

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

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One 1st winter bird on 30 November at Red Rock Reservoir tailwater area in Marion Co.

Tom Kent and I arrived about 7:45 AM on a bright sunny (and cold) morning. There were perhaps 300 gulls in the immediate area, mostly Ring-bills with a few Herring Gulls. At about 8:15 AM, we spotted a different looking bird that was sleeping at the edge of a small group of about 30 gulls on a sandbar about 40 yards away. I put my scope on the bird and saw it was noticeably smaller than the Ring-bills next to it in body bulk. It's head was tucked into its back but I could see it was basically a white bird with a black patch behind its eye and a dark (black) smudge on the back of its neck. After about 10 seconds of viewing (and before Tom Kent could look through the scope) the birds all flushed and we lost sight of this bird. About fifteen minutes later, we suddenly spotted it sitting on the water below the dam, by itself, and about 50 yards from us. With the scope, I noted the following:

Head, neck and body white except for a vertical auricular black patch, smudge of black immediately around the eye, and a kind of scaly (not solid) black smudge around the back of the lower neck (horizontally). I also noticed that the auricular patch actually connected to kind of a faint line going all the way over the top of the head, like the rear outline of a hood.

The mantel was a similar gray to the Ring-bills. There was a black horizontal stripe on the side of the bird formed by wing feathers. The tertials appeared white on the folded wing and the primary tips were black.

The eye was black and quite large relative to the head. The bill was slender, black, and about as long from base to tip as the distance from the base to the back of the eye.

After about 10 minutes, the bird got up and flew around for a few minutes before landing again in the same place we first saw it. In flight, I noted a very striking wing pattern of black and white as sketched below. Also, the tail was white and relatively square tipped and edged with black terminally. I thought the legs appeared dark.

We left about 8:40 AM.

Notes were taken immediately after sighting and this form typed next day. Have seen adult of this species in Alaska.

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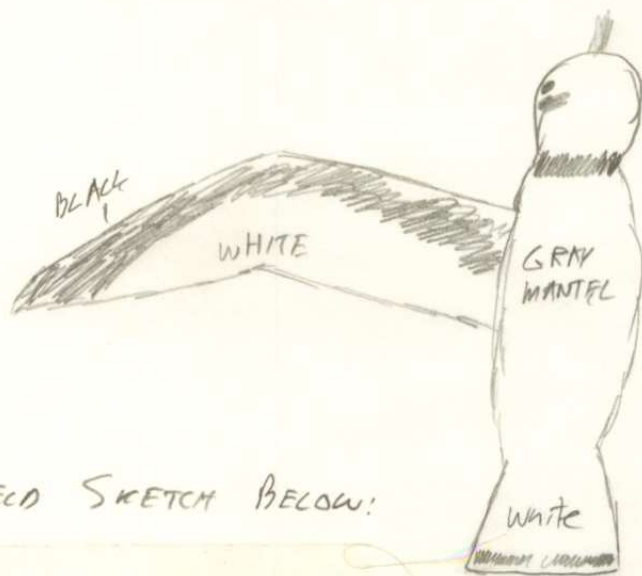
30 Nov 1988

Red Rock Pt.

CAROL BENDORF



GOOSE-LIKE APPEARANCE UNINTENTIONAL -
SKETCH TO SHOW COLOR PATTERNS ONLY

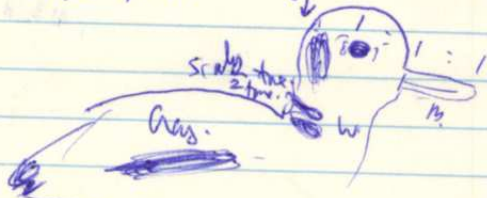


ACTUAL FIELD SKETCH BELOW:

8:40 dusk

plum.
white upper.

over top.



black primary tips - white tail
black bill.

