

Black-legged Kittiwake
24 Sep 1995

Record Number: 95-67
Classification: A-P

L. Manawa, Pottawattamie Co., IA
*Padelfords, *T. Kent, *J. Fuller

to 28 Sep; IBL 66:21-22, 96; P-0466, P-0472, P-0467, Padelford 1996

DOCUMENTATIONS

Loren Padelford/Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Rd., Bellevue
NE 68005 [*3/24/96]

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

PHOTOGRAPHS

Loren Padelford, 26 Sep 1995, P-0466

Thomas H. Kent, 26 Sep 1995, P-0472

Jim Fuller, 28 Sep 1995, P-0467 [not circulated]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:21-22

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Padelford, B., and L. Padelford. 1996. Black-legged Kittiwake
in Pottawattamie County. IBL 66:115.

Field Notes 50:62, 1996, P-0466

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, 2nd basic.

A-P, A very closely photographed bird in first-summer/second
winter plumage -- an unusual plumage and unusual date.



Black-legged Kittiwake P-0466
L. Manawa, Pottawattamie Co. 95-67
26 Sep 1995 Loren Padelford

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Black-legged Kittiwake P-0472
L. Manawa, Pottawattamie Co.
26 Sep 1995 T. H. Kent 95-67

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vided the best fall report in several years. The Sandhill Crane population continues to prosper, with excellent counts from every state except Missouri. Crane numbers peaked at 24,241 at the Jasper-Pulaski W.M.A., IN staging area (JBe).

Shorebirds

The latest among several tardy Lesser Golden-Plovers were singletons at Swan L., IA Nov. 27 (TK) and Switz City, IN Nov. 17 (RTi). Seeming to show a penchant for Ohio, Snowy Plovers were found Aug. 9 at Maumee Bay S.P., (†BC, †BWh) and Metzger Marsh Sept. 15 (TBa). Rosche believes this is the same bird reported in summer. The Region's largest Semipalmated Plover concentration was 250 in *St. Charles*, MO Aug.13 (WR). It was an excellent autumn for Piping Plovers, with 11 in Iowa, five in Missouri, five in Illinois, three in Indiana, and one in Ohio. A high count of 14 Black-necked Stilts (eight adults, plus six young) was made in *Jackson* and *Alexander*, IL Aug.10 (KMc, TD). Three lingering stilts were still present in the *Stoddard*, MO rice fields Sept.1 (PMc, BJ). The most remarkable report, however, involved a Black-necked Stilt that remained at Conneaut, OH Nov. 7–Nov.19 (†JPg, m.ob.). American Avocets were unusually common, with reports from every state except Missouri; the peak count was 38 at Saylorville Res., IA Oct.13 (SD) and a late bird lingered at Eagle Cr. Park, IN through Nov. 7 (AB, m.ob.).

Several correspondents expressed concern about depressed Greater Yellowlegs numbers. The only sizable Willet concentration consisted of 32 birds at Miller Beach, IN Aug. 20 (JMc). Whimbrels staged a strong flight through the Region, with reports from every state except Kentucky. Most noteworthy among these were 2 Iowa sightings that provided the state's 4th and 5th fall records, and a bird in *St. Charles*, MO Aug. 22 (†MT), which provided the first August record for e. Missouri (*vide* DA). In contrast, Hudsonian Godwits were scarce, with two in Illinois, one in Ohio, and one in Indiana. It was an unusually fine fall for White-rumped Sandpipers; the maximum tally among several c. Illinois counts was a remarkable 60 at Rice Lake W.M.A., Sept.12 (KR). Baird's Sandpipers peaked at Rice Lake W.M.A., IL Sept. 1 when 120 were counted (KR). Early Purple Sandpipers arrived at Miller Beach, IN Oct. 26 (JMc) and H.B.S.P., Oct. 29–30 (KMt *et al.*). It was a banner fall for Buffbreasted Sandpipers. In addition to numerous widespread reports, Buff-breasted arrived early and in unusually high concentrations. The peak



Little Gull in first-winter plumage at Maryville, Missouri, November 6, 1995. Photograph/David A. Easterla.

