

Species: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIGAW

(Vernacular Name)

RISSA TRIDACTYLA

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 11/13/76; 11/25/76; 11/28/76 Time Bird Seen: 2:30-3:00 PM (11/13) to 10:00-11:00 AM (11/28)

Locality: UNION RESERVOIR

Nearest Town: LONGMONT

County: WELD

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
STEVE LARSON	ALL OF BOULDER, COLO.	442-3752
BRUCE WEBB	BUT I DON'T KNOW	447-2614
PETE GENT	THEIR ADDRESSES	?

Optical Equipment: 7X35 BINOCULARS, 20-45X60 TELESCOPE

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: EXCELLENT (11/28); GOOD (11/13); FAIR (11/25)

Distance from bird (how measured): 50 FT. (11/25) - 200 YDS (11/13) ESTIMATED

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: Plumage: IMMATURE

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

- 11/13 - ACTIVE, FLYING A GREAT DEAL, SWIMMING VERY LITTLE
- 11/25 - FLYING ALONG SHORELINE IN STRONG WIND - DID NOT SIT DOWN
- 11/28 - SWIMMING ALMOST ENTIRELY - FLEW TWICE WHEN DISTURBED BY LOUD NOISE BUT SAT DOWN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY

IN FLIGHT - FLEW CLOSE TO WATER; NEVER OVER LAND; FLEW LIKE SABINE'S GULL
 SWIMMING - BUOYANT, NOT UNLIKE BONAPARTE'S GULL

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:

SIZE AND SHAPE - SIMILAR TO LAURENCE GULL; PERCEPTIBLY LARGER THAN BONAPARTE'S GULL, BUT ALSO EQUALLY PERCEPTIBLY SMALLER THAN RING-BILLED.

UNDERPARTS, TAIL, RUMP, HEAD - WHITE; HEAD WITH OVAL BLACKISH SPOT BEHIND EYE (VERTICAL ORIENTATION) AND NAPE WITH STRONG BLACKISH BAR OR COLLAR (SEPARATED FROM MANTLE BY WHITE AREA A LITTLE NARROWER THAN BAR ITSELF. TAIL SQUARISH TO SLIGHTLY NOTCHED WITH STRONG BLACK TERMINAL BAND UNDER SIDE OF WING WITH WEAK DUSKY SMUDGE AT DISTAL PORTION

MANTLE - PEARL GRAY, ABOUT SAME COLOR AS RING-BILLED GULL'S MANTLE

UPPER SIDE OF WING - IN FLIGHT, OUTER 3 OR 4 PRIMARIES BLACK, WRIST BLACK, BLACKISH BAR THROUGH GREATER COVERTS INTO TERTIARY IN FRONT OF THIS BAR THE WING COLOR APPROXIMATED THE MANTLE COLOR; BEHIND IT THE SECONDARIES AND INNER PRIMARIES WERE WHITISH. WING PATTERN OVERALL WAS GRAY WITH BLACK ZIG-ZAG AND WHITISH TRAILING PORTION - SIMILAR TO SABINE'S GULL.

Bill - SMALL, SLIGHTLY DECURVED, BLACK

LEGS AND FEET - BLACK

EYE - BLACKISH

AT REST, THE BLACK NAPE BAR COULD BE SEEN TO OCCUPY THE BASAL PORTION OF THE NECK (MOSTLY SEEMED TO BE RIGHT AT NECK-BODY JOINT); THE FOLDED WING EXTENDED 1-2 INCHES PAST TAIL TIP AND CARRIED A DUSKY LINE ALONG THE ENTIRE FORE EDGE.

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc: NEVER HEARD CALL

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

PRAIRIE RESERVOIR - NEAR MIDDLE OF LAKE EXCEPT IN SEVERE WEATHER

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

NO OTHER NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES HAS A BLACK NAPE BAR AND A PLAIN GRAY BACK EXCEPT RED-LEGGED KITTIWAKE, WHICH HAS RED LEGS AND FEET AND DARKER UNDER SIDE OF WING.

LITTLE GULL HAS SIMILAR WING PATTERN IN IMMATURE PLUMAGE, BUT LACKS NAPE BAR AND HAS DARK CROWN, RED LEGS AND FEET AND DISTINCTLY SMALLER SIZE.

