

**JAEGERS IN COLORADO:  
A REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

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**Introduction**

Knowledge of jaeger occurrence, distribution, migration timing, and, particularly, identification has increased manifold since Bird Records Committees came on the birding scene in North America in the 1960s and 1970s. Early in this period, the widely accepted convention was that an inland jaeger was a Parasitic unless proven otherwise. In fact, this was the convention in most parts of North America (see Lee 1989). Two bases for this convention were probably: 1) the inherent difficulty of identifying these here-and-gone wraiths in their multiplicity of plumages and, 2) the fact that few observers got to see many, except on arctic breeding grounds. The fact that Parasitic is, by far, the most common of the three species at coastal and Great Lakes locations, where one actually can see numerous jaegers in a day probably also added ammunition to this belief.

However, with the advent of regular off-shore birding trips came the opportunity for astute observers to work out the identification criteria for these myriad plumages, giving the rest of us the chance to identify a jaeger using field marks, rather than dogma. These advances in knowledge came slowly and, since most of this knowledge was not available in field guides, those of us in the interior still assumed that Parasitic was the default jaeger.

The advent of modern field guides and specialty guides (e.g., Harrison 1983, National Geographic Society 1983) provided in-depth instruction on how to, and how not to, identify jaegers. Current birders have much more accurate information on jaeger identification in one page of a modern field guide than most birders had in all published materials available to them 30 years ago. The Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) would like to point out the particularly important book, *Skuas and Jaegers* (Olsen and Larsson 1997), to which the Committee referred often.

In the past ten years or so, Colorado birders have been proving that the dogma about jaeger occurrence in the interior is just that, dogma. At least, the lion's

share of jaegers that have occurred in the state in that period has been shown to be Pomarine, not Parasitic. Additionally, even the exceedingly rare Long-tailed has proven to be not-so-exceedingly rare. The ratio of jaeger species identified in the state in the past decade is at odds with that of the 20 years prior, where most jaegers were identified as Parasitics (Table 1).

As this report deals with very different issues, compared to those of the usual Committee reports published in this journal, we follow a very different form from that typically published. We also dispense with most of the business and explanations found in typical Committee reports. Should anyone need more specifics about the operation of the CBRC, see the previous report (Leukering and Wood 2002), the recently updated and published by-laws (Anonymous 2002), and/or the Colorado Field Ornithologists' website ([www.cfo-link.org](http://www.cfo-link.org)).

### Methods

In 2002, in order to determine why there was such an apparently strong change in jaeger ratios in Colorado, the CBRC re-circulated all reports on file that had been submitted to the Committee to document jaeger occurrences in the state prior to 1996 (plus one report from 1998 that had originally not been accepted). We chose that cutoff year somewhat arbitrarily, but that year also saw the real acceleration of the apparent change in status of the three jaeger species in the state, as judged by CBRC-accepted records. We also reviewed documents on hand for one report of a jaeger that occurred prior to the initiation of the CBRC in 1973.

The Committee reviewed documents from 36 contributors of 41 jaeger reports, including multiple reports of each of the three jaeger species and including three reports that were submitted on jaegers that were left unidentified by the reporters. Per CBRC by-laws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept, or, in the case of reports that remained undecided after two rounds of voting, received no more than one "not accept" vote at a Committee meeting. Each report that was not accepted received fewer than four votes to accept in the final vote for that report, or in the case of reports that remained undecided after two rounds of voting, received more than one "not accept" vote at the CBRC meeting. The CBRC members voting on these reports were Tony Leukering, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Karleen Schofield, Larry Semo, John Vanderpoel, and Chris Wood.

Unlike for other taxa, once a particular report was not accepted, we allowed for accepting that report at the generic level, that is, accepting the identification as a jaeger, but not as a particular species. The Committee felt that this action was

necessary to avoid a great loss of information about Colorado jaeger occurrence. Finally, I polled the CBRC members to determine what the Committee felt was the most likely identification of each jaeger that the Committee accepted generically.