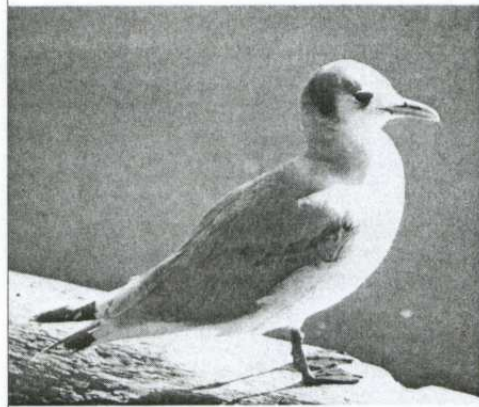
counts were at the Schneider Sod Farm, *Lake*, IN, where 47 (an all-time high for the state) were counted Aug. 5 (ASi, DM, JO) and in Momence, IL, where 43 were seen Sept. 2 (RCh). Ruffs were found at 3 locations: a male at Carlyle L., IL Aug. 3 (DKa), a male in *St. Charles*, MO Aug. 6 (†JZ), and an alternate-plumed female at Coralville Res., IA Aug. 21–26 (†TK, †CE, †JFU). Despite the presence of 327 Short-billed Dowitchers at L.Cal., July 15 (JL), this species was generally scarce. A Wilson's Phalarope at Lake Shattuck N.W.R., IL Nov. 24 (EW) was extremely late. The most noteworthy of the ten Red Phalaropes reported in the 4 n. states were singletons at Saylorville Res., IA Sept. 19 (†SD) and Oct. 22–26 (†SD, †m.ob.).

Jaegers to Terns

An extremely early juv. Pomarine Jaeger was identified at L. Spfld., Sept. 8 (†DBo). Four Parasitic Jaegers and nine unidentified jaegers were reported from Miller Beach, IN during the season. Another unidentified jaeger was seen at L. Manawa in w. Iowa Sept. 24 (B&LP). For the 2nd consecutive year two Long-tailed Jaegers were seen at Miller Beach, IN: an adult Sept. 9 (†RHu, JW) and a juvenile Oct. 29 (†JMc). In addition, a juv. Long-tailed was seen at H.B.S.P., Sept. 16 (†LR) and a probable juv. Long-tailed was discovered on a *LaSalle*, IL fish hatchery pond Sept. 17 (†C & JMc, ph.).

Laughing Gulls were well represented among the fall larids, with eight in Illinois, seven in Indiana, four in Iowa, and four in Ohio. Franklin's Gulls were unusually common. In addition to a mega count of 40,000 at Spirit L., IA Oct. 7 (SD), excellent numbers were also recorded farther

east, with 220 at L. Spfld., Oct. 30 (DBo), 65 at Huntington Res., IN Oct. 24 (JMc), and 16 at Buck Creek S.P., OH Oct.14 (DO). Four Little Gulls were seen in both Illinois and Ohio; an immature wandered W to Maryville, MO, where it frequented the sewage lagoons and Mozingo L., Nov. 5–14 (†DE, JHi, ph.). Common Black-headed Gulls were recorded again, with adults at Clinton L., IL Nov. 8 (†RCh) and Falls of the Ohio Nov. 15–16 (BPB, J&PB, †JMc). The latter bird was seen in both Indiana and Kentucky, providing the first state record for Kentucky. Lake Erie's expected Bonaparte's Gull build-up apparently shifted westward to L. Michigan, where >5000 were counted along the e. Indiana lakefront Nov.14 (AB, KB). The



Exceptional numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen in the upper Midwest during the fall. This individual was at Lake Manawa, Iowa, September 26, 1995. Photograph/Loren Padelford.

