

Sighted record verification

see also
+ Newlon

1. Species: Black-legged Kittiwake, imm. 2. Number: one.
3. Location: Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co. Iowa.
4. October 27, 1976. 5. Time seen: 4:20 - 4:40 PM.
6. Description. First seen flying over the water, periodically hovering briefly and then plunging, somewhat like a tern. Smaller than nearby Ring-bills. Noted in flight: zig-zag pattern on wing, slightly forked tail with black edge, black nuchal crescent. When bird alighted on water, I got closer and trained scope on it. Head white, except for black cheek spot; bill rather stubby, black; nuchal crescent very distinct, lined all around with white feathers. Corresponding to the diagonal wing bar seen in flight, a dark line was seen along the folded wing.
7. Voice: not heard. 8. Behavior: flight rather low over water, hovering and plunging, rather high-riding on water. 9. General habitat: Over water. Specific: in a small inlet formed by the scalloped SW shore of the reservoir.
10. Similar species (all immatures): Bonaparte's has no nuchal crescent, more white on wings, square or rounded tail; Black-headed - ditto, with even more white on wings; Sabine's: no nuchal spot, wing pattern of black-gray-white triangles, head gray in back; Ross's - no nuchal crescent, wedge-shaped tail, no spot behind eye; Little - much smaller, nuchal crescent (if present) merely an extension of the dark gray back, not demarcated in white, black cap. of these only the imm. Bonaparte's is more common than the Kittiwake in Iowa. This is the third record for the state (last seen in Davenport Dec. 1967).
11. Distance: est. 300-600 meters. 12. Equipment: 7x35 Leitz Triovid binoculars; 20-45x Bushnell 200m scope on tripod. 13 Light etc. Clear day. Sun

almost on a straight line drawn between bird and observer, in my back. Excellent light on bird.

14. Previous experience: I saw adult Kittiwake off the Washington coast Sept. '73, and an imm. from the Grand Manan ferry July '74. Imm. Bonaparte's seen on several occasions in Iowa. Imm. Little Gull seen July '74 in New Brunswick and March '75 at Newburyport, MA. In the latter place also saw adult Black-headed in winter plumage.

15. Other observers: Mike and Carol Newlon drove out after 5:30 PM when I alerted them to the sighting, and located the bird. W. Nelson and I saw

16. They agreed with identification.

5 Oct. 28, 4:30 PM
*

17. See 15.

18. Robbins, Pough, W and European Peterson. All confirmed diagnosis. The last of these was most helpful in the compilation of the differential diagnosis.

19. Between 5:20 and 5:40 PM (one hour after sighting).

W. St. Halimi

Box 182, R#6

October 28, 1976

IOWA CITY, IA 52240

* Total no. of observers who saw the bird on 10/27-28 is 7: NSH, M&CN, WN, R. DeCoster, A. Mueller & L. Serbousek