

Species: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

Rissa tridactyla

1974 (Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): Oct 29 - Oct 30 - Nov 1 Time Bird Seen: 1st afternoon - 1st - 3:30 PM

Locality: Greenman Reservoir 3rd morning to 1st - 3:30 PM

Nearest Town: Berthoud, Colo. County: Larimer

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Mrs. Camille Cumming	1924 N. County Road 17 Berthoud, Colo.	532-2016

Optical Equipment: Scope 15x50 15 to 50 binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: 7x35 mm - m

Light Conditions: overcast - all day

Distance from bird (how measured): 15 to 20 feet above us - when down near for measurement

Length of Greenman Reservoir - 1/4 mile from topographic map

This was used as measurement of distance from birds

Number of Birds Seen: 3 Sex: Plume: winter

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

They flew low over water.
 I observed one chasing a sparrow hawk from reservoir. Also saw one skimming on the water.
 One stood for a long time at edge of water (shallow) so I could see the black legs.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern.
 Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

This gull was medium sized - winter plumage.
 (not as large as California)
 There was a triangular black wing tip - sharply defined. (no trace of white spot)
 Bill - greenish-yellow - rather small + slender
 Gray on nape and back of neck (as brushed on)
 All the wing (except the longest primaries) gray
 Tail - white - slightly forked.

Sometimes the birds were observed at 1/2 mile
 Sometimes birds were much closer - 200 feet
 Sometimes " " observed at 400 - 500 - 600 feet

We were always using (OVER) length of reservoir as

DIPPER: Volume 2, Number 9

used both 2 foot and 1 foot measuring sticks.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

In flight. above us - sort of a - a - a - a - a
One flew about ^{15 ft} 20 feet above my head so I could hear his call as he was chasing sparrow hawk.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Coleman Reservoir.

Few trees on shore line.

Mallard - red heads - widgion ducks on reservoir

Length of Coleman Reservoir - 1/4 mile. - Topographical map

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Californias were eliminated because of size - and greenish legs - also windows on black primaries

Franklins were eliminated because of white spots on primaries - White band separates the black from gray on wing tips.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

none

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Used books after each sighting for help in identification + verification of mark we had observed.

This report was written from notes made during X after X observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Mrs Ann Means SIGNATURE: Mrs Ann Means DATE: Dec 29-7

Street Address: 2009 Del Norte Town and State: Levland, Colo ZIP: 80537

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

Rissa tridactyla

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 29 & Nov. 1, 1974 Time Bird Seen: 1:30 p.m. to approx. 4 p.m.

Locality: Coleman Reservoir - 2.2 miles due west of Berthoud

Nearest Town: Berthoud County: Larimer

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Caution Nov. 1st 1974 1:30 p.m.

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Ann Means	2009 - E. North, Loveland	669-0004

Optical Equipment: Binoculars 7x50 - Scope Juna 15-50 x60 Zoom 15 to 50 - Used

If photographed, type of equipment used: at 20 to 30 approx.

Light Conditions: Overcast, moist

Distance from bird (how measured): 20 ft. to 1/4 mile - the close distance, when in air almost

above us - just compared with length of a room - the 1/4 mile from topographic map length of Coleman R.

Number of Birds Seen: 3 Sex: ? Plumage: winter

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: We stood on small hill above N.W. cor. of Coleman. Soon noticed that aside from two or three California gulls there were 3 very sharp flyers with no ~~wings~~ ^{wings} easily discerned with binocs. as they circled our end of reservoir. The triangular pitch black wing tip was like a cut-out laid onto the grey wing. I would say light grey only it wasn't as light as the Little Gull seen Nov. 2. The pure white tail seemed quite square across the end. The bill was yellow without ring or spot. We couldn't see the legs

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern.

Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

well while it was in the air, even turning in the air almost over us, but when one of them walked on the shore at s.w. cor. of lake the legs looked very dark.

When two went by at about our level and very close I was shocked and confused to see a definite ^{and rather expansive} grey patch at juncture of back of head and neck on both of them. (I had looked at the bl-l. kittiwake picture in Peterson but not in Birds of N.A. and so did not realize that the grey patch was right in winter plumage.)

When the birds swooped low enough to show the back of wings close to us we could see that the white edge of wing extended a bit into the black on the rear edge.

We watched them quite continuously for well over 2 hrs. About a half hour before we left one bird dropped into the middle of the lake and plowed just under the water toward the north shore, perhaps 150 ft. (at least 100 ft), visible at all times and using its wings like oars although the water was over the body. I had watched gulls in San Francisco Bay all my childhood and never had seen a gull do this before. After I had talked to Ron Harden about this he called me back and said he (OVER) had found in the Nat'l Geog.

DIPPER: Volume 2, Number 9

"Birds of Amer." that kittiwakes are the only gulls to swim under water.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

A shrill cry but we didn't hear it repeated often

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: Already mentioned. This is a good pond-duck reservoir so not too deep. There are some grasses near south edge. Reservoir near county road but our location on small hill ideal for viewing. Reservoir about 1/4 mi. long.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

On Oct. 29, the only other gulls were two or three California, much larger much bulkier, with windows in black tips and spot on bill.

On Nov. 1, when we watched for only about 15 minutes, 7 or 8 were Franklins and Ring-bills with windows, rounded tails, darker wings (upper surface).

On Oct. 30th we went to look for the Kittiwakes about an hour before dark. There were gulls there, Ring-bills if I remember correctly, but no Kittiwakes.

Further note on behavior: I recall that soon after we remarked the lack of window in wing tips we saw that two of the birds were concentrated on repeatedly chasing a bird that lit on the fence south of the lake. Later we determined this bird, which repeatedly returned to the post, was a sparrowhawk. The gregariousness of these birds did not seem gull-like although gulls fight violently for food with each other and other fish.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Only Kittiwake I had seen was one at "Lion Country" south of Los Angeles last winter. I had watched gulls on S.F. Bay all my teenage years and of course our Colorado gull species here. In winter I usually watch gulls on California coast and off the west coast of Mexico—that is in Gulf of California, where I expect to go in January again.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Peterson illustrations looked at during observation. B. of North Amer. after observation. The latter reassured me by confirming the grey on back of head and neck. Nat'l Geog. B. of N. Amer. reassured me by confirming the swimming under water.

This report was written from notes made during yes after observation; from memory also.

PRINT NAME: Camille Cummings SIGNATURE: Camille Cummings DATE: Dec. 21, 1964
Street Address: PO Box 109 Town and State: Bethford, Co ZIP: 80513

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 1450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110