

Sabine's Gull  
10 Nov 1983  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
\*Eugene Armstrong, et al.  
IBL 53:100; 54:39; Kent 1983

Record Number: 83-33  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Eloise Armstrong (November 10)  
Carl Bendorf (November 11)  
Thomas J. Staudt (November 11)  
Peter C. Petersen (November 11)  
Thomas H. Kent (November 11)  
James Dinsmore (November 11)  
Hank Zalatel (November 11)  
M. Newlon (November 12)  
Robert K. Myers (November 12)  
Francis L. Moore (November 12)  
Beth Proescholdt (November 12)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Peter C. Petersen (November 11; P-0112)  
Francis L. Moore (November 12; P-0160)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 53:100  
Kent, T. H. 1983. Sabine's Gull at Saylorville Reservoir. Iowa  
Bird Life 53:105-106.  
Photograph: IBL 53:105 (Jack Holloway, 17 Nov)  
Records Committee: IBL 54:39

VOTE: 2-I, 5-I-P

Comment to reviewers: See Dec IBL. If anyone needs to see the  
12 documentations and additional photos, let me know. Otherwise,  
I will conserve paper.

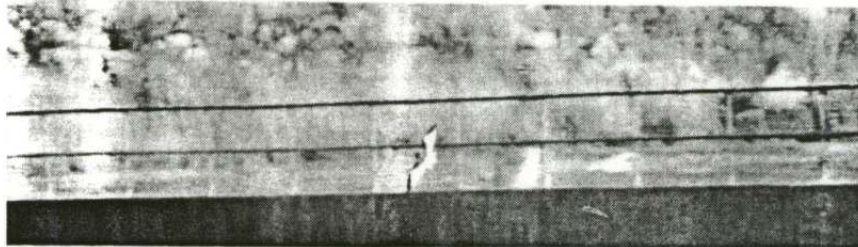
I-P, Even I saw this one!

Kent, T. H. 1983. Sabine's Gull at Saylorville Reservoir.  
Iowa Bird Life 53:105-106

**Sabine's Gull at Saylorville Reservoir** — On November 10, 1983 an unusual gull was noted flying over the Saylorville Reservoir dam by Dr. Bery Engebretson as he drove to work. He notified Eugene and Eloise Armstrong who identified the bird as a juvenile Sabine's Gull and spread the word to other birders.

The following description is a composite of twelve documentations from the numerous individuals who saw the bird from November 10 to 23. This small gull, about two-thirds the size of a Ring-billed Gull, exhibited a fast, graceful, tern-like flight as it foraged for small fish, probably gizzard shad, in the choppy waters below the Saylorville Reservoir dam. It would feed for about five minutes before flying up over the dam where it became lost among the hundreds of ring-bills; once it was spotted resting on the water. Carl Bendorf heard it utter a short, raspy "RAAWK" as it flew over the dam. Dependably, it returned every 30 to 45 minutes for more of the tiny fish in the spillway waters. The upperwing pattern could be spotted from a great distance. The outer primaries and their coverts were black; the inner primaries and outer secondaries and some of their coverts provided a sharply cut off white triangle; and the somewhat mottled, dark brown inner coverts and mantle completed the three-toned wing. The brown of the mantle extended up over the neck and top of the head and onto the side of the neck to form a smudged collar. From beneath the wing pattern was clearly evident in my best photo, but not as striking as when seen from above. The forehead, throat, underparts, and tail were white except for a black band (reported as subterminal by some) on the slightly forked tail. The bill was black and eye dark, with light edge seen by one observer. Legs were variously described as black and of medium tone.

