

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒Accepted 7-0**Species:** Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)**Date:** 24 November 1996**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Basic I**Locality:** Long Pond**Elevation:** about 5400'**Nearest town:** Ft. Collins**County:** Larimer**Time observed:** about 10:20 - 10:25 MST**Duration of observation:** about 5 minutes

Description: On my way to Douglas Reservoir to look for the immature Black-legged Kittiwake that had been reported there the previous day, I drove by Long Pond, north of Ft. Collins. There were a lot of gulls there, so, being the gullaholic that I am, I stopped to check them out. I had gotten about halfway through the gulls when I saw an immature kittiwake flying among the many Ring-bills. I watched it for a bit, then continued looking through the gulls and ducks there. I didn't find anything else of note, so decided to try to refind the kittiwake among the 300+ gulls there. It took a while, but I finally found it swimming on the north side of the pond.

The bird was a medium-sized gull, about the same length as the nearby Ring-bills, but with somewhat shorter wings. The head was white with an ill-defined black splotch behind the eye, which was black, as was the bill. There was a wide, black half-collar covering the back of the neck. The back was darker gray than the back color of the Ring-bills. The underparts were unrelieved white. In flight from above, the wings showed a pronounced "M" formed from black outer primaries, a black carpal patch, and a black band crossing the secondary coverts from the wrist to the base of the trailing edge of the. The tail was white with a wide, black terminal band. I did not notice the color the one time I briefly saw the legs.

Similar species eliminated: Immature Black-legged Kittiwakes are at least somewhat similar in plumage to a number of other species in immature plumage. The wide, black half-collar eliminates all species with which it could be confused. In addition, size and shape eliminate Little and Ross' gulls, bill color and the color of the outer primaries eliminates Black-headed Gull, and outer primaries color and size eliminate Bonaparte's Gull.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 100s of Black-legged Kittiwakes (a few on the Great Lakes and hundreds on the Atlantic Ocean -- both places where I have conducted waterbird counts). I have seen all the species that have occurred in North America with which one could confuse an immature Black-legged Kittiwake, except Ross' Gull. I have spent hundreds of hours studying and watching gulls, as they are one of my most favorite groups of birds (my license plat is GULLS).

Light conditions: sun behind me and to my left

Optical equipment used: Kowa 30x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of about 75 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature: 

Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 7 December 1996 from notes written ~~within~~ at the time of the sighting