

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-156

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

Rec 1/23/02

Date: 1 November 2000 **Number seen:** one

Sex: ?

Plumage: Juvenal

Locality: Standley Lake

Elevation: about 1600m

Nearest town: Westminster

County: Jefferson

Time observed: 07:55 - 08:15 MST

Duration of observation: off and on for a total of about 12 minutes

Description: This bird, found on 30 October 2000 by Larry Semo was a smallish, dark juvenile jaeger. From near the southeast corner, I found it swimming on the northern fourth of the lake near the boat ramp. Except for one short flight during which I saw most critical features, it stayed on the water the entire time that I was present. At about 08:05, Larry Semo showed up and we watched it not fly until we both left at 08:15.

I saw the bird mostly at long distance, so could not determine some aspects of its plumage. The head and neck were dark with slight rufous tones and with a much paler nape. I could not determine if the nape was streaked. The bill was longish and thin with a distinct dark tip contrasting with the paler base. I could not discern the precise proportion of pale and dark on the bill, but it appeared to be less than half black. The back was much darker than the head and had little in the way of rufous tones. I could not discern fringing on the back feathers, but at times there appeared to be some slightly paler spots on the back. The tail was dark and the central rectrices extended noticeably beyond the rest of the tail; I could not determine the shape of the tips of the central rectrices, but the tips were not wide and blunt. The rump appeared nearly concolorous with the back and tail, but was a bit paler. The underparts were two-toned: the neck and chest were very dark (darker than the head) and the belly was paler, being a medium brown with some paler barring on the flanks. The vent region was paler than the belly, but was not obviously barred black and white. The underwings were dark with some paler barring on axillars and coverts. There was an extensive white flash at the base of the primaries, but none at the base of the primary coverts. There was a wide, white flash at the base of the primaries on the upperwing, which was only somewhat smaller than that apparent on the underwing. I could not determine whether there were fringes on the upperwing coverts or on the primary tips.

In the bird's short, desultory flight, it only flew some 100m and plopped back down on the water. The wingbeats did not provide any ID clues. The jaeger did not closely approach any other bird, so I could not obtain any direct size comparisons, but it appeared much smaller than a California Gull that was about 300m from it. The bird did not project a particularly pot-bellied appearance, but it wasn't particularly chesty, either.

Similar species eliminated: Juvenile and Basic I gulls are all eliminated by plumage pattern. Long-tailed Jaeger is ruled out by lack of strong underwing pattern, overall coloration, and vent pattern; bill shape is also suggestive. Pomarine was eliminated by the lack of strong underwing and vent patterns, the small size, and by bill shape. Additionally, the pattern of the underside primary coverts is suggestive against Pomarine. The strong white crescent at the base of the primaries on the upper wing is nearly diagnostic.

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 100s of Pomarines, >85 Parasitics, and >45 Long-tails. Importantly, I have recently seen two dark Pomarines (10/8/00), a dark Long-tailed (9/5/00), and another dark Parasitic (10/11/00), all juveniles, in Colorado. I also had just returned from Cape May, where I saw 13 Parasitic Jaegers of varying ages and plumages (10/20-28/00).

Light conditions: sun to my back, behind mostly cloudy skies

Optical equipment used: Leica 20-60x

Distance, and how estimated: the bird was 650-700m away (estimated using the known width of the lake)

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Larry Semo

Other observers who saw the bird independently: unknown

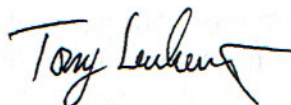
If photographed, type of equipment and film: did not photograph

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: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: Written on 2 November 2000 from notes written about one hour after sighting