### Results and Discussion

Of the 41 reports reviewed, the Committee accepted specific identifications of only 17, an acceptance rate of only 41.5% (Table 1). The CBRC also accepted one report of a Parasitic as the state's first record of Long-tailed and accepted two of the three reports submitted as jaeger sp. for an overall acceptance rate of 48.8%. To our knowledge, this rate is the lowest ever reported by the CBRC. However, it is not surprising, considering the species involved and the age of most reports. Of the 21 records not accepted, seven were not accepted outright, with the balance being accepted at the generic level (Table 1).

The organization and style of reporting on the individual records and non-accepted reports included below follow that of Leukering and Wood (2002), with minor changes, and the nomenclature and sequence follow that of the American Ornithologists' Union (1998). The items of information are, in their order of appearance for individual occurrences: CBRC accession number (either three-parted, for reports prior to 1998, or two-parted for those after 1997), plumage, location, and date. In the parenthetical expression following the date is the re-circulation voting record for the report from one to three rounds of voting. The format of the voting record is the number of accept votes on the left side of the hyphen and the number of not accept votes on the right side of the hyphen (see Leukering and Wood (2002) for a more thorough explanation). The boldfaced and italicized numbers represent the vote on acceptance as jaeger sp. The CBRC makes a final decision for most reports on the first round.

In this report, county names are italicized, in keeping with the style established for the News from the Field column in this journal (e.g., Semo and Wood 2003). I here report only the date span for individual records that were provided in the submitted reports; many of the birds were present prior to and/or subsequent to the dates reported to the CBRC. The Committee has not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans.

Abbreviations used in this report are: BL=Barr Lake, *Adams*; CCR=Cherry Creek Reservoir, *Arapahoe*; ChR=Chatfield Reservoir, *Douglas/Jefferson*; JMR=John Martin Reservoir, *Bent*; LH=Lake Henry, *Crowley*; MR=Marston Reservoir, *Denver*; PR=Pueblo Reservoir, *Pueblo*; Res.=reservoir; UR=Union Reservoir, *Weld*.

POMARINE JAEGER - *Stercorarius pomarinus*

**2001-206** - Not accepted - One individual was at MR on 23 September 1956 (0-7; 3-4). This report consisted solely of an excerpt from a seasonal report in Colorado Bird Notes (vol. 4, pg. 19) and the only detail listed was of elongated central rectrices. While this report may certainly have pertained to a jaeger, the scanty information provided in the published report did not allow the Committee to eliminate a molting immature gull from identification consideration.

**22-73-45** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One light-morph adult was at DeWeese Lake, *Custer*, on 12-13 May 1973 (7-0). Though the descriptions were brief and very sketchy (and unacceptable by themselves), the photographs provided were more than adequate to prove the identification.

**22-73-124** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One "intermediate"-morph adult was at Prospect Res., *Weld*, on 6 October 1973 (5-2, 6-1).

**22-75-147** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One dark-morph juvenile was at CCR, 5 October 1975 (5-2, 6-1).

**22-76-28** - Not accepted - One bird was reported at CCR, 27 February 1976 (0-7; 0-7). Though the bird seen might have been a jaeger, the details provided did not include a description of the bird, only of its behavior (it was not described chasing other birds, but flying calmly behind Ring-billed Gulls). Additionally, most CBRC members questioned the date, as any jaeger away from the ocean in February would be quite exceptional. This report was originally accepted as an unidentified jaeger.

**22-86-1** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One light-morph adult visited CCR on 23 November 1985 (4-3, 3-4, 4-0).

**22-86-42** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One light-morph sub-adult (possibly a bird in Alternate III; identified in the submission as a "winter adult") was at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 5 October 1986 (7-0). Jaegers are believed to molt on the winter grounds (waters?) and birds in basic plumage do not have the exaggerated central rectrices that the bird in question had and which the reporter described quite well.

**22-91-30** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One light-morph adult was at BL 29 June - 4 July 1991 (5-2, 6-1).