SABINE'S GULL HAS VERY SIMILAR WING PATTERN, BUT BACK IS DARKER AND DARK COLOR EXTENDS EVENLY OVER NAPE AND CROWN - NO BAR.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

HAVE OBSERVED SABINE'S GULLS IN SAME LOCATION AND HAVE STUDIED IMMATURE LITTLE GULLS AT THIS SITE - HAVE OBSERVED ONLY 1 OTHER OF THIS SPECIES - A WINTER ADULT AT SAME LOCATION.

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

PETERSON BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE HAS MOST ACCURATE PICTURE AND WAS USED AS CONFIRMING SOURCE.

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

PRINT NAME: PETER J. Moulton SIGNATURE: Peter J. Moulton DATE: 11/28/76
Street Address: 1328 So Coffman St #3 Town and State: LOVELAND, COLO. ZIP: 80021

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 14450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE Rissa tridactyla
 (Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): November 27, 1976 Time Bird Seen: 12:35 P.M. to 1:00 P.M.-MST

Locality: Union Reservoir

Nearest Town: Longmont County: Weld

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Apparently this bird has been around for over a month and has been seen by a number of people - Bruce Webb, Steve Larson, Pete and Mike Moulton to name a few. No one else was with me during my sighting.		

Optical Equipment: 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: h

Light Conditions: Bright sunlight from observer's back; much shimmering over water.

Distance from bird (how measured): Various: 300 feet to over 500 feet.

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Immature

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

This bird was first seen as it joined in the harrassment of a large flock of Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes which were feeding out on the reservoir. Approximately 50 gulls (mostly Ring-billed with a scattering of Bonaparte's) were engaged in the harrassment. The Kittiwake was observed flying most of the time although it would flutter to the surface of the water once in a while as if to pick up a bit of food, then taking off again to join the other circling gulls. With the approach of a boat carrying duck hunters, the feeding flock of Mergansers and Goldeneyes broke up and scattered over the reservoir. The Kittiwake then began feeding by itself along the shoreline. 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:

A rather small gull (size between Ring-billed Gull and Bonaparte's Gull). Most notable characteristic was the upperwing pattern which appeared as a dark "W" when the bird flew. The primaries on the upper wing were black. A broad, dark band crossed the wing from the wrist to the secondaries on the trailing edge of the wing. The background color on the remainder of the wing was gray (lighter toward the trailing edge, darker toward the leading edge). Tail appeared square at the distance I was observing the bird, was white with a black terminal band. Underparts and head were white. There was a fairly well pronounced black nape band and was seen when the bird got closer. The underwings were mostly white with some gray in the primary area. I could not make out the color of the bill or legs due to viewing distance. The bold upperwing pattern contrasted nicely with the patterns of the nearby Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls.

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

No call heard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large, fresh water reservoir adjacent to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Immature Bonaparte's Gull: Bonaparte's Gulls are smaller and are more tern-like in appearance. Bonaparte's Gulls show a similar band pattern in the upperwing, but it is not nearly as pronounced due mainly to the amount of white in the primaries (even in young birds).

Immature Little Gull: Also has similar upperwing pattern, but is very small and has rather rounded wingtips.

Immature Black-headed Gull: Roughly the same size as Kittiwake, but does not show the strong wing banding due to amount of white in upperwing primaries.

Immature Sabine's Gull: Has boldly marked upper wing pattern but does not show banding forming the characteristic "W" of Kittiwake. Also too small (size of Bonaparte's).

All other immature gulls: Eliminated due to upperwing configuration not matching the foregoing species.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen literally hundreds of Black-legged Kittiwakes off central California during the fall and winter months, many of them immatures. Found Colorado's second state record for this species at Cherry Creek Reservoir on January 1, 1970 (also an immature). Have seen one bird (adult) once on Long Island, New York. Also have seen all the gulls mentioned above in the immature plumage except for the Black-headed Gull (one winter adult on Long Island, New York two years ago).

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

Standard Field Guides consulted and confirmed observation.

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

PRINT NAME: JACK REDDALL SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: 11-28-1976
Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

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