

FEATURES OF LONG-TAILED JAEGER
FOUND AND COLLECTED IN PRICE, UTAH ON SEPT. 10, 1993

Report by Nelson Boschen on Sept. 25, 1993

This bird was seen by Eddie Horvath to "fall out of the sky" onto a paved road in Price, Utah on Sept. 10, 1993. It was apparent that something was wrong with the bird. Mr. Horvath captured the bird with intentions of getting it to a rehabilitator, but the bird died shortly thereafter. Mr. Horvath gave the bird to Bill Bates (UDWR, Price office) who in turn sent the bird to me (Nelson Boschen, PO Box 20, Moab, UT 84532) for identification. The bird has been returned to Bill Bates, with the intent to give it to Dr. Clayton White at the BYU Bean Museum.

On Sept. 25, 1993, I collected the data given below and took four sets of photographs at various exposures. At least one set of photos will be sent to Ella Sorensen, co-chairman of the Utah Bird Latilong Committee. Each set of photos includes: (1) a full top view with wings fully spread, (2) a full bottom view with wings fully spread, and (3) a closeup of the bill, taken from the side. My identification was made primarily with the help of the Peterson field guide *Advanced Birding* by Kenn Kaufman (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1990).

AGE AND COLOR MORPH: juvenile, dark morph.

MEASUREMENTS TAKEN

1. Total length (bill tip to the longest central rectrice; moderately stretched): 37.0 cm; 14 9/16"
2. Wingspan (to the longest primaries; moderately stretched): 93.0 cm; 36 5/8"
3. Bill length (with the caliper jaws kept perpendicular to the gape angle)
 - a. From the tip to the base of the nail: 10.6 mm
 - b. The rest of the upper mandible until intercepting feathers: 9.2 mm

COLOR OF BARE PARTS

1. Both mandibles gray tending towards black on the outer half.
2. Legs and webbed feet gray except that the feet were pink-gray at the basal two fifths.

PLUMAGE FEATURES

The immediate impression is of a predominantly gray bird with a tint of brown. All feathers look new with little or no wear, which at this time of the year suggests juvenal plumage. Back and upperwing covert feathers: all with clean pale white fine scalloping, and most with only slightly curved tips. Nape somewhat pale gray, becoming broken with some faint wide gray-wash streaks in the earpatch area. Otherwise, the head area is a uniform gray. Upperwings: dark gray with a hint of brown and with thread-fine pale white on the flight feather tips and with wider, but still fine, pale white tips on all coverts; the outer two primaries show white feather shafts, while the remaining flight feathers show gray shafts. Underwings: coverts dark gray with a hint of brown and with extensive pale white mottling; the flight feathers gray except for white bases to the primaries (along the lengths of the primaries visible beyond the coverts, this white makes up less than 1/3 of the outer primary and narrows in a wedge shape to the inner primaries). Chest

and belly gray with very faint and fine whitish scalloping, grading into heavy uniform bars on the undertail coverts and flanks. Under and upper tail covert barring tends toward black and white, though the white has a faint buffy tint (that is more apparent on the upper tail coverts). Tail feathers uniformly dark gray with pale white tips. The two central tail feathers extend about two centimeters beyond the adjacent feathers, are bluntly pointed, and have pale white marks at the tips. The feathers of the vent area are covered with yellowish orange feces.

KEY FEATURES THAT SEPARATE IT FROM OTHER SPECIES

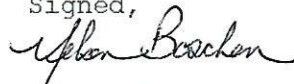
FROM GULLS: the longer two central tail feathers; the white under-primary bases.

FROM SKUAS: lighter build; narrower wings, without white primary bases visible on the upper sides; narrower bill.

FROM OTHER JAEGER: overall strong gray cast to plumage; the nail is equal to or longer than the remainder of the upper mandible; the two central rectrices extend well past the other tail feathers and are blunt-tipped even in fresh juvenal plumage; tail covert barring appears uniform instead of wavy; on the upper primaries, the shafts of only the outer two are white all or most of their length; the white on the underprimary bases is more restricted than commonly expected on the other two species; the pale white scalloping on the upper parts is narrower and less curved than expected on the other two species; the outer primary tips are pale white and inconspicuous.

FROM OTHER AGES AND COLOR MORPHS OF THE LONG-TAILED JAEGER: the dark belly separates it from all age light morphs; the all-fresh plumage is only found on the juvenile at this time of the year.

Signed,



Nelson Boschen

12-1993

Nelson Boshen 12-1993
PO Box 20
Moab, UT 84532
Dec. 2, 1993

Dear Elle,

As you can see, my seasonal report is pretty skimpy again. Working inside a building now doesn't lend itself to birding. Plus on my days off I've been working on a Bald Eagle management plan and seeing a dentist in Grand Junction (I've had all but 6 teeth removed recently + am seeing a dentist every break, probably for at least another 1 1/2 months before I finally have my full upper + partial lower plates.) In addition, vast amounts of time have been involved with developing some part time work with The Nature Conservancy in the sloughs. For an indefinite period (years) I will be performing one or two bird surveys each 2-wk period, plus some nest searching during the nesting season. The surveys will probably begin some time in January. At least then I'll get some birding in! (I hear you're a TNC "employee" now, too!)

On 9-25-93

→ I took 4 sets of long-tailed jaeger slides of the bird's top, underside, and bill (closeup). Three of those sets are included for you to do with as you wish. The bird's color may not be 100% true for 2 possible reasons: ① Slower shutter speeds tend to add a bluish tint to photos, and ② The film is Fujichrome Velvia 50, which I've heard tends to exaggerate colors (though I don't know if it does so to slate-gray specifically). For anyone who may be able to recognise a relationship, below are details of each shot, all taken in full shade,

Slide #	lens	Shutter Speed	F-stop	exposure	Time	Composition	
11	50mm macro	1/5 sec	8.5	~ average	1340	entire bird, top	
12			8.5	~ "	1340		
13			8-8.5	~ under 1/4 F-stop	1340		
15				8.5	~ average	1344	entire bird, bottom
16				8.5	~ average	1344	
17				8-8.5	~ under 1/4 F-stop	1344	
19				8-8.5	~ under 1/4 F-stop	1355	
20			8-8.5	~ under 1/4 F-stop	1355	bill closeup, right side	
21			8.5	~ average	1357		

A higher F-stop number makes a photo darker but sharper. The small difference may be insignificant here, but, to play it safe, you may want to keep one of each in each comp. group, + send Hugh the extra from each group (for example, #'s 11, 15 + 19).

May your world be filled with shore birds and other LFB's (that is, "little feathered bodies").

Nelson