**22-91-31** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - Variably one to two dark-morph juveniles were at PR 31 October - 23 November 1991 (7-0). Only one bird was found on the first date. A dark-morph jaeger was present at the location on 26 October that may have been either of the two birds described, though the reporter did not see it well enough to be certain.

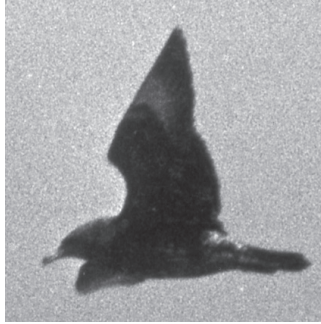
**22-93-57** - Not accepted - One individual was reported at CCR on 3 October 1993 (0-7; 2-5). The submission provided little description other than overall color pattern and the behavior observed of chasing a Great Blue Heron and then an unidentified gull. The bird was reported as "considerably larger" than the gull (which the reporter suggested was either a Ring-billed or a Herring), but size compared to the heron was not provided. Regardless of which species of white-headed gull was the yardstick species, no jaegers are considerably larger than either. While the bird may well have been a jaeger, nothing in the description eliminated other taxa, e.g., Bald Eagle. This report is as good an example as exists of the importance of, not only describing the bird or birds seen, but also to explain how one eliminates all identification contenders.

**22-94-29** - Accepted as Pomarine Jaeger - One dark-morph bird was at LH on 5 November 1994 (4-3, 4-3, 4-0).

**1998-52** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One individual ("subadult?" in the documentation) reported near Huerfano Lake, *Pueblo*, on 30 August 1998 (0-7; 7-0). This report was originally not accepted and it received less support upon re-circulation than on its first trip through the CBRC. While some aspects of the plumage were suggestive of Pomarine, all members of the Committee felt that, overall, the bird was much more suggestive of Long-tailed. Supporting features for the latter identification include the behavior (walking on a paved road that was about 1 mile away from the lake), the overall color ("gray-brown"), and the date. The date is important if the bird was a juvenile, as only Long-tailed is likely to arrive in juvenal plumage in Colorado in late August. Though the reporter listed the bird as a sub-adult, the very short tail, with little projection of the central rectrices, points toward a juvenile; these feathers should be longer, more adult-like on sub-adults.

The Committee would like to point out that certain juvenal plumages of Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers are very similar (see Olsen and Larsson 1997) and require the observer to correctly assess structural features and critical plumage details, e.g., number of white primary shafts, to correctly identify such birds. The Committee feels that trite expressions such as "barrel-chested" and "pot-bellied" are misunderstood and mis-used. All CBRC members felt that had the observer submitted the bird as a Long-tailed, they would have

accepted the report as such. However, the Committee was not willing to accept this report as a species different than that submitted (as for 22-73-115, see below), as there was no physical documentation upon which to base such a radical decision.



Dark-morph juvenile Pomarine Jaeger at Cherry Creek Reservoir, *Arapahoe*, on 5 Oct 1975. Photo by William Lybarger.

PARASITIC JAEGER - *Stercorarius parasiticus*

**22-73-115** - Accepted as Long-tailed Jaeger - One juvenile was photographed at CCR on 20 September 1973 (2-5; 7-0 as Long-tailed). Though submitted as a Parasitic, the three photographs submitted with the report prove the bird to be a Long-tailed. The Committee solicited outside expert opinion on the photographs (but did not provide those experts details of the report, such as date), though that opinion was actually divided. By their own admissions, a few of the experts were confused by a bird showing plumage features of a juvenile Long-tailed, but the bill structure and pattern of a Parasitic. The CBRC felt that all plumage features apparent in the pictures were consistent with those of Long-tailed and inconsistent with those of Parasitic and that bill features are more variable than often appreciated. To support that contention, the CBRC noted that one picture of a juvenile Long-tailed in Olsen and Larsson (1997) showed a bird with a bill virtually identical to that on the bird in question. Additionally the Committee felt that the date ruled out juveniles of any other species. So, for the first time in the Committee's history, the CBRC accepted a report as pertaining to a species different from that submitted. As another result of this decision, the published list of species that have occurred at Cherry Creek State Park (Reddall 1996) should be changed. Though Long-tailed Jaeger should be added to that list, all reports of Parasitic from Cherry Creek State Park have now been not accepted (see below).

