

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Black-legged Kittiwake

How Many?1 first-winter

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-first seen at the Hwy 17 Bridge and seen later above the dam

Habitat?initially seen resting on small pond along river-later observed on reservoir with other gulls

Date?29 Nov, 1,2 Dec 1987

Time?11:30-11:48 a.m. on 29 Nov and 2:30-3:00 p.m. on 1 Dec

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

Others who saw bird:Bart Ballard

Description of bird:Bart and I were looking through a small group of gulls resting on a small pond west of the highway 17 bridge when I noticed a medium-sized gull resting with Bonaparte's and Ring-billed gulls. The bird was larger than a Bonaparte's Gull, but smaller than a Ring-billed Gull. We noted the following marks on the bird as it rested on the water; black bill, light gray crescent behind eye, and black line along the folded wing. After several minutes, all of the gulls took off and headed east over the bridge, presumably towards Jester Park. Features seen in flight included; bold, black "W" across the back of the wings, gray back, white rump, slightly forked, white tail with a narrow, black terminal band, and dark legs. The bird did not have a dark collar. The bird was aged as first-winter on the basis of the wing pattern, the dark bill, and the narrow, black terminal band.

Similar species and how eliminated:No other small gull has the combination of a black bill, a black "W" across the wings, and a slightly forked tail.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were good with the sun behind us. Estimated viewing distance was about 125 yards. We used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen two other Black-legged Kittiwakes in Iowa; Dec 1986 at Rathbun and Oct/Nov 1987 at Saylorville. I have also seen hundreds of kittiwakes off Massachusetts.

References consulted:Grant Gulls: A Guide to Identification

How long before field notes were made?none made

How long before this form was completed?written on 2 Dec