

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Black-legged Kittiwake

How Many?1 first-winter

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-near the Big Creek spillway and off Jester Park

Habitat?resting and feeding with other gulls on reservoir

Date?25 Oct-2 Nov 1987

Time?

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others who saw bird:Paul Martsching

Description of bird:Paul and I were looking over some gulls at the Big Creek spillway when I noticed a different gull with a bold wing pattern. The bird was larger than several nearby Bonaparte's Gulls, but smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls it was with. The most obvious feature of this bird was the wing pattern; a bold, black "W" extended across the back of the wings and contrasted sharply with the birds paler back and rest of wing. Other features noted on the bird were; black collar across the back of the neck, black spot behind the eye, black bill, slightly forked tail with a narrow, black terminal band, and black legs. The rest of the bird, including the underparts, head, tail, and rump, was white. The bird was aged as first-winter on the basis of the wing pattern, dark collar, and dark bill. I have several photographs of the bird in flight(taken on 28 Oct).

Similar species and how eliminated:The small size and wing pattern rules out all large gulls. Only Little Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Sabine's Gull, and Black-legged Kittiwake have striking wing patterns like this bird. The black collar and black carpal bar eliminates Sabine's and Bonaparte's gulls. The larger size, black collar, and black legs eliminates Little Gull.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent on all observations. Estimated viewing distance was from about 30 feet when I photographed the bird. At other times, the bird was seen at distances of about 100-200 yards. I used a Buschnell 20-45x spotting scope for most observations.

Previous experience with species:I have seen one other Black-legged Kittiwake in Iowa(Dec 1986) and thousands in the Atlantic Ocean off Massachusetts.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made?none made

How long before this form was completed?6 hours-updated on 1 Dec