

LBRC Report Form

1. English and Scientific names: Thayer's Gull, *Larus glaucoides thayeri*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
One 1st winter
3. Parish:
Jefferson Parish
4. Specific Locality:
Grand Isle, breakwater at southern end of Grand Isle Beach near Pompano Ln
5. Date(s) when observed: January 13, 2024
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 12:45 - 1:00 PM
7. Reporting observer: David Heyrovsky
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
None
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
None (don't know)
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good conditions - sunny with light clouds, viewing direction E, SE
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Vortex Viper 10 x 42 HD binoculars
12. Distance to bird(s): Closest about 100 yards
13. Duration of observation: 15 minutes
14. Habitat: Rocky breakwater at beach (on the Gulf of Mexico side)
15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Resting, preening, stretching wings for the duration of my observation. I didn't go too close so as not to flush the birds on the breakwater. Other birds on the breakwater: mostly Laughing Gulls, Royal Terns, Brown Pelicans, Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstone, Double-Crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, plus Ring-billed Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls nearby on the beach.

Over the next few days the influx of Arctic air brought freezing temperatures to the region - but the occurrence of this gull might be just a coincidence.

16. 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):

The gull was very conspicuous sitting among the Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns: a notably larger, very pale brownish bird with dark wingtips and pink legs. In comparison with birds seen at the beach, it was larger than Ring-billed Gull but smaller and less bulky than Herring Gull.

Its stance was very upright, with the body axis from tail to chest raised strongly above the horizontal (ca. 30 degrees). The folded wings protruded prominently beyond the tail, with the wingtip - tailtip distance slightly exceeding the tailtip - tertials distance. The shape of the head was very rounded, with a centrally positioned dark eye. The bill was fairly short, rather slender (not heavy), seen in the field as primarily dark (with the photos showing a slightly paler base). The gonydeal angle was visible but not prominent.

The scapulars and upper wing coverts were whitish with a pale brownish tinge, and with thin dark brown barring on the coverts. The protruding primary tips were dark brown (darkest feathers on the standing bird) with pale tips and thin pale fringes. The tertials on the folded wing had solid brown bases and broad white tips with some brown bars at the transition. The open wing seen from above revealed a strong pattern, with the dark brown secondaries (which had broader white tips) and outer primaries contrasting with the very pale inner primaries and greater coverts.

The upper mantle, the neck, and the underside was pale brownish without markings, turning darker to "dirty" brown on the belly. The undertail coverts were pale with prominent brown barring. When the bird raised its wings, it revealed unmarked whitish lower flanks / sides of the belly. The tail feathers seen from below were brown without prominent markings, I have not seen the tail well from above except for its pale sides. The head was paler than the neck, with a darker patch around the eye.

17. Voice: Silent

18. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Glaucous Gull 1st winter eliminated by: the smaller size of the observed bird; its round head with a rather centrally positioned eye; its short and more slender bill that is not sharply two-colored; its longer wingtip projection beyond the tail tip; its dark flight & tail feathers.

Glaucous-winged Gull 1st winter eliminated by: the smaller size of the observed bird; its round head with a rather centrally positioned eye; its short and more slender bill; its longer wingtip projection beyond the tail tip; the color contrast on the folded wing (dark wingtip & bases of tertials vs. pale coverts) and on the open wing (dark outer primaries and secondaries vs. very pale inner primaries, secondary tips and greater coverts).

Iceland Gull subspecies *L. g. glaucoides* eliminated by: dark flight feathers of the

observed bird.

Kumlien's Gull 2nd winter eliminated by: lack of a bicolored bill; no gray feathers on mantle & scapulars.

Kumlien's Gull 1st winter eliminated by: the combination of dark brown primaries with pale tips & edges, brown tertials with pale tips, and dark brown secondaries with pale tips standing out against paler greater coverts.

Thayer's Gull 2nd winter eliminated by: the combination of the bill not being clearly bicolored, no gray feathers on mantle & scapulars, dark belly, fairly uniformly patterned coverts on the folded wing.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

Nine photographs (quality not great), all uploaded

20. Previous experience with this species: None with Thayer's, but I have observed Kumlien's Iceland Gulls repeatedly along the Massachusetts Coast (mainly in the Cape Ann region), mostly in winter.

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

In the field: Sibley Birds v2 app

Books consulted at home included: Sibley (2014) - The Sibley Guide to Birds (2nd ed.); Dunn & Alderfer (2011) - NG Field Guide to the Birds of North America (6th ed.); Stokes & Stokes (2010) - The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America; Dunne & Karlson (2019) - Gulls Simplified; Olsen & Larsson (2010 reprint) - Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America

22. Identification aids used when?

At time of sighting, After observation

23. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain:

Yes, as detailed in 18 above.

24. Date report completed:

October 17, 2024

25. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

26. If yes, may we include your name with the report?

Yes









