

## Short communication

# New record of Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) off Liguria (NW Italy)

Enrico Carta\*, Davide Ascheri, Elena Fontanesi

**Abstract** - In this work we revise past observations of Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* in Italy and its ecological features in Northern Italy. Moreover, we report the new observation of the species realized in August 2020, of an individual in juvenile plumage that was spotted in front of the town of Imperia. The identification was based on the pictures taken during the sighting. The record, following one in Genoa in 1991, is the second for this species in the Ligurian Region, and it is the first sighting in the western part of the region.

**Key words:** Long-tailed Jaeger, Liguria, vagrant birds, marine environment.

**Riassunto** - Nuovo avvistamento di labbo codalunga (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) al largo della Liguria (Italia nordoccidentale).

Nel presente lavoro indichiamo quanto noto in bibliografia sulle segnalazioni di labbo codalunga (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) e sulle sue caratteristiche ecologiche in Nord Italia.

Successivamente riportiamo la notizia di un esemplare osservato nell'agosto 2020 in piumaggio giovanile al largo di Imperia. L'identificazione è avvenuta in base alle foto scattate al momento dell'incontro. Si tratta del secondo dato ligure noto: il primo riguarda un esemplare trovato a Genova nel 1991. Si tratta, inoltre, della prima osservazione per la specie nel settore occidentale della regione.

**Parole chiave:** labbo codalunga, Liguria, specie accidentali, ambiente marino.

The Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus* Vieillot, 1819) is considered a migratory and a possible wintering species in Italy (Brichetti & Fracasso, 2015). The same authors describe its presence among the national territory as scarce but quite regular, with movements in August-October (peak in September) and March-April; occasional in May-June (Brichetti & Fracasso, 2006). Most of the observations known in Italy are referred to immatures of the dark morph or intermediate phase (Bri-

chetti & Fracasso, 2006). Despite its pelagic habits, and unlike the other species of the same genus, the Long-tailed Jaeger in Northern Italy is more frequent in inland areas, both lowland and mountainous, with records up to 2000-2400 meters in Piedmont and Aosta Valley (Boano, 1988; Brichetti & Fracasso, 2006), regions in which the species is considered as irregular transient (Pavia & Boano, 2009).

An individual of this species has been observed and photographed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2020 during a dedicated research survey, with the primary focus on bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and used also as platform of opportunity to collect data on seabirds. The individual was found 4.17 km offshore Imperia (Fig. 1). It was a juvenile and it presented the dark morph (Svensson *et al.*, 2012). At first it was stationary on the surface of the water, then it moved towards east, before stopping again not far from the zodiac.

Similarly to records in other Italian regions (Sighele, 2016), the proper species identification was possible based on the photos collected at sea (Fig. 2), with the essential contribution and opinion of some experts. The main useful features for recognition were the short half black beak, uniform shaded chest, dark projection of the wing without pale apices, barred white-black undertail (Quaglierini, *in litt.*).

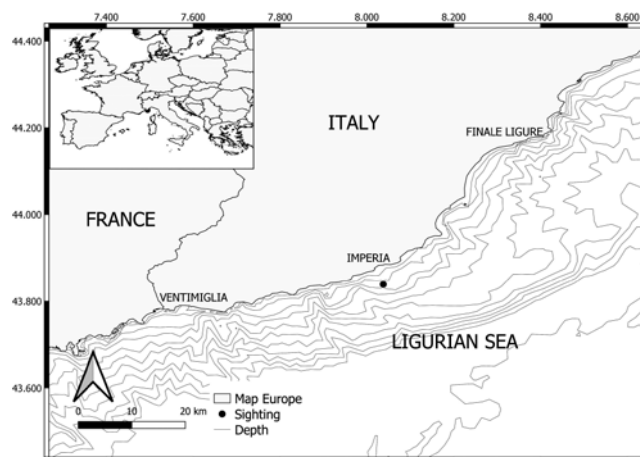


Fig. 1 - Map of the sighting realized with QGIS 3.14. / Mappa dell'avvistamento realizzato con QGIS 3.14.

