

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What Species? Black-legged Kittiwake

How many? 1

Location? Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co.

Type of Habitat? Spillway below dam

When? November 25, 1996, 12:35 - 12:40 p.m.

Who? Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

Others with you: None

Others before or after you: Ken Lowder, Tom Kent (before)

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

The bird was seen flying below the dam with many Ring-billed and Herring gulls. It was in first winter plumage. Size and shape very similar to Ring-billed Gulls. Bill slender and entirely black. Eye dark. Head white with small black smudge behind eye. Underparts white. Black "collar" on upper back. Mantle light gray. Upperwings mostly white with black "W" from the outer primaries to the wrist and then angled down towards the back. Underwings white with black outer primary tips. Uppertail and undertail coverts white. Uppertail and undertail white with black terminal band, which was broadest in the center, making the tail appear slightly notched.

Similar species; how eliminated: The pattern of the upperparts is very distinctive. The black "collar" eliminates similar species.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.

Viewing conditions: Diffuse sunlight; viewed 20-40 yards away with 8 x 40 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: No experience with this species; very familiar with regular Iowa gulls.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide.

How long before field notes made? Five hours.

How long before this form completed? Five hours.