

AND THE NEXT DAY - BACK AT STELLWAGEN BANK
ANOTHER LONG-TAILED JAEGER

Coincidentally, the juvenile jaeger pictured here was observed on a Brookline Bird Club pelagic trip to Stellwagen Bank on September 8, 1985. Like the Hydrographer Canyon individual, this bird was not identified as a Long-tailed Jaeger at the time of the observation.

This jaeger approached rapidly from the stern of the boat, passing the port side, and was gone in a short time. As it approached head-on, the most striking feature was the pale-headed aspect contrasting with a grayish brown back. Rather than observe the bird any longer, I decided to attempt to photograph it because of the apparent abnormal (but what is abnormal when discussing jaegers?) plumage.

When the photograph was developed, the bird was identified as a Long-tailed Jaeger by several characteristics: *the pale-headed appearance; the short, rounded central rectrices (more narrow and pointed in juvenile Parasitics); the small, delicate bill; barred undertail coverts and hooded upper chest and throat; and the nearly white lower chest and belly.*

The bird was not observed in comparison with any other species; so such subjective marks as relative manner of flight and relative size could not be determined.

In retrospect, the individual in question was clearly an intermediate-morph juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger.

The comments set forth in Rick Cech's fine article should lead to a clearer understanding of immature jaeger plumages and more enlightened identification in the future.

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*Juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger
Stellwagen Bank, September 8, 1985*

Photo by Richard A. Forster