The mantle was entirely pale gray. The folded primaries appeared dark gray to black. The bill was black, about the length of the head, and had a stout, tubular appearance. The bird made several short flights, during which I noted the pale wing stripe contrasting with the dark upperwings and the dark tail. At a distance, the bird appeared so pale that it might easily have been overlooked as a Sanderling. Based on the mantle pattern and lack of any buffy wash on the neck and underparts, I concluded the bird was an adult in basic plumage. However, it is possible the bird was a juvenile that had already completed the molt to basic plumage. This bird remained in this area through 26 October and was seen by several others.

These are the seventh and eighth records of Red Phalarope in Iowa. There are four previous records from Saylorville Reservoir: 30 September-3 October 1988 (Dinsmore and Engebretsen 1989), 4 August 1991 (Dinsmore 1992), 25-30 September 1991 (Proescholdt 1992), and 26 October 1991 (Proescholdt 1992). The other two records are from 8-9 November 1992 at Rathbun Reservoir (Kent 1993) and 25, 29 November 1994 at Spirit Lake (Gordon Brown, pers. comm., Schoenewe 1996).

LITERATURE CITED

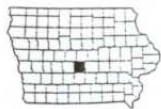
- Dinsmore, S. J. 1992. A second Red Phalarope at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 62:86-87.
 Dinsmore, S. J., and B. Engebretsen. 1989. Red Phalarope at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 59:19.
 Kent, T. H. 1993. Red Phalarope at Rathbun Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 63:82.
 Proescholdt, M. 1992. Two more Red Phalaropes at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 62:87-88.
 Schoenewe, L. A. 1996. Red Phalarope at Spirit Lake. *Iowa Bird Life* 66:111-112.

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014

RED KNOTS AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 1 September 1995 I observed a Red Knot with a group of about 100 shorebirds on a distant mudflat at the north end of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. I watched the bird at a distance of 300-400 m from 8:55-9:10 a.m. The bird was larger, stockier, and shorter-legged than several Lesser Yellowlegs and Stilt Sandpipers with which it was feeding. The bill was straight, thick, and about the same length as the head. The legs appeared dark at a distance. The underparts were white and appeared unmarked. The mantle and head were gray, similar to the color of a basic-plumaged Sanderling. When feeding, the wings appeared darker than the upperparts. The bird made two short flights. In flight, the bird appeared nearly uniform pale gray except for darker primaries and a pale rump. Since the underparts appeared very white and unstreaked, I concluded that the bird was probably an adult in basic plumage.



On 29 September 1995 I was birding the same area when I noticed a larger shorebird with a small flock of Sanderlings. I watched the bird from 7:45-8:20 a.m. and identified it as a juvenile Red Knot. This bird was about half again as large as a

Sanderling with a similar stocky, short-legged appearance. The legs were dull yellow-green, but sometimes appeared dark. The bill was black, of medium length, and straight. The head and upperparts were light gray except for a faint, pale supercilium and pale edges to the feathers of the mantle. The underparts were whiter with a pale gray wash to the upper breast and some faint gray streaking on the breast and flanks. The vent was white. The tail was dark on the distal half, while the uppertail and rump were paler and barred with dark gray. In flight, the outer primaries were darker than the rest of the wing and there was a pale stripe along the base of the flight feathers. This bird remained here through at least 3 October and was seen by numerous birders.

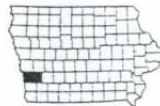
There are about 15 previous records of Red Knots in Iowa, all but two since 1984. Most records are of juveniles in August and September. There are two other records from Saylorville Reservoir: three adults from 5-6 August 1986 at Oak Grove Beach (Dinsmore, S., *IBL* 57:24, 1987) and two juveniles from 3-6 September 1989 at Sandpiper Beach (*IBL* 60:14).

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

BABS AND LOREN PADELDFORD

On the morning of 24 September 1995 we were birding Lake Manawa in Pottawattamie County when we found a Black-legged Kittiwake sitting on the water about 25 yards off the west shore. We watched it from 10:30 to 10:45 a.m. During that time, it remained in the water, but moved out toward the middle of the lake. We returned later, but, at first, could not find the bird. After a few minutes, it flew to the same area where we had seen it that morning. We observed it from 6:15 to 6:20 p.m., this time from as close as 15 yards.



