

FIRST RECORD OF BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE FOR ALBERTA

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In the morning of November 16, 1976, the authors identified a dead Black-legged Kittiwake brought to them by the Calgary Ornithological Society as an immature Black-legged Kittiwake. This is a species rarely seen far inland. It breeds in Alaska, extreme northern Canada and along the eastern seaboard⁴ with the most recent and northernmost colony being on Green Island of the coast of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.³ The nearest migration route to Alberta is off the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, with the vast majority of sightings in this locale being between May and September (R. W. Campbell, pers. comm.).

A review of the literature shows that Black-legged Kittiwakes are becoming more common with increasing regularity in the United States, the result of either an increase in birdwatchers or an increase in the species or a combination of both factors. Most of the sightings are from coastal states, but 15 inland states have now recorded sightings of this species. In the authors' opinions, most unusual sightings are a Black-legged Kittiwake seen in Utah on March 12, 1967²; two birds in South Dakota in September, 1967⁵; and a single bird in Alberta on October 10, 1951.¹

The following diagnostic features of the dead bird were noted: bill and tail black; tail white, slightly forked, black-tipped; underside white; head white with a dark grayish-black spot and a black nape band; mandible gray with black wing tips and a brownish-black bar diagonally crossing the wing coverts; hind toe rudimentary with no nail. Enquiring about the bird, the authors learned that the specimen was found alive by Mrs. McMurray on the road in front

of her home in Calgary, Alberta on November 13, 1976. The bird was subsequently taken to the Calgary Zoo by Mrs. McMurray where it died a few days later. The specimen has since been placed in the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta in Edmonton under number Z-76.129.1.

In the afternoon of November 16, 1976 the authors attended a necropsy on the bird which was performed by the veterinarian staff at the Calgary Zoo. Dissection showed the bird to be a male. While the exact cause of death could not be determined, the following facts were obtained. The bird had an old head injury in the right occipital region with traumatic lesion of the skin and underlying tissues. The gastrointestinal system was empty, except for a small piece of yellow plastic which was found in the gizzard. On top of this, pathologic diagnosis found hepatic hemorrhage, pulmonary edema and hemorrhage, and renal tubulonecrosis.

¹BAUMGARTNER, F. M. 1952. Southern Great Plains Region. Audubon Field Notes 6:25.

²BEHLE, W. H. 1973. Significant bird records from Utah. Great Basin Naturalist 33:243-245.

³FINCH, D. W. 1971. Northeastern Maritime Region. American Birds 25:834.

⁴GODFREY, W. E. 1966. The birds of Canada. Queen's Printer. Ottawa. 428 pp.

⁵HATCH, D. R. M. 1968. Northern Great Plains Region. American Birds 22:56.