

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Thayer's Gull, *Larus thayeri*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 adult
3. Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: Rutherford Beach, ca. 5 mi W of community of Rutherford Beach
4. Date(s) when observed: 11 Oct 2015
5. Time(s) of day when observed: ca, 3:45-4:05 pm
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul E. Conover, Lafayette, LA 70506
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): none
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Light was excellent, autumn afternoon sunlight with bird to the E, no heatwaves.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60 zoom, Samsung S4 camera.
11. Distance to bird(s): down to about 30-40 yards
12. Duration of observation: about 20 min
13. Habitat: Gulf beach
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Standing among a large flock of gulls, terns, and skimmers, preening. Seen alongside dozens of Herring Gulls of all ages, as well as over a dozen Lesser Black-backed, and a few Ring-billed Gulls. Also present hundreds of Caspian and a few Royal terns, a small group of skimmers, and over a hundred Laughing Gulls. Birds flushed in response to skittishness of Caspian Terns, resettled several times. I eventually worked closer only to have part of flock resettle behind me. Each time the birds resettled I lost the bird in the blur and had to relocate it when the flock landed back. When the Thayer's moved past me, I was able to pick it out in flight from the group as its shape, size, or flight style—I can't remember exactly—was somehow different, and I was able to snap a couple of flight shots.
15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

An adult "large white-headed gull" slightly but noticeably smaller than most if not all of Herrings present, with mantle color similar to adult Herring Gull, a medium-sized yellow bill, pink legs, and a dark eye.

Mantle not noticeably different from Herrings in field, but the mantle color of all Herrings was variable given their angle to the light. Tail and underparts white.

Eye brown, on close inspection the brown the result of a dense mottling of brown specks against a slight paler background that was minimally visible through the specks.

Orbital ring purplish, with pink tint.

Bill somewhat compact, not dainty but not large, vivid medium yellow. Gonys defined but not notably pronounced. Gonys spot a blurry oval of clear orange. No black markings on bill.

Leg color bubblegum pink with vinaceous tones.

Wings same color above as mantle, with fairly broad trailing edge of white on secondaries and inner primaries due to broad white tips. Molt on primaries, with primaries 1-7 fresh, 8 molting in and short and in sheath with just white tip and part of dark subterminal band visible, 9-10 worn and degraded. Primaries 5-8 with complete blackish subterminal bands, broad white tips, and distinct white tongues on inner webs proximal to subterminal bands. P9 worn and frayed, missing parts of edges on pale areas but with black areas appearing complete; black confined to outer web except for a small curve into inner web at about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the length of the wing. P9 otherwise gray except for a diffuse white mirror area adjacent to the black inner web curve (tip missing). P10 similar to P9 but with dark outer web more extensive, with dark markings running over shaft, then flaring out to create a triangular partial subterminal band. Inner margin of P10 gray, lightening to white distally (tip missing).

Underside of wings mostly grayish-white, with dark markings mainly on outer primary.

16. Voice: Not noted

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): In part or whole, combination of purple orbital ring, wingtip pattern, and eye color eliminate most other pure individuals of other gull species including American and European Herring, California Gull, etc. Darkness of wing markings and complete subterminal band on P5 eliminate Kumlien's and Kumlien's X Thayer's hybrids. Other hybrids eliminated by suite of features noted above.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, photos and video stills attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've only seen one bird I've felt was an adult Thayer's, a May bird in Louisiana.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation: Dunn and Howell, Olsen and Larsson, Snell's BNA account, Dwight.

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	no, recorded
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	10/11/15
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes, this appears to be a classic Thayer's with clear cut fieldmarks that agree with every description from Dwight to the present.

23. Date: 10/14/2015