The bird was a medium-sized gull, approximately the size of a Ring-billed Gull. It appeared to be molting from first alternate to second basic plumage. The mantle was light gray, about the shade of a Ring-billed Gull. There were faint carpal bars on the inner portion of the upper wing. The outer primaries appeared black. The crown, forehead, face, and nape of the neck were white. There were dark gray smudgy ear patches connected by a lighter gray band across the back of the head. The notched tail was all white except for a thin black terminal band. The bill was almost completely yellow except for a hint of a very thin black outline at the base. The legs were short and black. There were no bands on the legs.

We again saw the bird and photographed it on 26 September. It was sitting on a rock on the west shore of the lake. During this observation the bird was much closer than on the 24th, and we noticed it had dark eyes.

On one occasion, the kittiwake was seen sitting on the railing of the fishing dock on Boy Scout Island southeast of the original location. Usually it was seen near the west shore. It was also reported on 28 September, 1 October, and last on 2 October.

The Black-legged Kittiwake was also photographed by Tom Kent and Jim Fuller, and observed by many Iowa and Nebraska birders. This individual was both the oldest bird of this species documented in Iowa and also the record earliest date (*IBL* 66:21-22, 1996).

1405 Little John Rd. Bellevue, NE 68005

95-67

Babs & Loren Padelford
1405 Little John Rd.
Bellevue, NE 68005

Documentation of Black-legged Kittiwake

Date: September 24, 1995

Location: Lake Manawa, Pottawattamie County, Iowa

Time: 10:30 - 10:45 am and 6:15 - 6:20 pm

Description of bird: It was a medium sized gull approximately the size of a Ring-billed Gull. When first seen it was sitting on the water close to the west shore of the lake. The plumage of the bird appeared to be intermediate between first summer and second winter. The mantle was light gray about the shade of a Ring-billed Gull. There were faint carpal bars on the inner portion of the upper wing. The notched tail was all white except for a thin black terminal band. The forehead and face were white. There were dark gray smudgy areas behind the ear on both sides and was thinly connected across the back of the head by a lighter gray area. The outer primaries appeared black. The bill was almost completely yellow except for a hint of a very thin outline of black at the base.

Behavior: When first seen in the morning the bird sat on the water close to shore and moved slowly away towards the center of the lake as we observed it. It was sleeping when last observed. In the afternoon, we were standing on the shore in the same area, but did not see the bird. After a few minutes, it flew in to the same area near the shore and remained there a couple of minutes. Then it flew around the lake.

Distance from bird: a.m. - 25 - 75 yards; p.m. - 15 yards at closest.

Optical Equipment - Bushnell spotting scopes - 25 X & 20 X

Other observers - Jim and Sandy Kovanda

Light conditions: a.m. - cloudy; p.m. - sun behind us, light excellent.

Photographs were taken.

Loren Padelford
Babs Padelford

95-67

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Black-legged Kittiwake; **Number:** 1 first-summer

Location: L. Manawa, Pottawattamie Co., IA

Date: 27 September 1995; **Time:** 8:35 to 9:10 and 10:40 to 10:55 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: reported by Padelfords, seen by others before and after me.

Habitat and circumstances: Large natural river-bottom lake.