**22-73-143** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at CCR on 17 December 1973 (0-7; 7-0). This report is typical of most of the older reports of Parasitic Jaeger in Colorado. The description does a good job at describing a jaeger, but provides little or no information that would allow the Committee to distinguish the species seen. The central rectrices were described as about one inch longer than the other rectrices, but, critically, the shape of those feathers was not described. We believe that the original Committee decision to accept this and other Parasitic reports, despite the lack of definitive details, is the best support for our contention that, like most observers of the period, the Committee members were swayed by the belief that Parasitic was the default jaeger species. We have the benefit of much more information than earlier Committees had.

**22-75-116** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One non-adult was harassing gulls at CCR on 15 August 1975 (0-7; 6-1). The only aspects of the description that supports an identification as a jaeger were the dark underwings, white flash in the primaries, and short projection of the central rectrices ("little nubbins"). The date of the report is early, even for Long-tailed, but that species was the only one to garner any votes (two).

**22-75-152** - Accepted as Parasitic Jaeger - One dark-morph adult was at Lake Meredith, *Crowley*, on 13 September 1975 (7-0). The reporter supplied a nice sketch of the tail, which was the convincing factor for most of the Committee members.

**22-75-143** - Not accepted - One dark individual was seen flying around Dye Res., *Otero*, on 28 September 1975 (1-6; 3-4). There was little actual description of the bird involved in this report, other than it was all dark and larger than Franklin's Gulls. The behavior, which comprised most of the report, was not inconsistent with that of Long-tailed Jaeger, but also was not inconsistent with that of many gull species.

**22-76-96** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at BL, 17-25 September 1976 (7-0). The reporter of this individual felt strongly that this bird was not the bird in 22-76-92 and that it was a Parasitic. Unfortunately, the reporter provided few specific plumage details and only one Committee member hazarded a guess on this individual's identity - Parasitic. One member felt that there was no strong case for considering this bird separate from the one described in 22-76-92 (jaeger sp.).

**22-76-123** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was chasing Ring-billed Gulls at MR on 11 December 1976 (3-4; 5-2). This report split the

CBRC, not only as to species, but also as to whether or not the bird was a jaeger. However, though there is no policy in place to deal with the details of re-circulation, the Committee felt that there should be overwhelming support to alter previous decisions. Therefore, it accepted this report generically as a suitable compromise.

**22-77-63** - Not accepted - One dark-morph adult was reported at CCR on 3 August 1977 (0-7; 3-4). Andrews (1978) incorrectly referred to this report as 22-77-67, where it was accepted without comment as jaeger sp. There was little in the report to suggest that the bird reported was a jaeger and not a gull.

**22-77-59** - Accepted as Parasitic Jaeger - One "intermediate"-morph adult was at UR 13-14 August 1977 (4-3, 3-4, 4-0). Though the details provided were a bit sketchy, the report received enough support at the CBRC meeting to keep it alive, despite a negative vote in the second round. Since there was not overwhelming support to alter the previous decision of the Committee, members at the last meeting unanimously accepted the report. With its acceptance, this record becomes the first, and only, "summer" record in Colorado of a jaeger other than Pomarine.

**22-77-65** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at UR on 4 September 1977 (2-5; 6-1). Though the reporter and, apparently, others believed that the bird in question was a Parasitic, the documentation included no strong evidence to support that identification.

**22-77-71** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One light-morph adult was at ChR on 17 September 1977 (1-6; 6-1). The bird was described as being slightly smaller than a California Gull, which would make the jaeger a very large one. The Committee felt that Pomarine was not eliminated by the details provided.

