

Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*



Folk Name: (none)

Status: Migrant

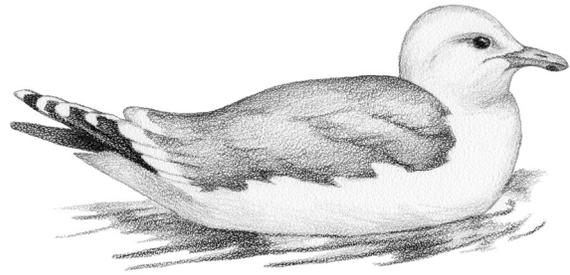
Abundance: Accidental

Habitat: Open water of lakes and rivers

Thayer's Gull regularly winters on the Pacific Coast and is considered casual or rare in the East. It is one of the rarest gulls that can be seen in the Carolinas. It is a challenge to identify, and its status as a distinct species has been debated for several decades. It is known to hybridize with both the Herring Gull and Iceland Gull. Thayer's Gull was upgraded to the full North Carolina list by the Bird Records Committee in 1990 after six or seven sight records and one photograph were published. It wasn't officially confirmed in South Carolina until an adult was photographed at the Horry County landfill on January 11, 2016.

A "first cycle" Thayer's Gull was discovered by Chris Talkington and David Wright on December 18, 2011. The two were birding from a pontoon boat on Lake Norman in Mecklenburg County while helping out with the annual Southern Lake Norman Christmas Bird Count. The bird was found roosting with thousands of Ring-billed Gulls and some Herring and Bonaparte's Gulls. It was well photographed and was relocated and photographed again by several observers on that day and the next. This sighting is yet another "amazing" record of a rare gull species in the Central Carolinas and the first record of this species ever documented inland in North or South Carolina.

*Note: As of July 2017, the American Ornithologists' Union has designated Thayer's Gull to be a subspecies of Iceland Gull; *Larus glaucooides thayeri*.*



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Thayer's Gull on Lake Norman. (Chris Talkington)