Description of bird: I spotted this gull flying along the west shore, which has been recently rocked. I observed it swimming very close to shore, sitting on rocks and logs, and flying after I flushed it by tossing rocks into the water nearby. Needless to say, it was very tame and was often within 10 to 15 feet. I had no direct size comparison, but it was smaller than a Ring-billed Gull. It appeared rather short-legged and stood upright. The head and bill appeared robust compared to Franklin's Gulls (about 10,000 present on the center of the lake). The bill was dusky yellow with some black streaks in the upper mandible near the base. The proximal bill was straight and uniform, with a gentle down curve to the distal part of the upper mandible. The legs were black. The eye was dark. There was a black wash across the back of the head and no crescent on the lower neck. The folded wings were light gray (roughly similar to a ring-billed) with a thin dark gray carpal bar. The primaries were black except for one that appeared brown and frayed. There were small white tips to the primaries. The tail was white with a thin black tip. The black was thinner on one side of the tail. The underparts were white. In flight, the black outer primaries formed a leading black wedge that probable included part of the primary coverts. The white tips were evident. The carpal bar was thinner and paler than would be expected in a first-winter bird and did not connect to the outer dark primaries.

Voice: not heard.

Similar species: The combination of black legs and yellow bill fit no other North American gull (except perhaps Ivory Gull, which has black legs and a yellow-tipped bill). The size, shape, and distribution of black also fit this species. The worn tail band, fading carpal bar, and wedged-shaped and worn other primaries all fit first-summer plumage. The darkening on the back of the head is consistent with molt into second-winter plumage.

Any one have reservations?: no.

Light: I was looking east into the sun, but was able to move ahead of the bird and look back with side lighting.

Distance: As close as 10 feet (filled frame with 420 mm lens). **Optics:** 10x binocular, 420 mm lens.

Previous experience: Have seen first-winter birds in Iowa and many adults on East and West coasts and in Alaska, but I don't recall seeing this plumage before.

References before/after viewing: none until final typing.

Time of notes: During observation; **Final typing:** 2 days.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

95-67

SPECIES: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (Between First and Second year)

LOCATION: Lake Manawa (Pottawattamie County)

DATE & TIME: 28 September, 1995 (7:40-8:00 AM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA., 52240.

OTHERS: Reported by Loren Padelford. Seen previously by T. Kent and E. & E. Armstrong. Seen after by C. Fuller and T. Schantz, and P. & R. Allen.

DESCRIPTION: The bird was located, flying by itself near the west shore of the lake. It then sat on a snag along the shoreline. It did not associate with the hundreds of Franklin's and Ring-billed Gulls. There was nothing to compare general size, but would estimate the size as about that of a Ring-billed Gull.

The upperparts were a light gray, similar to that of a Ring-billed Gull, and the underparts were generally snow white. There was a subtle brownish carpal bar on the folded wing. The head and bill seemed small, and lacked a gonys, compared to Ring-billed Gulls. The bill was also a yellowish-gray color and was relatively thin and short. The dark eye had a dark gray smudge around it which connected with a dark gray cap on the back of the head. Farther down the neck on the nape, the coloring was almost black. There was an extension of the lighter gray from the upper back onto the upper breast, and a white area beneath that which was indented almost to the back. Then there was another gray area below that white, which rounded out onto the breast much like the black on a male Barrow's Goldeneye does. The folded wingtips were dark, and the wingtip extended about an inch beyond the tail. The tail could be seen to have somewhat of a dark band. The legs were black. In flight, the dark V pattern on each wing of a first year bird could still be seen, but it was not very prominent and appeared to be molting. The tail was slightly notched, and there was a dark terminal band, but it was not prominent either, and also appeared to be molting.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The black legs, unmarked yellowish-gray bill, wing pattern in flight, and dark on the back of the head, all rule out Ring-billed Gull. Black legs also eliminate Red-legged Kittiwake.

OPTICS & CONDITIONS: I was looking toward the south. It was early morning, and the sun was just rising in the east. I used Swift Audubon binoculars (8.5 X 44). The flying bird was viewed at 50-300 feet, and I walked up to the perched bird within 20 feet and took photographs.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen four previous first winter and one adult bird in Iowa, and numerous adults in Alaska. I have never seen a bird of this plumage, however.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Notes were taken in the car after viewing the bird, and this form was typed on 12 October. The National Geographic Field Guide was viewed after the sighting.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Three slides submitted to the Records Committee Secretary on 25 October.