**22-83-6** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at UR 5-6 December 1982 (0-7; 6-1). This report garnered only one vote each for Pomarine and Parasitic, despite documentation, including a nice sketch of the head, being submitted by four observers. Again, this is strong evidence that, at the time, few observers knew which features were critical in identifying juvenile jaegers.

**22-83-30** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph individual was at the Rawhide Power Plant (Hamilton Res.), Larimer, on 29 July 1983 (0-7; 6-1). As for most reports of Parasitic Jaeger, this one provided little in the way of definitive details, with the observer apparently relying almost solely on size and structure for identification.



**22-84-11** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at UR 15-16 October 1983 (1-6; 6-1). The reporter provided few details that would permit specific identification.

**22-85-43** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One light-morph juvenile was at ChR, *Jefferson*, 7-8 September 1985 (1-6; 6-1). The date of this occurrence is early enough in fall to suggest that the bird was a Long-tailed; juvenile Parasitics are typically somewhat later migrants. In fact, three members voted for Long-tailed (versus one vote for Parasitic) as the identification of the bird in question. Despite strong beliefs by many Committee members that the bird was a Long-tailed, the lack of photographs precluded accepting the report as such.

**22-85-48** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One light-morph adult was at Blue Mesa Res., *Gunnison*, on 25 September 1985 (2-5; 6-1). Though submitted by an experienced observer, the details did not permit most CBRC members to definitively identify the bird described.

**22-86-41** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile (identified as a "3rd year" in the submission) was at CCR on 26 September 1985 (5-2, 2-5; 6-1). The details provided were better than for most reports of Parasitic and included details that were not then known to be important, such as strong barring on many tracts of feathers. However, these details of the upper- and undertail coverts and the underwings were very suggestive of Pomarine, particularly for a sub-adult, so the CBRC voted to accept the report generically.

**22-87-26** - Accepted as Parasitic Jaeger - One dark-morph juvenile was at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on 6 September 1985 (5-2, 6-1).

**22-87-27** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile was at Antero Res., *Park*, on 30 August 1987 (1-6; 6-1). The details provided suggested to many CBRC members that the bird in question was probably a Long-tailed (e.g., the 30 August date, the "lead-gray color," and the "deep gray wings" with a "narrow black trailing edge"). As for 22-85-43, the Committee felt that the lack of photographs precluded accepting the report as that of a Long-tailed.

**22-89-16** - Accepted as Parasitic Jaeger - One light-morph adult was at Holbrook Res., *Otero*, 14-15 September 1989 (7-0). The relatively useful description provided by the observer included an important, and little-known, feature - white forehead - that convinced the Committee that the identification was correct.

**22-95-33** - Not accepted - One light-morph individual was reported north of Ouray, *Ouray*, on 15 June 1995 (1-6; 2-5). This report of a bird flying over land and seen by the reporter while riding in a car, provided little in the way of field marks to convince the Committee that it was a jaeger that was seen.

**22-95-34** - Accepted as Parasitic Jaeger - One light-morph sub-adult was at LH 9-10 September 1995 (6-1). The extensive white flash on the upper side of the wing convinced most CBRC members that the identification as submitted was correct.



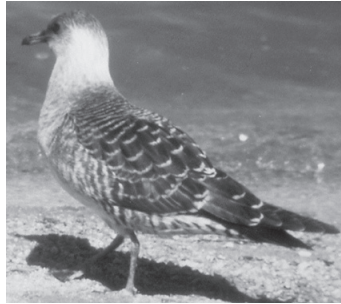
Adult Parasitic Jaeger at Chatfield Reservoir, *Jefferson/Douglas*, on 13 October 2000. Taken from video by Larry Semo.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER - *Stercorarius longicaudus*

**22-92-18** - Accepted as Long-tailed Jaeger - One light-morph adult was at the Plum Creek Delta of Chatfield Res., *Douglas*, 28-29 May 1992 (7-0).

**22-93-41** - Accepted as Long-tailed Jaeger - One light-morph adult graced Adobe Creek Res. (Blue Lake), *Bent*, 12 September 1993 (7-0).

