recorded, at least ideally, at the time of the observation.

I think that most probably this was a Parasitic, but I remain uncomfortable with the amount of actual evidence.