

Black-legged Kittiwake
26 Apr 1998
Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co., IA
*Ray Cummins, *Tom Johnson
IBL 68:93

Record Number: 98-16
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Ray Cummins [*9/4/98]
Thomas N. Johnson, Rt 1, Mystic

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 68:93
Records Committee: IBL 69:89

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Unusual time of year for this species to appear. All the key features of first year bird well described.

A-D, Interesting date but probably fitting for this peculiar spring.

A-D, I wrote Tom Johnson and he replied that April 26 is the correct date, not April 2 as he had indicated. Only the broken tail band suggests molt to first-summer plumage, but perhaps early fading of the black areas would not be noticeable. Kittiwakes are the same length as Ring-billed Gulls but have a much shorter wing span. Otherwise, the characteristic marks of a first-year kittiwake are noted. Midwestern states have 2 to 6 spring records of kittiwakes with the most in April and almost all first-year birds.

A-D, Tom Johnson says April 2. Which is correct? Description is adequate, although surprising plumage for a spring migrant.


Species: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

Number: 1

Location: LAKE RATHBURNObserver: Ray CumminsOthers before/with/after: Tom Johnson, Mike StevensDate: 4-26-98 Time bird seen: 3PM to 4PMHabitat & Peninsula at Lake RathburnCircumstances: Identified on flyby at dedication sight
further confirmed w/ very close look on PeninsulaDescription: Size of Ringbilled Gulls - Black collar prominent,
Black bill & Legs - Black W in flight Black trailing
Edge to tail WAS broken not solid on this bird.Description of voice: N/ASimilarly appearing species:Distance: 15yds Setting 50 to 150ydr flyingOptical equipment: Row 20-60X Scope & BinocularsLight: GoodPrevious experience with species: Seen 6-70 in IowaAnyone have any reservations: NOBooks and references:Time of field notes: NoneFinal typing: 6-2-98Signature: Ray Cummins Address:Date: 6-2-98

What species? Black-legged Kittiwake - 1st winter How many? 1
 Location? Lake Rathbun 98-16
 Type of Habitat? Boat ramp (closed off) on Lake Rathbun
 When? date(s): 4-2-98 time: 4:30 to 5:10
 Who? your name and address: Thomas N. Johnson RT I Mystic, IA.
 Others with you: Ray Cummins, Mike Stephens
 Others before ^{us} or after you: none that I know of

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Mike and Ray called me that they were at the lake and and soon a Black-legged Kittiwake fly by and land on a closed off boat ramp but hadn't located it among the gulls and Pelicans. We located it with a spotting scope and at 400 mile distance could see the black splotch on the back of the neck. We moved to the ramp area and were up to 50 feet before it flew. I saw the black bill, black legs, black subterminal band, black spot behind eye and black on neck that was spotted at least 3 inches at certain angles. It was about the same size as the ring billed gulls present and larger than the Franklins. We made it fly and saw the distinctive wing pattern  1st winter

Similar species; how eliminated: Bonaparte's gull - no black area on neck-wing pattern different.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NO
 If yes, explain:

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

Howa spotting scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: soon in Iowa, seen Bonaparte every year.

B.L. Kittiwake 3 or 6 times

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic, Birds in Iowa

How long before field notes made? same night this form completed? 1 month

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