Sabine's Gull nests in the high arctic around the arctic circle and spends the rest of its life at sea, migrating in the eastern Pacific Ocean to wintering grounds off of Peru and in the eastern Atlantic Ocean to southwest Africa. The long migration begins early as typified by the sixty or so midcontinent records since 1960. Fifty of these records, which are widely distributed from Saskatchewan and Ontario in the north to Texas and Louisiana in the south, are equally divided over September and October, with the ten remaining records from November and December. There are also one to three records from April, May, June, July, and August. Records are most likely on the Great Lakes, with the most (11) from Illinois, but the one to eight sightings per year may occur anywhere in mid-continent. Most are juveniles.



Sabine's Gull, Saylorville Dam, 17 Nov. 1983, photo by Jack Holloway

Kent, T. H. 1983. Sabine's Gull at Saylorville Reservoir.  
Iowa Bird Life 53:105-106. (cont)

Sabine's Gull is unusual in that juveniles do not moult into first winter plumage until reaching the wintering grounds. Other immature gulls in Iowa arrive in first winter plumage. Both juvenile and adult plumaged Sabine's Gulls are unmistakable because of their wing and back pattern.

There are four previous Iowa sightings of Sabine's Gull. Bartsch (1899) shot juvenile birds north of Burlington on October 15, 1891 and October 12, 1894. The specimens are at the University of Iowa. Another specimen in juvenile plumage, now at the Putnam Museum, was taken by W. L. Allen in Scott County (DuMont 1933), but no date was recorded. The fourth sighting is of a bird at Clear Lake on September 25, 1970 (Brown 1971, Knoop 1983). Knoop saw the bird flying west, low and close to shore, noted "a definite black and white pattern on the back" and identified the bird from books. She assumed the bird to be an adult because, while viewing the books, she could not recall seeing any tail markings. Although the details of the latter sighting are meager, confusion with an immature Black-legged Kittiwake seems unlikely because of the early date and because no black terminal tail band, black half-collar band, or light mantle were noted.

sighting is of a bird at Clear Lake on September 25, 1970 (Brown 1971, Knoop 1983). Knoop saw the bird flying west, low and close to shore, noted "a definite black and white pattern on the back" and identified the bird from books. She assumed the bird to be an adult because, while viewing the books, she could not recall seeing any tail markings. Although the details of the latter sighting are meager, confusion with an immature Black-legged Kittiwake seems unlikely because of the early date and because no black terminal tail band, black half-collar band, or light mantle were noted.

#### REFERENCES

- Bartsch, P. 1899. *Xema sabini* and *Chordelles virginianus sennetti* — Two additions to Iowa avifauna. *Auk* 16:86.  
Brown, W. H. 1971. Field reports. *Iowa Bird Life* 41: 25-29.  
DuMont, P. A. 1933. *A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa*. Iowa City: University of Iowa.  
Knoop, P. 1983. Letter to T. H. Kent.  
T. H. KENT, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52240.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation  
by the Records Committee  
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: SABINE'S GULL  
DATE SEEN: Nov 10, 1983  
SITE OF OBSERVATION: Polk County, Iowa  
OBSERVERS: Eugene and Eloise Armstrong  
DATE OF REVIEW: January 1984  
METHOD OF REVIEW: Mailed to Records Committee  
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: I-P

COMMENTS: This bird was well-documented and seen by almost every interested birder in Iowa. The birding community is very appreciative of the prompt notice given by the observers of the bird's presence!

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Sabine's Gull 2. Number: one

Location Tailwaters of Saybrville Dam - Polk County, Iowa

4. Date: Nov. 10, 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 3:15 to 3:45

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):

Size of Blackheaded gulls - gull shaped - striking threecolor wing pattern - Outer five primary's black - interprimary's white - Mantle and Nape soft brown - Secondary's white - Forehead white - Tail - moderately forked with a black tip. Black Bill and feet.

