

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-legged Kittiwake - 1st winter

Location: below dam - Lake Red Rock, Marion Co, IA

Habitat: dam on Des Moines River forming reservoir; open river with islands

Date(s): 11/27/88

Time: 4:02 pm to 4:28 pm

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

Other observers: none

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, under-tail, legs, feet). Also mention behavior and voice.

This gull looked "slightly smaller than ring-billed" although it was never close enough to other gulls to adequately compare sizes. As it sat on the water the entire time, I did not observe it in flight. This "black-billed" bird was "white on top of head" and entire face except for a "black crescent behind the black eye". This crescent was larger than the spot which appears in the field guides. Behind the crescent the head turned a "pale gray leading to a wide black stripe on nape of neck". The bird was "white underneath with a light gray mantle". A "broad black stripe" began at "mid-wing" leading back to "a broad white band" which would appear to be the secondaries and tail. The white culminated in "another black band" of wing tips and tail band.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The only other gull with a black collar, the red-legged kittiwake, was eliminated because of the black wing stripe and tail band.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Very overcast and beginning to snow lightly. Observed at an estimated 200' through scope at 40x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

First immature bird seen. Many hours(!) spent with other gulls, particularly this fall.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None prior to field notes; National Geographic Field Guide, Audubon Master Guide, and other guides consulted prior to completion of this form.

How long before field notes made? immediately How long before this form completed? 3 hours