

Black-legged Kittiwake
9 Dec 1989
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
M. Proescholdt, et al.
IBL 60:52, 61:85

Record Number: 89-57
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Mark Proescholdt, 9 Dec
Jim Fuller, 10 Dec
Steve Dinsmore, 10 Dec
Ann Johnson, 10 Dec

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:52
Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Many viewers agree. All field marks visible; seen personally by myself, no doubts.

A-D: Conclusively documented.

A-D: Excellent description by all observers.

A-D: The evidence from many observers is overwhelming.

A-D: All descriptions note the same diagnostic field marks for Black-legged Kittiwake. There is no doubt about this record considering all descriptions from many independent observers from two different dates.

A-D: Good documentations by Jim Fuller, Steve Dinsmore, and Ann Johnson.

A-D: Good descriptions of a bird seen by many. ID contenders convincingly eliminated.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Black-legged Kittiwake How many? 1Location? Below Dam at Red Rock Reservoir - (Marion Co.)Type of habitat? Gravel Bars and flowing waterWhen? date(s): Dec. 9, 1989 time: 2:00 p.m. to 2:20 p.m. and again at 3:20 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Noneothers before or after you: Armstrongs, Bob Myers, Ann Johnson, Steve Dinsmore,Pam and Reid Allen

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 voice and behavior.

I saw this gull close to me on a gravel bar that looked sharp and different from other gulls around it. Its body length was about the size of a Ring-Billed Gull. It had an all white head, a black spot behind the eye, and a notched tail with a black tip to the tail. It had a black bar on the nape of the neck. It had very dark black bars across its inner wings. This bird had light colored legs. The National Geographic guide states that "a very few young birds have pinkish legs." It had black wing tips. It flew and I had good looks at the bird in flight.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Bonaparte's Gull is smaller and lacks the black bar across the nape and also lacks the blackish bars across the inner wings.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Sunny with sun behind me, 20-30 yards on gravel bar and 40-80 yards in flight (estimated), 8x30 Binocs

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen a number of Black-legged Kittiwakes now in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

R.T. Peterson guide, National Geographic Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? Dec. 26, 1989
the bird

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

What species? BLACK-LELLED KITTIWAKE How many? 1 IMMATURELocation? BELOW RED ROCK DAM - MARION COUNTYType of habitat? WATERWhen? date(s): 10 DECEMBER 1989 time: 7:55 AM to OFF+ON FOR ABOUT 1 HOURWho? your name and address: JIM FULLER, 6 LONCVIEW KNOLL, RR#4, IOWA CITY, 52240others with you: CHUCK FULLERothers before or after you: E+A ARMSTRONG, M. PROFSCHOLDT, B. MYERS

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 voice and behavior.

THE BIRD WAS STANDING ON A GRAVEL BAR BELOW THE DAM. IT WAS ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF THE NEARBY RING-BILLED AND NOTICEABLY SMALLER THAN THE MERRINGS. IT HAD A SMALL, ROUNDED HEAD WITH A DARK EYE AND A BLACK SPOT BEHIND THE EYE THAT WAS NOT ROUND BUT MORE OVOID. THE BILL WAS QUITE SMALL, APPEARED TO BE DOWNTURNED AND ENTIRELY BLACK. THE NECK AND THE BREAST & BELLY WERE SNOW WHITE. THE NECK (NAPE) HAD A DARK HORIZONTAL STREAK JUST IN FRONT OF THE MANTLE. THE MANTLE SEEMED TO BE VERY SLIGHTLY DARKER THAN THAT OF THE ADULT RING-BILLED. THE FOLDED WING WAS GRAY BUT HAD A DARK STREAK ABOUT MIDWAY THROUGH IT. LEGS WERE GRAY, ALTHOUGH BLACK WOULD BE EXPECTED. THE BIRD DID FLY ONCE ABOUT 50 YARDS, AND THE DARK "W" PATTERN WAS SEEN ON UPPER WING AND THE TAIL HAD A BLACK TERMINAL BAND WHICH VIEED IN AT THE MIDDLE. THE TAIL END APPEARED TO B FLIT.