7. Description of voice, if heard: None

8. Description of behavior: Tern like motions while feeding.  
Hunted close to the water surface.

9. Habitat - general:  
specific: Large body of water

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

11. Distance (how measured)? 15 ft and beyond  
Est.

12. Optical equipment: 7x35  
Bushnell's

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Moderately bright overcast. Obscured sun

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
None - Black Legged Killiwake

15. Other observers: Bery Inglebretson - Eugene Armstrong

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
Dick + Pauly Mooney - Tom Kent - Peter Petersen - Tom Stout - Carl Bendorf  
Jim Dinsmore - Joe Schaufenbae

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Late ADD: Book Birds of NA. by Robbins

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 24 hrs.

Elvise Armstrong Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date: Nov. 11, 1983 City, State: Bronzeville, Ia 50038

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? SABINE'S GULL How many? 1

Location? SAYLORVILLE DAM SPILLWAY - POLK CO.

Type of habitat? \_\_\_\_\_

When? date(s): 11 NOVEMBER 1983 time: 6:55AM AND 8:45 AM - SEVERAL MINUTES to Each time.

Who? your name and address: CARL BENDORF 825 7TH AVE IOWA CITY IA 52240

others with you: TOM KENT, TOM STAUB, PETER PETERSON

others before or after you: M.O.U.

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.

Gull shape - perhaps 25% smaller than adjacent Ring-bills. Wings seemed relatively narrower and longer than Ring-bills. Light, buoyant flight.

Underparts completely white. Mantle, neck, back of head and wing coverts were all a uniform mottled, warm dark brown color. Triangle at end of wings black, remainder of wing (triangle shape - generally the mid trailing edge) was pure white.

Tail was white, slightly forked with a narrow black subterminal band. Bill was small and black.

First time bird flew low overhead, it uttered a short, monotone, raspy "RAAWK".

When bird reappeared over spillway, we noted how brown of back of neck dipped down into breast between head and wing.

This was typical juvenile plumaged Sabine's Gull.

Similar species and how eliminated: The distinctive and striking upper wing pattern is diagnostic of this species.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: 7X35 binos, good overcast light, 20 to 150 yards. ~~Ex~~ Excellent Viewing.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? 30 minutes this form completed? 19 days.

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

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sabine's Gull - Juvenile How many? 1Location? Saylorville Reservoir Spillway area

Type of habitat? \_\_\_\_\_

When? date(s): November 11 1983 time: 6:55 am to 8:40-8:45 amWho? your name and address: Thomas J. Standt 931 N. Summit Iowa Cityothers with you: Carl Bendit, Tom Kent, Pete Petersenothers before or after you: Eugene & Eloise Armstrong

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 small gull with gray-brown upper parts from crown, over nape, around hindneck in a collar fashion, continuing on to mantle, scapulars, and foreward wing coverts of inner wing. Outer primaries were solid black including greater coverts. Secondaries and inner primaries formed a solid white wedge dividing the gray brown area from the black primaries.

Rump and tail white with a black subterminal band. Tail was forked.

Forehead, face, and throat white. Small black bill, dark legs, dark eye.

Underparts were whitish. Underwing also whitish with a faint dark bar on innerwing between white secondaries and coverts. Primary tips had black trailing edge.

## Similar species and how eliminated:

No other gull has such a striking tricolored appearance over the upper parts.

Black-bellied Kittiwake has a forked tail with black band but has a distinct "M" on the upper parts.

Little gull also has a "M" pattern over the upper parts.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Overcast, no sun

7x binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

none - observed many Bonaparte's and one Little gull on Nov. 6 in Chicago

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Knowing that I would be looking for a Sabine's gull, many guides were consulted the night before including Grant & Harrison

How long before field notes made? Made immediately after this form completed? less than 30 hrs

observation

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Sabine's Gull 2. Number: 1  
 3. Location Saylorville Dam, Polk Co.  
 4. Date: Nov. 11, 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 6:58 to 7:00 AM  
8:35 8:40 AM - blue notes

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):

Small gull, noticeably smaller than accompanying Ring-bills, a bit slimmer.  
 Large triangular black patch at wing tip, brown area on forewing <sup>across</sup>  
 back forming a W. Tail noticeably notched, some dark along terminal edge.  
 Brown crown & hind neck. Wing area not brown or black very white - see slide.

