

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-legged Kittiwake - first winter

Location: Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Linn County, IA

Habitat: Lake formed by backwater of Cedar River

Date: 1 November 1991

Time: c. 13:30 to 13:40

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Beth Brown, Tim Schantz, Jim Sinclair

Description of bird: This gull was on the water toward the back side of the lake. There did not appear to be a significant difference in size between this bird and Ring-billed Gulls nearby, although none were close enough for a direct comparison. Looking through light rain, I could observe a primarily white bird with a gray mantle and a black carpal bar on the wing. The bill was small and black. Behind the eye was a black crescent, larger than the spot of a Bonaparte's Gull. There was a black collar across the back of the neck. The bird got into the air for a brief period of time at which time I was able to see black outer primaries meeting the carpal bar at the shoulder, white inner primaries and secondaries, and a squared-off white tail with a complete black tail band.

Similar species and how eliminated: A first winter Bonaparte's Gull, the most likely gull to be confused with this bird, was eliminated by the presence of a distinct black collar, black outer primaries, and white trailing edge of the wings. Other gulls which show a distinct "M" in flight include Little - eliminated by gray rather than brown mantle, lack of cap, pure white secondaries, and size; Ross's - eliminated by presence of collar, shape of tail, and extensiveness of tail band; Sabine's - eliminated by combination of gray mantle with full tail band and black carpal bar.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): Observed at approximately 200 yards through 15x-60x scope at various settings. Sky was overcast to heavy with light rain falling.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: A number of first winter Kittiwakes have been observed in the past three years.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Grant's Gulls was consulted prior to completing documentation

How long before field notes made? Next day **How long before this form completed?** Three days