

Parasitic Jaeger/juvenile
10-14 September 2011
Barren Reservoir Allen/Barren Counties
First Kentucky record
David L. Roemer

There was a strong movement of jaegers on southern Lake Michigan on 5 September as reported by Ken Brock on the Indiana listserv, with 8 of 15 jaegers seen identified as Parasitics. The remainder were too distant to identify. On the same date, Jen Brumfield reported 8 jaegers on Lake Erie at Cleveland, with 4 of them being Parasitic and the remainder either Parasitic or Long-tailed and unidentified. September is typically the month with the highest number of Parasitic Jaegers sighted on the Great Lakes, and the month I expected to see a Parasitic in Kentucky if one was ever found.

A series of high pressure systems moved across the Great Lakes region from the west, and a series of low pressure systems, including that associated with Tropical Storm Lee, was spread across the eastern states including eastern Kentucky. The clockwise rotation of the highs and the counter-clockwise rotation of the lows resulted in strong northerly winds and ideal migrating conditions across the Great Lakes over the next few days. A link to a weather map from 5 September is copied below. Click on the "next day" link to follow the movement of the weather systems.

http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/dailywxmap/index_20110905.html

Single distant jaegers were observed at Barren Reservoir near the mouth of Skaggs Creek at least twice on the morning of 10 September from Bailey's Point boat ramp. I got the impression of Long-tailed during one sighting, and the impression during another that it was not a Long-tailed, appearing too bulky and broad-winged. Images of a jaeger were obtained with a digital camera through my scope from across the lake as it sat on the water, but I was unable to identify it due to distance. It was flushed by a boat and flew upriver where I spent most of the day searching for it unsuccessfully. Aaron Hulseley and I located a juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger late in the afternoon from Bailey's Point Campground, and I went home to get my boat to attempt to obtain images of it. We were able to obtain poor but diagnostic images just before dark.

Upon reviewing the digiscoped images that night, the bird photographed that morning did appear to show characters consistent with juvenile Parasitic. I then posted to birdky that it was possible that 2 jaegers were present on Barren with one being a possible Parasitic. The next morning, 11 September, I took my boat to Barren and did in fact locate 2 juvenile jaegers, the Long-tailed and a Parasitic.

Both jaegers were present through 14 September. Hap Chambers and I watched the Parasitic attempt flight, but was unable due to injury or malnutrition. We caught the bird from my boat and I took it to a rehab facility where it was under the care of a veterinarian. I was told by facility personnel that one of their employees released the bird on the Ohio River in Meade County on 24 September. I was told that it gained 50 grams of weight while in their care and flew well when released.

The Parasitic was readily distinguished from the Long-tailed given good views, primarily due to its cinnamon tones and prominent pale primary crescents, both of which the Long-tailed lacked.



Parasitic Jaeger 12 September 2011 Barren Reservoir Allen/Barren Counties, Kentucky



Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaegers 11 September 2011 Barren Reservoir Allen/Barren Counties Kentucky