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard by me.  
 8. Description of behavior: Seen briefly flying across Saylorville Lake above dam  
and then from dam feeding below spillway (8:35-8:40 AM)  
 9. Habitat - general: Saylorville Res.  
 specific: chiefly channel below spillway, D.M. River

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Bl.-lg. Kittiwake - This bird had brown back, + triangle of brown on  
secondary coverts, brown extending onto head.

11. Distance (how measured)? 200+ yards - est. - early obs. 12. Optical equipment: 10X40 binocs.  
25-30 yards - est. (later obs.)

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
O.C. light level low due to early hour.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Saw several off  
Westport, Va. in 1976

15. Other observers: Tom Kent, Tom Staudt, Carl Bender F, both obs., 2nd obs. -  
Gene Armstrong,

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes  
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Gene Armstrong  
Joeschau Fenbue,  
+ Jim Dinsmore

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

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

Signature Peter C. Peterson Address: 2354 W. Chellan Blvd

Date: Nov. 11, 1983 City, State: Davenport, Ia. 52803



## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Sabine's Gull (1 juv.), 11 Nov 1983,

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St. Iowa City IA 52240

Other observers: Peter Petersen, Carl Bendorf, Tom Staudt, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, Jim Dinsmore, Joe Schaufenbuel; also seen at different time by Dick and P. Mooney. Bird found by local person and identified on 10 Nov by the Armstrongs.

Time: 7 AM and 8:45 AM

Habitat: Spillway below major reservoir.

Notes from 7:35 AM: "Smaller than Ring-billed Gull--but not seen with any other bird for comparison. Black primaries, dark (color not seen) over mantle extending up neck to top of head. Tail slightly notched with black tip. Dark (gray) of top of head contrasted with light anterior neck. Underparts light (white). Legs and bill not seen. Fast flying gull."

At 8:45 I was concentrating on taking pictures, so let others make additional observations at close range. The striking W wing pattern could be seen from a great distance. The bird fed up and down the spillway as we observed from the edge.

Song: heard by Bendorf and Staudt as it flew over dam.

Behavior: smaller, faster flying gull than ring-bills present at 8:45; tended to bank and make sharp turns as it picked up small fish.

Conditions: 40 feet over our head as it flew over dam at 7 AM; about same distance later at spillway.

Similar species: Mantle and neck color clearly separates this species from immature Black-legged Kittiwake.

Agreement: no doubts.

Previous experience: none, have seen immature Kittiwakes.

References/time used: Looked at several books prior to, between, and after observations.

Time of notes/typed: Quoted notes 1/2 hour; final 5 hours.

Note: Previous Iowa records are

15 Oct 1891, Burlington, specimen at U. of Iowa

12 Oct 1894, Burlington, specimen at U. Of Iowa

no date (prior to 1900?), Scott Co., specimen at Putnam M.

fall 1970, Clear Lake, no details, Iowa Bird Life 41:27

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sabine's Gull How many? one

Location? spillway at Saylorville Dam, Polk County

Type of habitat? fast moving water

When? date(s): 11 Nov 1983 time: 8.30 to 8:35 a.m.

Who? your name and address: James Dinsmore, Dept Animal Ecology, ISU, Ames

others with you: Joe Schaufenbuel, Tom Kent, Pete Petersen, Karl Bendorf, Gene Armstrong, etc

others before or after you: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

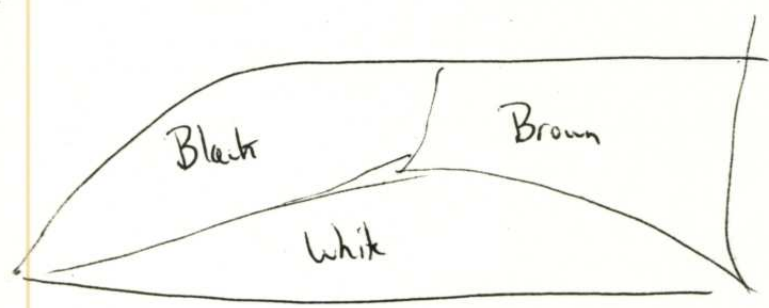
size appeared smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls it was with, and also was somewhat more agile in flight than the ring-bills

