

Black-legged Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Location: Sunset Point at Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., Pa.

Date: November 22, 2013

Time: 8:00 to 9:00 AM

Weather: Cloudy, light SW wind, temp. 45 F.

Viewing distance: approximately 3/4 mile offshore

Optics: Swarovski 8 X 42 Binocular and Kowa TSN 884 Prominar spotting scope from 20X to 60X.

Details: I was near Sunset Point conducting my waterbird count when I spotted a first cycle Black—legged Kittiwake sitting on the water about 200 yards offshore. Since the water was rather tranquil I was able to get good views through my spotting scope. I never saw it fly in, so I suspect it had been sitting on the water the whole time I was there from 6:50 AM until I spotted it at 8:00 AM. I had been busy counting thousands of mergansers passing by, so I wasn't paying attention to what was sitting on the water. When the duck flight started to subside I decided to scan the lake to see what was there when I spotted the kittiwake. The mantle was of medium gray and the black forewing bar stood out on the folded wing, especially on the tertials. The head was white with a round black spot behind the eye and a bold black bar crossed the back of the neck. The bill and folded primaries were all black. It remained on the water where I took a couple of photos until 9:00 AM when it flew off to the east. The bold black "M" pattern across the upperside was diagnostic when it flew. Roger Donn arrived in time to see the bird as well as Ruth Swaney.