

29-1987

species: Black-legged Kittiwake
(Vernacular name)

Rissa tridactyla
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 11/26/87 Time Bird Seen: 1:30PM to 2:30PM

Locality: Moab - Colorado River West of town in the marsh and 5 miles down river in the canyon
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 7 by 35 Nikon + 8 by 35 Bushnell

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: we tried to get pictures but the bird would not cooperate

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: immature (first year bird)

Light conditions: Clear to P/C very good

Distance from bird, and how measured: flew directly overhead at 50 to 75 ft est.

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The bird was flying the river generally heading down river but would swing back for a short distance now and then. It never landed and flew on down the river pasted where the road ended so I could not follow. It often flew close to the water.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

The river passes by Moab where it spreads out in a marsh which is really just a big Tamarisk area with few Cattails. The river then goes into a Canyon with some willows and mostly Tamarisk. Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Brenda Wright was with me but I don't if anyone from Moab saw the bird. I went into town and asked around for the

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

When I saw the bird I suspected it was a Ring-billed Gull. I noticed however, its flight was different. This quickly got me out of my truck with my binoculars. At this time the bird was flying directly at me and I got my best look. The bill was all dark. On the upper wings the dark shape of a  could be clearly seen. The upper tail ~~had~~ had a dark terminal band. As the bird came closer it flew up and over. From underneath the black legs could be seen clearly against the white under-tailed coverts. I did not see however the black terminal band on the tail from underneath. The best fieldmark was the dark band behind the head with a black spot

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: 

No sound

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

The only other Gull with the black band is the Little Gull. They are much smaller than this Gull which was about Franklins Gull size. Mew Gulls don't have the black Neape band. Neither do Ring-billed Gulls which fly differently and don't have a total dark bill. Sabine's, Franklins and Bonaparte don't have the correct marking either on the head and

Prior experience with this and similar species: 

Last Summer I spent 50 days on the ~~base~~ upper wing of the Arctic Ocean and Canada birding. I spent two days with 1000's of Black-legged Kittiwakes looking for the Red-legged Kittiwakes. Sabine's is the only Gull species of the west I don't experience is ~~never~~ 

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

NAME (print): Coen Dexter

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Signature: Coen Dexter 8/15/04

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Brenda Wright