

Bird found by Nic Halmi

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species BLACK*LEGGED KITTIWAKE 2. Number: one, immature
3. Location Coralville Docks, Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., Iowa
4. Date: 28 October 1976 5. Time Bird seen: 12:45 p.m. to 12:55 p.m.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): General appearance: quite white, apparently small (it was by itself), and quite active. Head with dark bill, dark eye, and a dark dot behind eye. A black transverse patch across the nape contrasted strongly with grayer back and upper wing coverts. A dark stripe ran diagonally across the upper inner wing. The outer several primaries were dark. The trailing edge of the secondaries were white as were the inner primaries. The tail appeared slightly forked and with dark band across its tip.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: Continual flight maybe fifty feet above water's surface. Graceful flight with occasion swoops to water.
9. Habitat - general: Large open water area of Coralville Reservoir. There specific: was a flock of adult Bonaparte's gulls about a mile south on the same area of the reservoir.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: Immature Bonaparte's gull lacks transverse mark across nape and has lighter wing coverts. The immature little gull is shown by Robbins et.al. to have a dark hood and scaly back.
11. Distance (how measured)? from about one mile to as close as about one hundred feet. 12. Optical equipment: 8x35 binocs. used. scope available but not useful.
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Bright sunshine. Sun-observer-bird angle about 135 degrees at closest vantage point.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Kittiwakes seen on pelagic trip from San Francisco in April, 1975, as immatures). Many Bonaparte's seen during four years in California (Berkeley)
15. Other observers: This is the bird found by Nic Halmi the previous day. Lillian Serbousek of Cedar Rapids saw it a bit after the above obs. at a greater distance.
16. Did the others agree with your identification?
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: N. Halmi and M. Newlon saw the bird the previous day.
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: I checked Peterson and Robbins et.al. before going out in search of the bird. The points in the description were written from viewing the bird.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? When the bird flew off I sat in my car and wrote the notes in point 6.

Signature

Richard J. DeCosta II

Address: 628 Reno street

Date: 30 October 1976

City, State: Iowa City, Iowa 52240

(over)