

Black-legged Kittiwake

21 Nov 1984

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

\*D. Thompson, \*M./\*B. Proescholdt, \*Moore

IBL 54:115; 55:57

Record Number: 84-29  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Dennis Thompson (21 November)

Beth Proescholdt (21 November)

Mark Proescholdt (21 November)

Francis L. Moore (22 November)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:115

Records Committee: IBL 55:57

VOTE: 7-II

II, Excellent descriptions.

II, Well described. Good sketch by Moore.

II, Note: the first documentation didn't copy legibly.

Probably doesn't matter in this case. Francis Moore's documentation is excellent.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD. 84-29

1. Species Black-legged Kittiwake 2. Number: 1

3. Location Below dam at Saylorville Res. Polk Co. Iowa

4. Date: 11/21/84 5. Time Bird seen: 10:00 to 10:30

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Bird was slightly smaller than the Ring-billed gulls it was feeding with. It was pale-bodied with a black half-collar. There was a black spot half-way between the collar and the eyes. There was a dark "W" across the wings (and back?). The primaries were all-dark. The back and 1/3 of the upper wing was gray. The bill was small, black, tip! The legs were black. The tail was slightly forked with an obvious black band.

7. Description of voice, if heard:

8. Description of behavior: Resembled a Bonaparte's in flight. Would plunge into the water ~~to~~ after fish.

9. Habitat - general: outlet below the dam. Feeding in the fast-moving water directly below the dam.  
specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Similar in shape & actions to Bonaparte's. No direct comparison was available, but seemed larger, I'd say half-way in size between Bonaparte's & Ring-billed. Black legs, black half-collar, and lack of carpal bar helped eliminate Bonaparte's. Gray back took care of Sabine's, white head, Franklin's,

11. Distance (how measured)? Close range - less than 30 yds. 12. Optical equipment: Bino's, scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
~~Sun~~ Bright sun behind me.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Observed one at Saylorville in 1981. Familiar with Bonaparte's.

15. Other observers:  
By myself.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
Edgene + Eloise Armstrong, Beth + Mark Preschoetz, Dick + Pauly Mooney, Margaret Brooks

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Had Robbins' book with me, looked at Harrison's, Nat. Geog. books later.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 1 week.

~~Dennis~~ Dennis Thompson Address: 2019 44th Des Moines Ia

Signature  
Date: 11/26/84 City, State: \_\_\_\_\_



What species? Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) How many? 1 im.

Location? Below dam at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co., IA

Type of habitat? Swift water at dam outlet

When? date(s): November 22, 1984 time: 10:26 a.m. to 10:29 a.m.

Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

others with you: None

others before or after you: Dennis Thompson, before

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 was standing below the dam looking through the Ring-billed Gulls for any other species that might be there. I had been there about 45 minutes when I noticed a smaller Gull fly over the dam and down to the out-flow area. One of the first things I noticed was that the bird had a dark area on the back of its neck and a black band at the end of its tail. The bird's bill was black, its eye was dark. The head, breast and belly was white except for a small blackish spot behind the eye. The bird looked as though it had a black collar on the back of its neck extending down toward the throat and neck area but not extending around the front of its neck. The tail was white, except for a black terminal band; it was also slightly forked. The feet were dark. The wing pattern was striking. The leading several primaries were black with no white spots. The rest of the primaries and secondaries were white, forming a triangle. There ~~was~~ was a dark area in the upper wing coverts extending from the wrist to the trailing area of the scapulars. The rest of the upper wing coverts and back was a light grayish color. The under wing surface was white except for the leading few primaries which were a dark gray to blackish color.



Similar species and how eliminated: No other small gull has a wing pattern like this bird in combination with a black crescent or ~~top~~ top half of upper neck and black tail band.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No, that I know of

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Sunny, excellent viewing conditions. Seen from approx. 40 to 50 yards at closest using 10x40 Leitz binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Saw one other Black-legged Kittiwake at Lock + Dam 11 at Dubuque on 12/6/81.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 5 min. this form completed? 6 hr.

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



What species? Black-legged Kittiwake, imm. How many? 1Location? Saylorville ReservoirType of habitat? below spillway of damWhen? date(s): November 21, 1984 time: 12:45 to 12:50 P.M.Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdt, Eloise + Gene Armstrong, Pully + Dick  
Moorey,others before or after you: Denny Thompson, Francis Moore Margaret Brooke

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.

A medium-sized gull, smaller than the Ring-bills flying around it, this bird with soft gray mantle + white body had inky black wingtips with the black continuing on from the wrist slanting across the secondaries to form an M pattern across the upperwings. It had a dark bar across the nape, a dark eye with a black spot behind the eye, a black bill and a narrow black band across the end of the tail which was slightly forked, but seemed more so by the indented black band:



The few minutes

we saw it the bird was flying and feeding above the water just below the spillway. We observed it about 5 minutes after which it flew up + over the dam, + we didn't see it again in our hour of waiting.

Similar species and how eliminated: immature Bonaparte's Gull; — this Kittiwake had no white in its wingtips as a Bonaparte's, + it had a black bar on its nape. The tail appeared forked while a Bonapartes is slightly rounded.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
sunny day, sun behind us, about 20 yards at the closest, (approx),  
binoculars - from parking lot we looked down on gull

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Never a Kittiwake, but several  
immature Bonaparte's

References and persons consulted before writing description: Guides; Peterson's, Robbins,  
National Geographic, Audubon Soc. Master Guide.

How long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Nov. 23, 1984



What species? Black-legged Kittiwake How many? 1Location? Just below Saylorville Dam - (Polk Co.)Type of habitat? Churning water below reservoir dam in large river valleyWhen? date(s): November 21, 1984 time: 12:45 to 12:50 p.m. - very approximate timesWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Beth Proescholdt, Gene and Eloise Armstrong, Margaret Brookeothers before or after you: Dennis Thompson - before, Francis Moore - after  
Pully and Richard Mooney

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.

An immature gull was swooping low over the churning water below Saylorville Dam. It had a white head with a black cheek spot and a dark bar across the back of its neck. It had black wing tips and very dark bars across the inner wings. The tail was slightly forked with a black tail band. I did not see the legs on this bird.

It was flying by itself, but it seemed bigger than the Bonaparte's gulls we had seen one week earlier. It was swooping low over the water. Then it gained elevation, swirled around a bit, and sailed over the dam. It was not seen again by me.

Similar species and how eliminated: An immature Bonaparte's Gull does not have the black bar on the nape and has white in the outer primaries.Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

It was a sunny, clear day with the sun behind us. Distances estimated. 7X35 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: First sighting of a Kittiwake. Saw quite a few immature Bonaparte's gulls at Saylorville one week before.References and persons consulted before writing description: Natl. Geog. Birds of N. America, R.T. Peterson's Birds East of the Rockies, Robbins' Birds of N. America.How long before field notes made? Right after this form completed? Nov. 23, 1984  
viewing bird.

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