

Submission Date	2013-04-15 22:12:34
Observer's Name	Geoff Malosh
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Phone	412-735-3128
Observer's Address	Street Address: 450 Amherst Avenue City: Moon Township State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 15108 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Initially with Mike Weible. Later at least 15 other observers came to see the bird but only about 5 were successful.
Species (Common Name)	Black-legged Kittiwake
Species (Scientific Name)	Rissa tridactyla
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	First winter plumage
Observation Date and Time	03-24-2013 10:10 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S13510225
County	Erie
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Presque Isle State Park
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Off Beach 11 in and near Thompson Bay
Habitat	Sheltered bay on Lake Erie
Distance to bird	200 feet at closest approach
Viewing conditions	Cloudy but no precipitation and plenty of light
Optical equipment used	Leica APO 82mm spotting scope, Canon 1D Mark IV + 500mm f/4 + teleconverters
Description	Description entered into eBird: First spring record for Erie County, per Jerry McWilliams. One first cycle bird seen at 10:10 for about 10 minutes, and again around 12:30 for 3 minutes. First picked out of the flock by Mike Weible. The bird was larger than Bonaparte's, about the same size or perhaps just a bit smaller than Ring-billed. It had a small, all black bill and dark eye. At rest the bird showed a small black

patch behind the eye on an otherwise all white head, and a thick, very obvious black half-collar that wrapped around the back of the bird's neck. It had a medium gray mantle with a very large and obvious thick black bar extending from the forward fold in the wing below the mantle all the way back to the rump. It had dark folded primaries and a short tail. When in flight, the half-collar was very obvious. The upperside of the wing had a very bold, thick, and obvious black "M" pattern, which was formed by a black leading edge to the outer 3-4 primaries and extending around the "wrist" of the wing and onto the lesser coverts (mirrored on each wing). This thick black M pattern outlined a lighter triangle on the trailing edge of each wing formed by light gray or white inner primaries, secondaries, and greater coverts. The underside of the wing in flight was very clean light gray or white throughout, except for the very tips of the outer 5-6 primaries, quite a contrast to the upper wing. The tail was all white except for well defined black tips, which created a black bar along the trailing edge of the folded tail, and a black dotted pattern when the tail was flared. It was not seen after 12:30pm. Photographed both in flight and at rest.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

Described above. The bird was seen bathing and preening, at rest, and in flight.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

The relatively short, all black bill, thick half-collar, and bold black "M" on the upperside of the bird in flight is distinctive for Black-legged Kittiwake. Sabine's Gull shows bold black on the upperside of the primaries but it does not have a complete black "M" and it lacks the distinctive half-collar (instead showing a partial hood in winter). Adult Sabine's does not have a black terminal band on the tail, which first-winter Sabine's does show but again the lack of a complete M for first-winter Sabine's eliminates that species. Bonaparte's Gull can show a weak M shape but lacks the half-collar and is also noticeably smaller than this bird. Red-legged Kittiwake has an even shorter bill than this bird, and does not show a complete M in any plumage. First-winter Ross's Gull shows a bold, complete M, but has a much smaller bill than kittiwake, and a diamond-shaped tail which was not evident on this bird. First-winter birds also do not show a collar or at best a very weak collar, not the thick half-collar shown by this bird. First-winter Black-headed Gull has a sort of M but also had black secondaries, lacks the collar, and normally has a lighter colored bill. First winter Little Gull also has a boldly patterned back but is much smaller than this bird and again does not have the collar.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

There was an unprecedented diversity of gulls at Thompson Bay and Beach 11 on March 24--twelve species. The following totals were recorded there that day. Numbers of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls are probably severely underestimated, but accurate totals were very difficult to estimate.

Black-legged Kittiwake 1
Bonaparte's Gull 12500
Black-headed Gull 1
Little Gull 30 (probably at least 50 on the park)
Franklin's Gull 1
Ring-billed Gull 20000
Herring Gull 10000

Thayer's Gull 1
Iceland Gull 4
Lesser Black-backed Gull 10
Glaucous Gull 4
Great Black-backed Gull 500

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings

[Kittiwake_BlackLegged_PresqueIslePA_20130324_1D4_4_E9H2814.jpg](#)
[Kittiwake_BlackLegged_PresqueIslePA_20130324_1D4_4_E9H2849.jpg](#)
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