

Black-legged Kittiwake 1
11 Nov 1990
5 mi. n of Ventura, Cerro Gordo Co., IA
Jan Walter
IBL 61:21, 62:22

Record Number: 90-36
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jan L. Walter

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 61:21
Records Committee: IBL 62:22

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Description seems to be adequate. I do think it would be a difficult bird to identify while flying, not sitting so it could be studied.

A-D: Leg color is especially convincing when combined with black wing tips.

A-D: Good description.

A-D: Despite what seems a rather bizarre choice of habitats, I think this bird was correctly identified. Even if the leg color was the result of dirt - and I feel comparison with nearby Ring-bills adequately demonstrates that it was not - the un-mirrored primaries and other field marks eliminate other possibilities. Good documentation.

A-D: Good detail, fits adult Black-legged Kittiwake.

A-D: Combination of black legs & feet, yellow bill, unmarked squarish white tail, all black triangular wingtips and same overall size as Ring-billed Gull rule out anything else. I would think tht the head should have had some darker coloring behind the eye and back toward the nape but molt may not have gotten that far in this bird. Good documentation.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

90-36

What species? Black-legged Kittiwake How many? 1

Location? 1 mi. w. of Co. Road S-14, 5/4 mi. n. of Ventura, Cerro Gordo Co., Ia

Type of Habitat? Harvested corn field

When? date(s): 11 Nov. 1990 time: 15-20 min to mid-afternoon

Who? your name and address: Jan L. Walter, 934-13th S.E., Mason City, Ia. 50401

Others with you: Jim B. Walter

Others before or after you: 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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior. This gull was in a flock of Ring-billed Gulls feeding behind a farmer doing fall tilling. It's extremely pale plumage made it stand out from the similar sized Ring-billeds. Several times when the flock rose from the ground, flew a short distance, and settled back down, the coal-black legs and feet were clearly visible against the snow white underparts. The Ring-billeds legs and feet did not show any dark discoloration so the black color was not due to dirt or mud. The eyes were dark and the head pure white without smudges or markings. The only times the yellow bill was visible were when the bird was feeding in the rough ground and I could not determine if it had any markings or not. When it flew, the mantle was only slightly darker than the head and unmarked squarish white tail, similar to the color in the photograph on p. 6 of the American Birds reference cited below. The wing tips were black, without any white spots or markings. The black area was smaller and more triangular than those on the wings of the Ring-billeds. I did not hear any calls that were different from those of the Ring-billeds.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Black legs and feet and yellow bill eliminated other Gulls in this size range.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? Not after consulting the
If yes, explain: American Birds reference cited below.

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

Bright sun, light from the side
Closest distance 75-100 yards (guess)
8X40 Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None with this species
Similar sized Ring-billed Gulls are abundant migrants in this area

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Birds of North America: National Geographic Society
Black-legged Kittiwake and Red-legged Kittiwake: Kaufman American Birds Vol. 43 No. 1
How long before field notes made? Right away this form completed? 2 weeks pp. 3-6

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).