

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒Accepted 7-0**Species:** Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)**Date:** 28 November 1996**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Basic I**Locality:** Union Reservoir**Elevation:** about 5400'**Nearest town:** Longmont**County:** Weld**Time observed:** about 16:00 - 16:05 MST**Duration of observation:** about 5 minutes

Description: I took some of my visiting family for a look at some of the birds on Union Reservoir on Thanksgiving day. We had scoped everything we could from the south end, so headed up to the north end, where it seemed the vast majority of the birds were. The first bird I saw (in the northwest corner) on the north side was a medium-sized gull floating. I almost passed it off as a young Ring-bill as I thought it was just the bad light that was making the back look somewhat dark. So, I looked at it with the bins and, lo and behold, it was my third immature kittiwake of the week! After showing the bird to my family in the scope, I tried to get just a little closer to it for photography by crossing the ditch and shooting the bird from the fence (it wasn't too far off on the lake). It didn't like that and flew off. I snapped a few shots, but the images will be (when they come back) ridiculously small.

The bird was a medium-sized gull. There were no other birds nearby for comparison, despite the fact that there were nearly 200 Ring-billed Gulls on the lake. The head was white with a somewhat circular 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 a darker gray than the back color of a Ring-billed Gull. What I could see of the underparts was white. The wings each showed an irregular, wide, black line parallel to the waterline from the wrist to the tertials. In flight, I saw that the outer primaries were black as were the primary coverts and that there was a ragged, wide, diagonal black bar connecting the wrist and the tertials. This "M" was on a gray background and the secondaries looked very pale. The tail was white with a substantial, black terminal band. I did not see the leg color.

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 eliminates Bonaparte's, Little, and Ross' gulls and bill color and the color of the outer primaries eliminates Black-headed 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.

Light conditions: sun in front of me and to my right

Optical equipment used: Zeiss 7x42 and Kowa 30x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at about 30 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Lizz Leukering and Ellen Dunn

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I will submit photos if they are at all definitive (Nikon and Fujichrome)

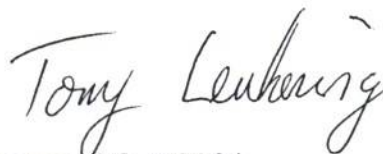
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Leukering". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the printed word "Signature:".

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

Date report was written: 7 December 1996 from notes written within an hour of the sighting