**22-95-35** - Accepted as Long-tailed Jaeger - One light-morph adult was at Milton Res., *Weld*, 4-6 September 1995 and at BL, 10-14 September 1995 (7-0). The CBRC subsumed report number 22-96-20 (documenting the occurrence at Milton Res.) into this report number as the CBRC felt that the likelihood of two different, identically-plumaged, adult Long-tailed Jaegers appearing at sites only about 20 miles apart, and only days apart with no overlap in temporal occurrence was much less than the likelihood of one individual being found at two different water bodies in the bird's travels.



Juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger at Cherry Creek Reservoir, *Arapahoe*, on 20 September 1973. Photo by Harold Holt.

JAEGER SPECIES - *Stercorarius* sp.

**22-76-92** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile visited BL on 11 September 1976 (6-1). The reporter submitted documentation as jaeger sp., but felt that the size (near California Gull) suggested that the bird was a Pomarine. Originally, the CBRC accepted the report and we do not here alter that decision. The reporter provided few details such that only one CBRC member voted for a specific identification - Pomarine.

**22-76-113** - Not accepted - One individual was at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 6 November 1976 (1-6). This report received little support from the Committee, as the reporting observer provided few plumage details to support the identification as a jaeger.

**22-76-117** - Accepted as jaeger sp. - One dark-morph juvenile harassed gulls at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on 24 November 1976 (6-1). The reporter felt that the bird in question was probably a Parasitic, but the Committee could find no written details that would support an identification more specific than jaeger sp. The late date and the lack of obvious projection of the central rectrices both support an identification of Pomarine (which garnered three votes from Committee members). However, the Committee felt that these points alone were insufficient even for that species, given the lack of physical documentation.

Table 1. Results of the re-circulation of pre-1996 jaeger reports in Colorado, with the addition of one 1998 report.

Accession number	Original CBRC decision	Numbers of votes for individual taxa and categories <sup>1</sup>	2003 CBRC decision
<b>Submitted as Pomarine Jaeger</b>			
2001-168 <sup>2</sup>	not reviewed	1 PO, 2 SP, 4 NA	Not accepted
22-73-45	Accepted		Accepted
22-73-124	Accepted		Accepted
22-75-147	Accepted		Accepted
22-76-28	Jaeger sp.	7 NA	Not accepted
22-86-1	Accepted		Accepted
22-86-42	Accepted		Accepted
22-91-30	Accepted		Accepted
22-91-31	Accepted		Accepted
22-93-57	Not accepted	2PO, 5NA	Not accepted
22-94-29	Accepted		Accepted
1998-52	Not accepted	7LT	Jaeger sp.
<b>Submitted as Parasitic Jaeger</b>			
22-73-115	Accepted		Long-tailed Jaeger sp.
22-73-143	Accepted	1PO, 6 SP	Jaeger sp.
22-75-116	Accepted	2LT, 4SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-75-152	Accepted		Accepted
22-75-143	Not accepted		Not accepted
22-76-96	Jaeger sp.	2PA, 5SP	Jaeger sp.
22-76-123	Jaeger sp.	1PO, 2PA, 2SP, 2NA	Jaeger sp.
22-77-63	Accepted		Not accepted
22-77-59	Accepted		Accepted
22-77-65	Jaeger sp.	3PA, 1LT, 2SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-77-71	Accepted	1PA, 1LT, 4SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-83-6	Accepted	1PO, 1PA, 4SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-83-30	Accepted	6SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-84-11	Accepted	2PA, 4SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-85-43	Accepted	1PA, 3LT, 2SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-85-48	Accepted	2PA, 4SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-86-41	Accepted	5PA, 1SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-87-26	Accepted		Accepted

Table 1. Continued.