Delfini del Ponente - APS, Via Regione Bussi, 18100 Imperia, Italia.  
E-mail: delfinidelponente@gmail.com

\* Corresponding author: enrico94@outlook.it

© 2021 Enrico Carta, Davide Ascheri, Elena Fontanesi

Received: 19 November 2021

Accepted for publication: 9 March 2021

Online publication: 16 April 2021



Fig. 2 - The long-tailed jaeger observed in front of Imperia on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2020. / Il labbo codalunga osservato davanti a Imperia il 22 agosto 2020. (Photo: / Foto: © Davide Ascheri).

The literature's search showed only one previous record of Long-tailed Jaeger in Liguria, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1991 in Genoa Sturla (Borgo *et al.*, 1992). Also in that occasion, the individual observed was a juvenile, in evident debilitated condition, which soon after died and is currently kept at the Civic Museum of Natural History "G. Doria" of Genoa (Borgo *et al.*, 1992). Therefore, the species is considered accidental in the regional checklist (Baghino *et al.*, 2012). There are also few general references for the species in Liguria in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but without any confirmation (cfr. Arrigoni Degli Oddi, 1904, 1929; cfr. Boschetti, 1926). The absence of records for the region until the '90s is confirmed by Spanò & Truffi (1987) and Boano (1988). The species has been known for the southern part of France in Nice area since the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the capture of an individual on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1893 (cfr. Giglioli, 1907).

Due to the lack of more recent data, this new observation must be considered the second for Liguria, and the first one ever for the western part of the region and for the Imperia area.

It is important to underline the difficulty to recognize the species from the parasitic jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), in particular when exhibiting juvenile plumage; consequently, the real occurrence of the species in Liguria, as well as in the rest of Italy, could be underrated.

#### Acknowledgements

Many people helped us with this work, but particular thanks are due to Alessio Quaglierini and Luciano Ruggieri for the help in recognizing the species; to Enrico Borgo and Giovanni Boano for providing bibliographic material; to Francesca Maurelli and Andrea Carolina Pedrazzini for the revision of the English language.

#### REFERENCES

- Arrigoni Degli Oddi E., 1904 – Manuale di Ornitologia italiana. *Hoeppli*, Milano.
- Arrigoni Degli Oddi E., 1929 – Ornitologia italiana. *Hoeppli*, Milano.
- Baghino L., Borgo E., Bottero M., Galli L. & Valfiorito R., 2012 – Check-list degli uccelli di Liguria. *Rivista italiana di Ornitologia. Research in Ornithology*, 81 (1): 15-42.
- Boano G., 1988 – Passaggio del labbo codalunga attraverso le alpi occidentali. *Sitta*, 2: 93-98.
- Borgo E., Truffi G. & Verner A., 1992 – Primo accertamento in Liguria di labbo codalunga *Stercorarius longicaudus*. *Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia*, 62 (3-4): 181-182.
- Boschetti G. A., 1926 – Appunti per lo studio della avifauna ligure (continuazione e fine). *Avicula*, 8: 44-53.
- Brichetti P. & Fracasso G., 2006 – Ornitologia italiana. Vol. 3. Stercorariidae - Caprimulgidae. *Alberto Perdisa Editore*, Bologna.
- Brichetti P. & Fracasso G., 2015 – Check list degli uccelli italiani aggiornata al 2014. *Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia. Research in Ornithology*, 85 (1): 31-50.
- Giglioli E. H., 1907 – Secondo resoconto dei risultati sull'inchiesta ornitologica in Italia. *Stabilimento Tipografico San Giuseppe*, Firenze.
- Pavia M. & Boano G., 2009 – Check-list degli uccelli del Piemonte e della Valle d'Aosta aggiornata al dicembre 2008. *Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia*, 79 (1): 23-47.
- Sighele M., 2016 – Gli stercorari nel basso Garda orientale (Provincia di Verona) e in Veneto (Aves: Stercorariidae). *Atti 7° Convegno Faunisti Veneti. Bollettino del Museo di Storia Naturale di Venezia*, 66 (suppl.): 194-202.
- Spanò S. & Truffi G., 1987 – Gli uccelli della Liguria occidentale. *Regione Liguria*, Genova.
- Svensson L., Mullarney K. & Zetterström D., 2012 – Guida degli uccelli d'Europa, Nord Africa e vicino Oriente. *Ricca Editore*, Roma.