Similar species and how eliminated: BONAPARTE'S GULL ARE SMALLER AND HAVE DARK TRAILING EDGE AND DOES NOT HAVE A NAPE COLLAR. COMMON BLACK HEADED DOES NOT HAVE A PROMINENT W ON UPPER WING OR NAPE COLLAR. RED-LELLED KITTIWAKE DOES NOT HAVE A TERMINAL TAIL

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

EARLY MORNING - OVERCAST - VIEWED FROM EAST AND NORTH AT DISTANCES OF 100-250 YARDS WITH KOWA TSN-4 SCOPE WITH 20-60X EYEPICLE

Previous experience with species and similar ones: SEEN IN SAME LOCATION THE PREVIOUS YEAR - ALSO AN IMMATURE

References and persons consulted before writing description:

NAT'L GEOGRAPHICHow long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 12 HOURS

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

BAND, AND UPPERWING PATTERN DOES NOT HAVE THE PROMINENT
"W". SABINE'S GULL HAS A DEEPLY FORKED TAIL OR GRAY
MANTLE AND FOLDED WING.

89-57

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Black-legged Kittiwake
 How Many? 1 1st-w bird
 Location? Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co.

Habitat? feeding below dam with other gulls

Date? 10 Dec 1989

Time? 9:56-10:35 a.m.

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

Others who saw bird: Mark Proescholdt

Description of bird: When I arrived below the dam, I immediately noticed the kittiwake feeding in the tailwaters because of the distinctive wing pattern. A striking black bar extended from the mid-portion of the base of each wing outwards to the forward bend of the wing, and from there it extended to the tip of the outermost primary. This pattern created a bold "W" pattern across the back of the bird. The rest of the upperwing was pale gray. During my observation, the bird alternately fed below the dam with Ring-billed and Herring gulls and rested on a gravel bar near the spillway. I concluded that the bird was slightly smaller but much slimmer than a Ring-billed Gull. The tail was noticeably forked and was white except for a narrow black terminal band. The head was also white with a small, black spot just posterior to each eye. The eyes and bill were dark, the latter being rather short and stocky when compared to the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. A conspicuous black collar, not more than an inch wide, extended across the back of the neck. The remainder of the bird was white. Of interest was the color of the legs. The legs were clearly a dull pink color, in contrast to the black legs of most 1st-winter Black-legged Kittiwakes. Pink leg color is rare, but does occur, in this species.

Similar species and how eliminated: The size, striking wing pattern, black collar, and forked tail are sufficient to eliminate other gulls.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with very good light. Estimated viewing distance was 30 yards. I used Bushnell 7x35 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen several Black-legged Kittiwakes in Iowa and thousands in Massachusetts.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made? while observing bird

How long before this form was completed? 6 hours

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-legged Kittiwake - 1st winter

Location: Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., IA

Habitat: open water below dam on Des Moines River with gravel bars

Date(s): 12/10/89

Time: 1:00 pm to 1:20 pm

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

Other observers: none at time; Mark Proescholdt on 12/9

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.

I observed this bird first in flight and later swimming in the river and standing on the ice. It was initially feeding directly below the dam with a number of ring-billed and herring gulls. It was one of the smaller gulls present and was easy to pick out because of the black "M" pattern to the wings, starting at the tip, including the outer primaries and leading back from the elbow across the wing coverts to mid-body. The inner primaries and secondaries were white, the remaining coverts and saddle were light gray, and the forked tail was white with a complete black tail band following the lines of the fork. The underparts were all white with the exception of black wing tips. The rounded head, which was observed better after the bird lighted, was white with a thin, slightly decurved dark bill, dark eye, and black auricular spot. A thick black collar was evident on the back of the neck. When the bird bent forward, this appeared to be a series of thin lines of feather edgings which in an upright posture meshed together to make a thicker band. Standing with other gulls the bird was much smaller than herrings and the rounder head and slimmer body made it appear slightly smaller than ring-billed. The legs looked lighter than expected, more grayish, and the black stripe across the wing was very evident when standing.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Bonaparte's, Ross', Com. Black-headed, and Little Gulls eliminated by forked tail and collar; Sabine's eliminated by gray saddle and neck collar; Red-legged Kittiwake eliminated by inner wing stripe and tail band

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Black-legged Kittiwake
10 December, 1989
Page 2

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

Overcast with a few snow flurries. Viewed from estimated 100 to 200 feet through 7x26 binoculars and scope at 25x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Second consecutive year of observing first winter kittiwake at this location.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America was consulted prior to completion of documentation.

How long before field notes made? during observation How long before this form completed? one day