

group of Ring-billed Gulls. At one point the jaeger hovered briefly just above the water, then dropped its feet and pattered in the wake before reaching down to quickly grab a small, stunned gizzard shad, swallowing it whole. The jaeger lit in the water ever so briefly, then resumed following in the wake with the gulls. This “pitter-patter” behavior of the feet, reminiscent of a storm-petrel, while the bird hovers low over the water’s surface picking small prey out of the water, was noted by Kevin Richmond while observing the Lake Chautauqua bird on several different dates, and was captured by him on video (pers. comm.).

McGeehan (1995) relates that during winter, this species “is primarily a hovering/dip-feeding species. . . looking for food on the surface or in the wake of trowlers [sic].” Veit (1985) stated that Long-tailed Jaegers “in migration in Newfoundland behaved similarly and fed among kittiwakes and terns, by swooping, foot pattering and picking items off the sea.” Olsen and Larsson (1997) also mention that Long-taileds regularly “dip-feed.”

Other more seemingly jaeger-like behavior as well as other interesting observations concerning the Lake Chautauqua Long-tailed Jaeger include the following notations taken from personal communication with Kevin Richmond, a few narratives gleaned from IBET (Illinois’ birding list serve), and the author’s own observations.

- 11 September – Parasitic harasses /chases Long-tailed in flight. Other than walking along the cross-dike, the Long-tailed flew low over the open water of the lake just to the north of the dike; but rarely landed. It also hovered low with its feet in the water, picking something off the water’s surface. It was also noted bathing in the evening and preening for some time (K. Richmond).
- 14 September - Long-tailed Jaeger knocked a Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) into the water in the evening. The tern was screaming and when it was able to take off from the water’s surface, it flew low over to the shoreline where it hid until the jaeger had flown off. Once the “coast was clear” it flew off in the opposite direction of the jaeger (K. Richmond).
- 16 September - The jaeger was flushed off of the cross-dike by a Merlin. The Merlin chased after it briefly (K. Richmond).
- 17 September - Engaged in an aerial dogfight with a pair of Peregrine Falcons (J. Murphy).
 - Long-tailed chases two different Ring-billed Gulls (K. Richmond).
 - Bird goes to roost onto a sandbar near the dike (L. Augustine et al).
- 18 September - Seemed to become more active after the moon came up in the evening. Bird observed bathing and preening for approximately one-half hour.

While bathing in flight while hovering, bird dipped most of the lower half of its body into the water while flapping its wings. It flew around for a short time, occasionally doing a wing-quiver, a very rapid shaking of the wings, in an apparent attempt to rid its wings of water (S. Bailey et al).

- 20 September - Fed with swallows low over the water (just north of the cross-dike) in a pouring rain, while engaged in “moth-like” flight (P. Weber).

Other observers also noted the bird preening and bathing as well as being chased by the Parasitic Jaeger. Only on occasion did anyone notice the Long-tailed chasing the Parasitic. An interesting sidebar to these interactions include the following account by Richmond noted on several dates. “The Parasitic Jaeger liked to try to sit next to the Long-tailed Jaeger out in the water. The Parasitic would slowly sidle up next to the Long-tailed very innocently only to invariably attack it. The Parasitic chased the Long-tailed on a number of occasions. Never once did I ever see the Parasitic catch the Long-tailed. The Long-tailed was able to outmaneuver it every time. On several evenings, both jaegers were seen making extended, long (at times soaring) flights together. When the Parasitic would behave and not try to attack the Long-tailed, [the Long-tailed] would tolerate [the Parasitic’s] company. It was always the Parasitic seeking out the company of the Long-tailed, except for one occasion.”

Although at least some inland jaegers may be undernourished (see under Unusual “inland” records), all jaegers this author has observed in Illinois seem to

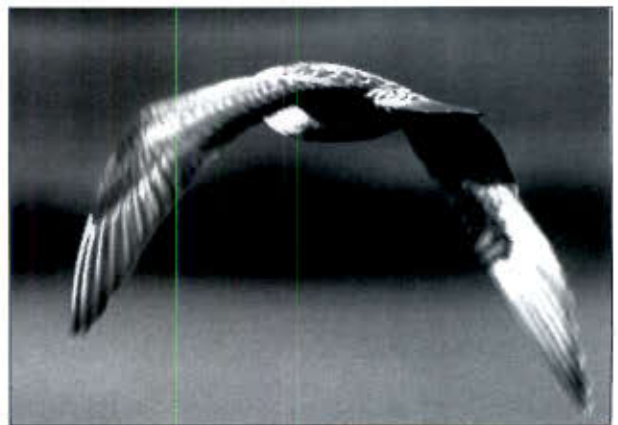


Figure 6. Although a seemingly poor photo in some respects, this photo of the 2000 Lake Chautauqua Long-tailed Jaeger shows the characteristic strong contrast between the dark secondaries and the much lighter upperwing coverts, distinctive to Long-tailed Jaeger. The strong underwing barring and two prominent all-white outer primary shafts are also very noticeable. Notice how the bright light makes the dirty-white/light brownish shafts of the remaining primaries appear much lighter than they actually are. Photo taken 15 September 2000 by Eric Walters.