Accession number	Original CBRC decision	Numbers of votes for individual taxa and categories <sup>1</sup>	2003 CBRC decision
<b>Submitted as Parasitic Jaeger, continued</b>			
22-87-27	Accepted	2PA, 3LT, 1SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-89-16	Accepted		Accepted
22-95-33	Not accepted		Not accepted
22-95-34	Accepted		Accepted
<b>Submitted as Long-tailed Jaeger</b>			
22-92-18	Accepted		Accepted
22-93-41	Accepted		Accepted
22-95-35 <sup>3</sup>	Accepted		Accepted
<b>Submitted as jaeger sp.</b>			
22-76-92	Accepted	1PO, 5SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.
22-76-113	Accepted		Not accepted
22-76-117	Accepted	3PO, 3SP, 1NA	Jaeger sp.

<sup>1</sup> PO=Pomarine; PA=Parasitic; LT=Long-tailed; SP=jaeger sp.; NA=not accepted

<sup>2</sup> This report was not reviewed previously; the CBRC gave it the final accession number of the circulation of 2001 reports in order to review it.

<sup>3</sup> This record actually comprises two different submissions that the CBRC combined into one record (see text).

In general, we found the level of documentation for these reports to be very low, with little in the way of definitive evidence provided to support the identifications as submitted. Reporters obviously were under the assumption that if it was a jaeger, then it was almost certainly a Parasitic. This poor quality in jaeger documentations was in strong contrast with the general level of identification material presented in documentations of many other taxa. Thus, the lack of quality documentation was not due to an overall lesser level of skill of writing supporting documentation for rare birds in earlier years. However, we must point out that a few documents hold up quite well to our current knowledge of jaeger identification. Those few reports that were supported by photographs also fared much better than did reports without physical evidence, as Committee members could see the birds for themselves without

having to depend on the words provided 10, 20, or 30 years ago by a reporter mostly unaware of the critical field marks required to identify jaegers. Again, the CBRC wants to point out that this lack of knowledge is not the fault of the reporters; we, as birders and ornithologists, just did not know how to do it.

The final results of this re-circulation of jaeger reports leaves Colorado with the following numbers of accepted records: Pomarine - 14; Parasitic - 6; Long-tailed - 7; and jaeger sp. - 16 (Appendix A). Thus, the status of Parasitic Jaeger in the state is virtually identical to that of Long-tailed Jaeger. In fact, should all pending reports be accepted, there would be equal numbers of records for the two species. However, I would not be surprised if Long-tailed is slightly more likely to occur in Colorado than is Parasitic, as more of the accepted jaeger sp. records are suggestive of Long-tailed than of Parasitic.

Perusal of the accepted records illuminates the seasonal timing of the three jaeger species in the state. There are accepted spring records for both Pomarine and Long-tailed, but only one and two, respectively, with both Long-tailed occurring in the very end of May. Colorado has three summer records of Pomarine falling between 17 June and 4 July, but note that there is another mid-summer record of the species pending. There is an accepted record for Parasitic in mid-August that probably represents an early migrant, rather than a summering bird. In the fall, Pomarine is typically the latest of the species to arrive in the state, with only one fall record prior to October and that occurred on 30 September. The timing of Parasitic and Long-tailed migrants is earlier; they typically arrive before the middle of September. The set of pending records does not alter our understanding of seasonality for either Pomarine or Long-tailed, but greatly extends the season of occurrence for Parasitic. Interestingly, all three pending Parasitic reports are from fall 2000, the single "best" jaeger season that Colorado birders have seen.

In considering all records, both accepted and pending, there are 56 individual birds (there are two records of two birds each). In this sample, the ratio of light and dark color morphs of juveniles is dramatically different than that of older birds. The ratio of light to dark juveniles is 3:26; in older birds it is 23:1 (I have ignored two individuals for which I cannot determine color morph and one of unknown age at this time). This difference seems exceedingly odd, considering that current beliefs are that jaegers do not change their color as they age. However, the continued lack of confirmation of the dark morph in adult Long-tailed Jaeger, despite the known (but somewhat rare) occurrence of dark-morph juveniles of the same species (Olsen and Larsson 1997), may also point toward doubt about this facet of our beliefs. Perhaps there is further dogma to illuminate.

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