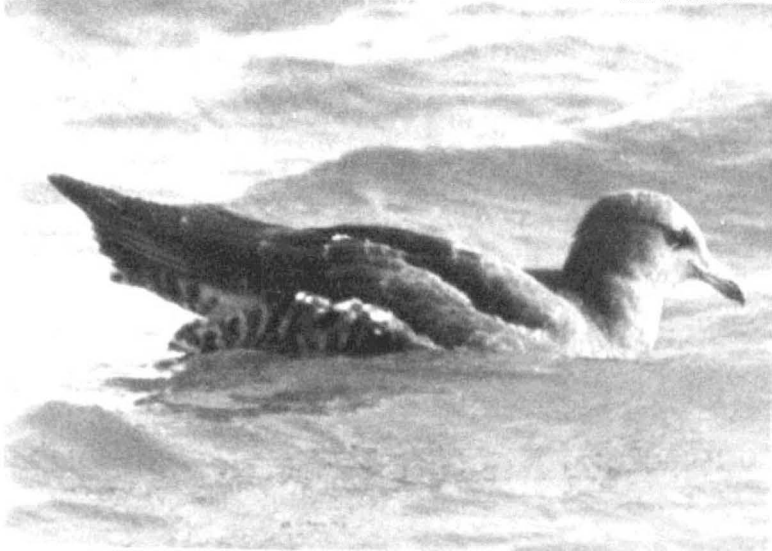


A NEW BIRD FOR OKLAHOMA: POMARINE JAEGER

By JOHN S. SHACKFORD

At about 0930 on 12 November 1979, at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, I observed a dark, gull-like bird that I assumed was a Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), an assumption based largely on the fact that the Parasitic was the only jaeger listed "officially" for the state. The bird looked much like a jaeger I had seen and photographed on 27 September 1975, an individual identified provisionally by George M. Sutton as a Pomarine Jaeger (*S. pomarinus*), but not reported as such since no specimen of that species had ever been collected in Oklahoma. That bird's bill, which was dark on its distal third, but flesh-colored otherwise, was, in Dr. Sutton's opinion, too blunt or "chunky" for that of a Parasitic Jaeger or Long-tailed Jaeger (*S. longicaudus*). The photographs that I took showed this "chunky" bill fairly well, but Dr. Sutton felt that they were not quite clear enough to stand as evidence that *S. pomarinus* belonged on Oklahoma's "official" list of birds.



POMARINE JAEGER

An immature bird photographed at Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City on 17 November 1979 by John S. Shackford. Note the heaviness, almost the bluntness, of the bill.

The jaeger that I observed for about an hour on 12 November 1979 kept well out from shore. It flew strongly and seemed to be in good health. From time to time it chased one of the several Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) that were flying about the lake. Not while I was watching it did it force any gull to disgorge food. I did not hear it cry out. At rest on the water it was dark all over except for light markings on the flanks and under tail coverts. When it was flying, light flashed occasionally from the under side of its wings.

I saw the jaeger almost every day between 12 and 18 November — a week of unusually fine weather throughout central Oklahoma. Others who also observed it were my wife Diane, Wesley S. Isaacs, John G. Newell, Ernest E. Wilson and his son Craig, Kathryn Belcher, and Gwen Field.

The bird was less active and less wary as the days passed. Gradually it spent more time idly floating on the water, drifting closer and closer to shore, though never quite to it. On 17 November it surprised me by swimming to within a few yards of the water's edge to investigate sticks that I tossed in its direction. I could not help thinking that it mistook these for something to eat. I photographed it several times that day. On the following day Ernest Wilson also photographed it.

On the evening of 18 November the jaeger was not on the lake proper but just north of it on one of the small "settling ponds" used by the Oklahoma City Water Department. On 19 November, at this same pond, I saw no flying or swimming jaeger, but presently I spied a dark carcass floating on water purification sludge about 30 yards out from shore. Convinced that this was the bird I had been seeing, I tried to snag it by casting a fishline — but in vain. The sludge was far too "boggy" for safe wading.

On 28 November, Warren D. Harden and I laid broad boards on the sludge and Harden, advancing precariously, finally reached and retrieved the carcass. Most of it was missing, for evidently a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) or other predator had fed upon it, but the wings and feet were there, and the bones of these proved to be those of a Pomarine Jaeger. The humeri, in particular, were much larger than those of adult Parasitic and Long-tailed jaegers collected on Baffin Island in the summer of 1953 by Dr. Sutton. Diagnostic remains are now at the Bird Range at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

I am grateful to Warren Harden, who made the journey out to the carcass, and to D. Scott Wood, who compared the specimen's wing bones directly with those of the other jaeger species.

ROUTE 1, BOX 125, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73111. 4 DECEMBER 1979.

A GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE COLONY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

By RANDALL A. PORTER

So far as I have been able to ascertain, the Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) was sighted only six times in Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma, prior to the year 1979. These early sightings were: on 7 May