

The Grapevine

Pomarine Jaegers at Huron

On Nov. 29, 1996, Sue Tackett and I were very pleased to see three juvenile Pomarine Jaegers from the end of the breakwall at Huron, Erie Co. They were present much of the time we were there. Most of the time they sat on the water, perhaps a 1/4 mile offshore, but when they were flying and often chasing Ring-billed Gulls (ignoring the Bonaparte's Gulls), they often approached quite closely. I was able to get some distant photos of one bird. These were our first jaegers in Ohio and we were particularly fortunate to see these birds so well. These were all juveniles and looked quite dark. One was slightly paler, particularly on the belly where there was much barring, and it was a little buffier overall, rather than blackish-brown. This individual had been called a possible Parasitic Jaeger by some of the observers present.

These birds were about the size of a Ring-billed Gull in direct comparison. They were longer and slimmer-winged, and of course were very dark. From above in flight there was a small white primary flash visible, but from below there was a bold double white flash, and we noted this feature repeatedly. This was caused by the white bases to the primary coverts and the primaries. The other feature we looked at carefully was the shape of the central rectrices. They were very short and rounded, almost flat ended, and often it was even hard to detect the shape of these short feathers. On the water, and particularly when close in flight, I was able to see that the bills were rather thick and were bluish at the bases (basal 3/4) and blackish at the tip. On no part of the plumage was I able to detect any rufous tinting to the tips of the feathers, a characteristic feature of juvenile Parasitic Jaegers.

I have long been suspicious of early fall reports of juvenile Pomarine Jaegers and feel that most, if not all, of these reports are in error. November is clearly the month that they appear. One wonders also how late Parasitic Jaegers move through the interior of North America. Perhaps many of the late November Parasitic reports, are in fact Pomarines. I did photograph a sub-adult Parasitic Jaeger once at the north end of the Salton Sea in mid-December. Clearly, there is still much to learn about the movement of jaegers, especially of juveniles through the interior of North America. By Jon L. Dunn, 153 Grange Hall Rd., Beaver Creek, OH 45430.

Bird Banding at Lakeshore MP, Autumn 1996

For a total of 169 hours (1920 net hours) on 32 days between July 13 and October 27, 1996, I banded birds at Lakeshore MP (Lake Co.). My final tally was 2922 individuals banded, representing 94 species. Peak movements per month were July 22 (116 individuals banded), August 3 (103 ind.), September 25 (123 ind.), and October 12 (161 ind.). My top ten species banded were: House Finch-- 356; White-throated Sparrow-- 332; Gray Catbird-- 145; Swainson's Thrush-- 118; Am. Goldfinch-- 113; Black-capped Chickadee-- 111; Yellow Warbler-- 106; Baltimore Oriole-- 100; Mourning Dove-- 87; & Hermit Thrush-- 80. Data by John Pogacnik, 4765 Lockwood Rd., Perry, OH 44081.

Autumn 1996 Passerine Banding at Navarre Marsh

Once again, the Black Swamp Bird Observatory operated bird banding sites at the Navarre Unit of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (Ottawa Co.), behind the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station. The main Navarre site was manned daily from August 1 to November 1, 1996. A total of 3267 individuals were banded at the main Navarre site, with the top ten species being: Swainson's Thrush-- 394; White-throated Sparrow-- 217; Hermit Thrush-- 208; Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler-- 169; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-- 163; Golden-crowned Kinglet-- 157; Gray Catbird-- 134; Magnolia Warbler-- 128; Gray-cheeked Thrush-- 110; & Common Yellowthroat-- 107. This data was reported in the Black Swamp Bird Observatory Annual Report 1996, pp. 12-15. BSBO, P.O. Box 228, Oak Harbor, OH 43449.

More notes on the Long-billed Murrelet

On November 14, 1996 I observed the Long-billed Murrelet at Beaver Creek Res. in northern Seneca County. This bird was obviously the star of the fall and was widely enjoyed by many, many observers. Thankfully it stayed a week and was easy to locate most of the time. This individual was clearly of the Asian Long-billed Murrelet.

The bird was a small black (or dark) and white alcid. Above, it was slaty-colored with fine grayish edges on the back and especially on the rump. The lores were blackish (darkest part of the upperparts). There was a conspicuous white eye ring that appeared complete. There was a small and diffuse whitish or pale-grayish patch in the rear of the auriculars that was well within the dark of the head. The division of dark and white on the sides of the neck was very even, much more so than on the North American Marbled Murrelet. There was the slightest indentation of white at the bottom of the lores and the dark dipped down slightly under the eye. The white scapulars formed a conspicuous white patch. There was a thin strip of dark brown down the rump and there was white coming well up the sides of the rump, sort of in a pattern like an Olive-sided Flycatcher. These white patches came fairly close to connecting. The tail was short and blackish. The underparts, including the front of the neck were pure white, except for some fairly conspicuous darker scaling on the sides. The blackish bill appeared long. The culmen appeared to curve slightly over the lower mandible. The wings, including the wing linings, were black. On Nov. 15, Sue Tackett and I noted a slight forehead bump. The head was slightly raised as it swam, bill pointing slightly up. When it dove, the wings were spread.

The most striking difference between the Long-billed Murrelet and the Marbled Murrelet is the hooded look of the Long-billed, with no white coming up around the back of the head, which is characteristic of Marbled. This is the first time I have seen this species, but there are some 20 records or so for North America, nearly all away from the west coast. It is a first record for Ohio. By Jon L. Dunn, 153 Grange Hall Rd., Beaver Creek, OH 45430.