Bill black Eye black

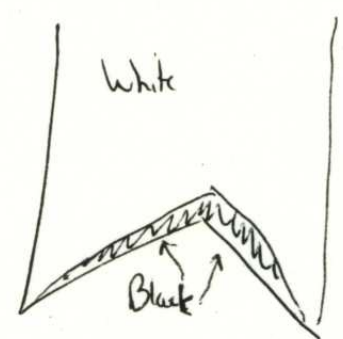
Head fore part of head largely white, back of head and top of neck was brownish with that color extending on to back

Tail distinctly notched, mostly white but with black at tip of feathers in notch

Wing distinctly three colored with the brown on the feathers near the base about the same color as the back of body (see diagram)



wing - diagramatic



Tail

Similar species and how eliminated: Little Gull--too large, no white "gap" on back of head/neck Black-legged Kittiwake--this bird had distinctly black and brown areas on top of wing with a white area as shown above Bonaparte's Gull--ditto kittiwake, also tail was notched

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: about 30 - 40 yards away (estimated) 6 x 30 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: none with this species, have seen

Bonaparte's Gull References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? \_\_\_\_\_ this form completed? 10 hours

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

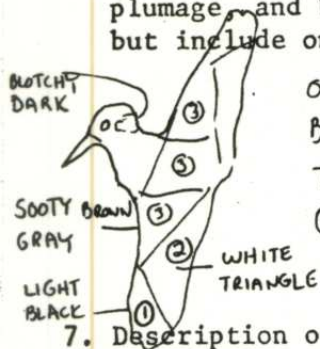
BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species SABINE'S GULL 2. Number: ONE

3. Location SPILLWAY SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

4. Date: NOVEMBER 11, 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 3:28 PM to 30 SECONDS ONLY <sup>SEEN FOR</sup>

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):  
 OF A FRANKLIN OR BONAPARTE'S, WHITE ON TOP OF HEAD, DARK BLOTCH BEHIND EYE, THROAT, BREAST WHITE, TIP OF WING TO WRIST THEN DOWN TO ABOUT MIDDLE OF PRIMARIES LIGHT BLACK, TRIANGLE OF SECONDARIES WHITE  
 ③ BACK AND SHOULDER A SOOTY BROWN GRAY



7. Description of voice, if heard: NONE

8. Description of behavior: BIRD APPEARED FROM SOUTH SWOOPED DOWN TO WATER, THEN ROSE AND WENT OVER DAM

9. Habitat - general: RESERVOIR  
 specific: SPILLWAY OF RESERVOIR, RAPID FALLING WATER INTO RIVER

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
FRANKLIN AND BONAPARTE'S GULLS DO NOT HAVE WHITE TRIANGLE ② ON TOP OF WING BONAPARTE'S DON'T HAVE BLACK TRIANGLE ① ON PRIMARIES. ON FRANKLINS GULL BLACK LOCATED ONLY ON TIP OF WING AND DOES EXTEND TO WRIST

11. Distance (how measured)? 40 YARDS (ESTIMATE) 12. Optical equipment: BUSHNELL 8x40

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): CLOUDY SUN AND LIGHT BEHIND

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

NEVER SEEN BEFORE

15. Other observers:

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: EUGENE ARMSTRONG, CARL BENDORF

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
GOLDEN BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICAN

