

First-cycle Glaucous Gull

Photo by Robert Hughes.

This first-cycle Glaucous Gull is similar to the palest of Kumlien's Iceland Gull, but note the much shorter wings, blockier head shape, and the bicolored bill.



Second-cycle Thayer's Gull

Photo by Robert Hughes.

Most large gulls take four years to reach adult plumage. The mottled appearance of the mantle and wing coverts on this bird is typical of a second-cycle bird. In many ways this bird is similar to a Herring Gull. But this bird's primaries are considerably paler than a Herring Gull's. Furthermore, the pale frosty tips are unlike a Herring Gull. The darkest Kumlien's Gulls may approach this, but they should show more of a pattern to the tertials. While quite variable, this is a rather normal-looking second-cycle Thayer's Gull.

Adult Thayer's Gull

Photo by Robert Hughes.

Scanning through large flocks of Herring Gulls can be tedious, but often rewarding when you come upon something like this bird. Looking at the underside of the far wing we can see that it is very pale. Herring Gull, by contrast, would have the underside of the primaries appear black with only a small white mirror and white tip. This is the least subjective mark to separate this Thayer's Gull from Herring Gull. Also note the dark wash on the back of the head and nape that is quite smudgy. When scanning through a large flock of Herring Gulls, looking for this more even wash, is a good way to find a candidate Thayer's Gull.

