

Black-legged Kittiwake
2 Nov 1980
Estherville, Emmet Co., IA
*Dennis Henrickson
IBL 52:42

Record Number: 80-20
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Dennis Henrickson

REFERENCE

Records Committee: IBL 52:42

VOTE: 1-III, 3-IV, 3-V

IV, Reluctantly -- it could have been a Bonaparte's and there isn't enough info to tell which it was.

V, Wrong habitat, rare, not experienced observer (with this species, sic), no binoculars, key points missed -- tail shape, wing detail.

IV, Does streak behind the eye mean black streak on the back of the neck?

III, Description does not rule out imm. Little Gull (unlikely). What was 'streak behind the eye'? Size right. Tractor following entirely atypical. Single observer.

V, Bonaparte's Gull not sufficiently ruled out.

V, Tail not seen (but it's important). It is not clear what is meant by 'streak behind the eye'. Relative size of bird supports Kittiwake, but occurrence in field does not. Probably a Bonaparte's.

IV, Description seems good as far as it goes, but incomplete. Farmers make good birders however.

11 March 1981

Dennis Henrickson
Estherville Ia

Dear Dennis,

The Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologist' Union reviewed your report of Black-legged Kittiwake. Of the seven members, 1 thought it was an acceptable sight record, 3 thought it was probable but lacked enough confirming detail and 3 were uncertain as to whether it was a Kittiwake or not.

Comments made were as follows:

"It could have been a Bonaparte's and there isn't enough info to tell which it was."

"Wrong habitat, rare, not experienced observer (with this species, sic), no binoculars, key points missed--tail shape, wing detail."

"Does streak behind the eye mean the black streak on back of neck?"

"Description does not rule out imm. Little Gull (unlikely). What was 'streak behind the eye'? Size right. Tractor following entirely atypical. Single observer."

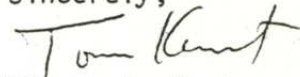
"Bonaparte's Gull not sufficiently ruled out"

"Tail not seen (but it's important). It is not clear what is meant by 'streak behind the eye'. Relative size of bird supports Kittiwake, but occurrence in field does not. Probably a Bonaparte's."

"Description seems good as far as it goes, but incomplete. Farmers make good birders, however."

Thank you for sharing this most interesting observation with us.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Kent
Secretary, Records Committee

Black legged Kittiwake sighted

For most of my 49 years I have been a bird watcher, but today November 2, 1980 was a first for me. While finishing plowing the center of a field first gull scouts appeared, then they started coming until there were gulls all over the place. Most were mature and immature Franklins with a few Ring billed. Eventually one appeared within 20 ft of the tractor that was different. During its first pass I noticed its size between a Franklin and Ring billed, a dark spot and streak behind the eye and that the upper wing front was blackish. I got two more good looks at it later on and noticed black through the center of the ^{upper} wings to the body and a black tail band. The Golden Bird Guide identifies it as an immature Black legged Kittiwake.

Dennis Henrickson

RR 4

Estherville, Iowa 51334

80-20 December 8
1980

Tom,

Normally during the months of October and November a few Bonaparte's can be seen flying over lakes up this way. Has a Bonaparte gull ever been documented with other gulls following a tractor? This bird didn't act like a tern in its movements (flying pattern and bill position). I don't think the bird had a fan-like tail either, but I don't remember for sure. As to the bill and feet, I just didn't focus on them. Sometimes I carry binocs and a field bird guide on the tractor, but not that particular day. The bird was so close and its markings so easy to spot that the binocs wouldn't have been of any help. I'm sure that this bird is more common in Iowa than the four accepted documented reports. How many farmers besides Gene Armstrong take bird watching seriously? Well, maybe one hog farmer, Ross.

Sincerely yours,
Dennis Henneken

RR 4

Estherville, Iowa

PS - At about this same time an immature short eyed owl was living along our dredge ditch.