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? SAME DAY

Signature Hank Zuletel Address: 715 WEST

Date: NOVEMBER 11, 1983 City, State: COLO, IOWA 50056

What species? Sabine's gull imm How many? 1Location? Saylorville DamType of habitat? Spillway below damWhen? date(s): 12 Nov 83 time: 640 AM to 645 AM  
700 AM to 705 AMWho? your name and address: M Newlonothers with you: C Newlon, B+C Knight, BJ Rose, S Dumas

others before or after you: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

Small gull,  $\frac{2}{3}$  X size of ringbill.  
 mantle + wing coverts brown with hints of mottling. Primaries black; Broad white triangle at rear edge of wing - inner primaries + secondaries pattern repeated on underwing but less distinctly. Tail white, slightly forked, with a narrow black terminal band on all but outermost feathers. Head smudged with dusky, paler on forehead + throat, a little white around eye. Smudges coalesce at base of nape to form a darker band that extended slightly down sides of breast. Underparts white. Bill short, black. Leg color hard to see; neither very dark nor very pale.

Wingbeat quicker + shallower than ringbills, flight more graceful, maneuvers quicker and sharper.

Both times obs., bird was fishing below dam for about 5-10 min. First time, ate two small fish in flight; second time, caught larger fish + flew over dam with it.

Similar species and how eliminated: Wing pattern eliminates all other N Am gulls. Bl-l kittiwake most similar but has smaller black tip extending across tip of wing, not full length of primaries.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
 50', 8x40 binoculars. Light poor: heavy grey clouds, heavy snow, wind.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen Sabine's gulls + kittiwakes numerous times off W. Coast of US.

References and persons consulted before writing description: transcribed from notes made on spot; no refs consulted.

How long before field notes made? \_\_\_\_\_ this form completed? 11-28-83

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

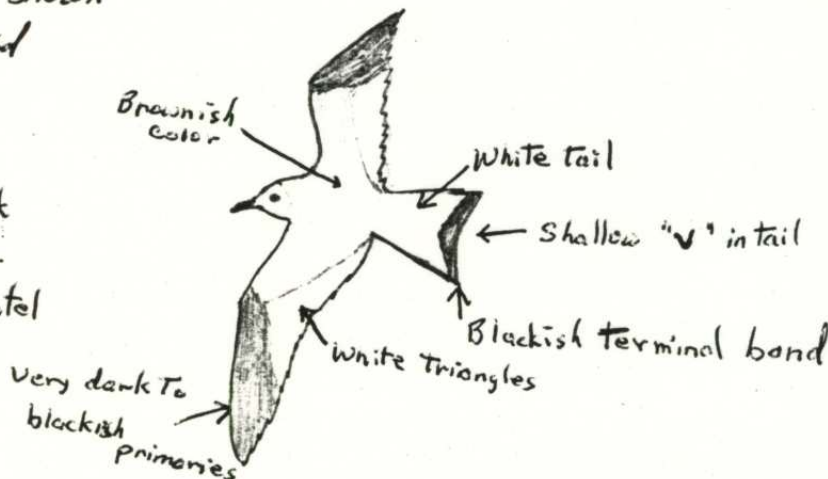
What species? Sabine's Gull How many? 1 (juvenile)Location? Saylorville Reservoir - Polk Co. IowaType of habitat? spillway below main damWhen? date(s): Nov. 12, 1983 time: 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM Two sightings lasting about 5 min eachWho? your name and address: Robert K. Myers, 1236 Sylvia Ave. Waterloo, Iowaothers with you: Francis Moore, Russ Haysothers before or after you: many before and after

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.

Field marks can best be shown on a sketch of the bird

Also:

1. legs, eyes + bill were dark
2. white below except for extension of brown mantle just under wing
3.  $\frac{2}{3}$  size of Ring-bills with it - about same size as Bonaparte's gull
4. Tern-like flight



The bird would come about every 30 to 40 min., feed for about 5 min., catch two small fish, and go back over dam carrying second fish.

