

Illinois and "Inland" Status

Illinois currently has only the two recent records for Long-tailed Jaeger. A more critical examination of the one purported Long-tailed specimen, which was collected near Nashville (Washington County) 21 October 1893, may yet show this to be Illinois' first accepted record, but see Stotz (2001). There is also a purported Long-tailed that was picked up in a decayed state along the shore of the Mississippi River near Cairo in November 1876 (Ridgway 1889); however, given the knowledge of the time, this record will probably always be questionable. There have been a few other reports of Long-taileds in Illinois, some likely correct. Kassebaum (2001) mentions another bird observed at Lake Carlyle in 1998. Kevin Richmond observed an intermediate-type juvenile Long-tailed harassing a Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) at Lake Chautauqua 13 October 1997. Richard Sandburg observed a similar bird at Clinton Lake (DeWitt County) some days later (K. Richmond pers. comm.). Unfortunately, there is no documentation for any of these birds. As this article goes to press, yet another Long-tailed has been reported during late-September 2001, this time an adult at Lake Carlyle.

In an exam of jaeger records published in "North American Birds," and its predecessors "Field Notes" and "American Birds," for all inland locations in the lower 48 states from 1990 through 2000, as well as the use of various state bird monographs, I actually found records for more states for Long-tailed Jaeger (20) than I did for Parasitic (15). This is just the opposite situation from the Great Lakes where Parasitic records far outnumber the other two jaeger species (Sherony and Brock 1997), and the same holds true for near shore coastal areas (Wiley and Lee 1999). Midwestern states other than Illinois that had "inland" Long-tailed Jaeger records from the above sources include Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota (Janssen 1987), Ohio (Peterjohn 1989), and Missouri (Robbins and Easterla 1992). Wisconsin and Iowa also have older records (Robbins 1991, Kent and Dinsmore 1996). Interestingly, two other Midwestern states, Indiana and Michigan, have never had an "inland" Long-tailed Jaeger record (Mumford and Keller 1984, Granlund et al 1994), despite each state having numerous records from the Great Lakes (14 for Indiana, 17 for Michigan).

Unusual "Inland" Records

The above feeding behavior has been noted by others at "inland" locations, and could also be responsible for the many sightings of this species in areas that appear to be inappropriate for a jaeger. An adult bird was found at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and was at first thought to be weak, as it "did relatively little flying, but rested and fed on lake flies," and could be approached

"as close as five feet" (Robbins 1991). That bird was also seen scavenging on road-killed rabbit. Ohio has two "inland" records, both involving sick or injured birds that later died. One was found along a rural road near Ashtabula, and the other was found in a residential yard in Parma (Peterjohn 1989). One apparently literally "fell out of the sky" and died 9 September 1993 at Price, Utah (Kingery 1994). One was found sitting on a road in McLean County, North Dakota, 15 October 1991 (Berkey 1992). One juvenile was picked up alive along the highway near Ash Fork, Arizona, 28 August 1996 (Benesh and Rosenberg 1997). A dead Long-tailed Jaeger was found along a road near Plymouth, Wisconsin 6 September 1996 "where it had been seen for several days feeding with Ring-billed Gulls on farm fields prior to its demise" (Tessen 1997). Another was found dead in Ponderosa Pine Forest, north of Lupton, Arizona 18 September 1992 (Rosenberg and Stejskal 1993).

Perhaps the most unusual record is of an adult Long-tailed that was shot (then captured alive, later becoming a specimen) while flying with pigeons on a farm in a rural area near Lone Tree, Iowa on 15 June 1906 (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). However, almost as unusual may be the TV tower mortality record at Raleigh, North Carolina, (well inland from the coast) 25 August, 1960 (Lee 1989). There is also an "inland" record for Minnesota of a specimen collected on 1 July 1898 at Warren, which as far as I can tell, is farther than 30 miles from any significant body of water (Janssen 1987). In addition, the one Illinois specimen purported to be this species (but see Stotz 2001), was also found dead at a location (near Nashville), what would have been a considerable distance from any significant body of water at that time. As you can see in the above records, the Long-tailed Jaeger not only has a preponderance for turning up at unusual locations, but also has been found in a weakened state or already dead on several occasions. Of 15 records of dead jaegers retrieved from the Great Lakes region, 10 were Long-tailed, suggesting that either this species of jaeger arrives in poorer condition than the other two species or it is being significantly undercounted by observers (Sherony and Brock 1997). This species' different feeding strategies and prey selection (as compared with other jaegers) may play an important role in if and how it is able to complete an overland or "inland" migration route to the Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico. This is especially true given the very degraded nature of the Great Lakes (Ashworth 1986), along which most Long-taileds are likely funneled.

This species' tendency to appear in open areas, away from any body of water has been noted elsewhere as in McGeehan's (1995) statement concerning European (British Isles?) Long-taileds, which "turn up on