Similar species and how eliminated:

First-winter kittiwake has somewhat similar tail + wing pattern but has gray back and a black collar on nape of neckDid any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Closest viewing about 30' with 7x35 B+L binoculars -Not very good lighting but ID was obviousPrevious experience with species and similar ones: NONE with Sabine's, but have seen Black-legged kittiwakeReferences and persons consulted before writing description: NONEHow long before field notes made? ON THE SPOT this form completed? 2 weeks

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

What species? Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) How many? 1 immature

Location? Spillway at Dam of Sailorville Reservoir, near Johnston, Polk Co.

Type of habitat? churning water at spillway of dam.

When? date(s): November 12, 1983 time: 9:00am to 10:00am.

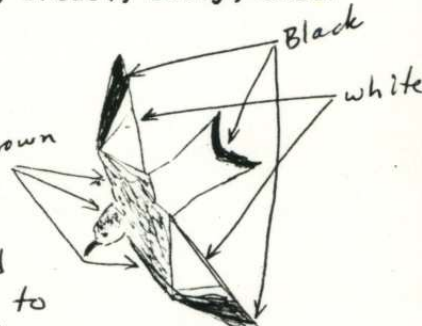
Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

others with you: Bob Myers, Russell Hays.

others before or after you: Gene Armstrong, Tom Kent, Carl Bendorf, Tom Stout, m. ob.

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 seen twice for about 5 minutes at a time as it came to feed on small fish (probably Gizzard Shad) as they came through the spillway. Both times that I saw the bird it came and caught 2 small fish each time. After catching the second meal it would then fly up and over the dam and out over the reservoir. It would then be gone about 30 to 40 minutes before it returned to feed below the spillway again. The bird had a dark bill and eye.



The coloration of the bird was a striking tricolored triangular pattern. The outer primaries were black, the inner primaries and secondaries was white from the wrist to the tertials, the mantle and top of head and back was a medium brown color. A very striking bird and not like any other I have seen. (See drawing). No voice was heard.

Similar species and how eliminated: immature Black-legged Kittiwake has a dark band on the back of the neck. No other small or large gull in North America has the striking tricolor ~~wing~~ triangular wing pattern with a forked tail.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Viewing conditions very good. Strong lighting, overcast with light Snow falling during viewing times.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have no previous experience with this species, have seen one Black-legged Kittiwake immature.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? At time of sighting this form completed? 8 hours

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

What species? Sabine's Gull, immature How many? 1Location? Saylorville, spillway below damType of habitat? at turbulent water below spillwayWhen? date(s): November 12, 1983 time: 10:15 to 10:20Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdtothers with you: Phyllis Harris, Carol McMillen, Ramona Sommerlot, Mark Proescholdtothers before or after you: m.o.b

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.

this gull smaller than the many Ring-billed Gulls with a tern-like flight had a bold pattern of triangles across wings and back - black, white, gray, white, black. It had a black bill (didn't see the yellow tip) and black legs and its forked tail was accented by a black edge, quite heavy. The gray of the back extended up the nape and onto the back of the head, with the forehead and throat white. As we drove across the dam the gull flew across + over our car for a first close look. Then as we parked <sup>on the road</sup> looking down to the gulls feeding, the Sabine's flew back and forth across the water from rip-rap to rip-rap, dipping to the water, flying in a graceful way. We observed it about 5 minutes before it flew up + over the dam.

Similar species and how eliminated: no similar species with the distinct triangles on wingsDid any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance, (how measured), and optical equipment: fog, + snowing - distance it flew over our car on the dam - then about 50 feet above the spillway - binoculars - + it was plainly seen with our naked eyes tooPrevious experience with species and similar ones: never have we seen a Sabine'sReferences and persons consulted before writing description: Peterson + Robbins guides + Pough's Audubon GuideHow long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Nov 27

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