

Through year after year of dealing with the great horn I never felt the urge to draw one from life. I have often wondered why. Then, at the University of Michigan one day, someone brought in a great horn that had appeal. It was big, beautifully feathered, and docile. After being talked to a bit it submitted to having its feathered toes stroked. It gave up popping its bill unless startled by the slamming of a door. I settled down with pencil, eraser, brushes, and the old Fuertes paintbox, and did a portrait of the owl's head. While I worked my model never looked at my face. What it watched was my right hand. That hand seemed to fascinate it. Its facial expression was at times a bit frightening. What, I thought, if that owl should decide to pounce on one of those fingers? For all I knew they might look like weasels to the owl!

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THE BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN OKLAHOMA

BY MITCHELL OLIPHANT

The Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) is almost circumpolar in distribution, breeding in the Arctic Ocean and the higher latitudes of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans (Harrison, P., 1983, *Seabirds, an identification guide*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, p. 359). Its winter range extends southward in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to approximately the Tropic of Cancer (*op. cit.*, p. 435). The species is essentially pelagic, and, outside its breeding grounds, is not often recorded over land even in coastal areas, although it "Occurs occasionally in many inland localities, including Great Lakes" (Farrand, J., Jr., 1983, *The Audubon master guide to birding*, Vol. 2, p. 78, Alfred A. Knopf, New York). Thus it is surprising that this ocean-loving gull should show up in Oklahoma, a state lying hundreds of miles from any ocean. Nevertheless, kittiwakes have visited the state 13 times during the last 30 years.

The first sighting in Oklahoma seems to have occurred in Tulsa in 1959. This kittiwake, in first winter feather, was seen by numerous observers, including Anne B. Reynolds, L. Bruce Reynolds and John S. Tomer from 8 to 29 March 1959 at or near Lake Yahola in Mohawk Park (1959, *Aud. Field Notes*, 13:305). It was photographed on 15 March by Jerry Neil and on 18 March by Jack P. Barrett. Five of these photos are on file at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range (Sutton, G. M., [1982], *Species summaries of Oklahoma birds*, Oklahoma Mus. Nat. Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman). Only six months later, another immature Black-legged Kittiwake appeared at Lake Yahola. From 12 October to 7 November 1959, Anne Reynolds, her husband Bruce and possibly others, studied this bird (1960, *Aud. Field Notes*, 14:51). The possibility that this kittiwake was the same bird as was seen the previous spring was rejected by Sutton, who wrote: "had it been the same bird someone surely would have noted it during the summer, for bird students at Tulsa have long been perceptive and active" (Sutton [1982] *op. cit.*). This remarkable year for Black-legged Kittiwake sightings in Oklahoma was capped when J. David Ligon and W. Marvin Davis collected a bird in its first winter plumage on 19 November 1959 below the Lake Overholser dam in Oklahoma City (1960, *Aud. Field Notes*, 14:51).

There were no further reports in Oklahoma until 30 December 1967. On that date, John G. Newell, while helping to conduct the Oklahoma City Audubon Christmas Bird Count, sighted another first winter bird, again near the dam at Lake Overholser (1968, Aud. Field Notes, 22:452, 548). It remained in the vicinity until 5 April 1968. Newell wrote: "Although it associated with Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), it frequently fed or rested alone in the vicinity of the dam — the nearest thing it could find to a steep-sided sea-cliff" (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*).

On 24 November 1968, another Black-legged Kittiwake was found in the Tulsa area. On that date, G. C. and Ethel Getgood discovered one along the Arkansas River below the Keystone Reservoir dam (1969, Aud. Field Notes, 23:76). On 16 and 17 December 1968, Anne and Bruce Reynolds observed probably the same bird there and it was in first winter feather (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*). This bird apparently lingered well into 1969, having been last recorded on 10 March of that year. Observers during this period included the Reynoldses and John S. Tomer (Tomer, 1970, Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc., 3:30; Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*).

During the decade of the 1970s there were three kittiwake sightings in Oklahoma. From 5-7 November 1972 a singleton appeared at Tulsa, chiefly at impoundments in Mohawk Park, as reported by Anne and Bruce Reynolds *et al.* (1973, Amer. Birds, 27:80). A bird in first winter feather was noted by several persons below Hulah Reservoir dam in Osage County between 16 and 19 February 1974. Observers included Elizabeth Hicks on 16 February and Dotty M. Goard and Madge Hildreth on 19 February (1974, Amer. Birds, 28:658). Again at Hulah Reservoir, on 26 December 1976, an immature bird was discovered by Howard W. and Dotty M. Goard; they noted its notched tail, black legs and bill, and the dusky area on the head, but "no black line across the back of the neck;" it was smaller than several Ring-billed Gulls nearby (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*).

The 1980s produced four sightings of kittiwakes in Oklahoma. Below the Great Salt Plains Reservoir dam in Alfalfa County, an immature bird was observed repeatedly by J. A. Kirk *et al.* between 1 and 19 January 1981 (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*). On 8 November 1986, I discovered an immature Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City. The black legs and bill, black spot behind the eye, black band across the back of its neck and the prominent "W" marking on the wings when the bird was in flight all led me to the conclusion that it was a first winter bird, perhaps no more than four months old. Although the bird was elusive and sometimes difficult to find, it was nevertheless seen by a number of observers over a period of approximately a month and a half. The last sighting was made by Bob Funston on 21 December 1986 during the Oklahoma City Christmas Bird Count. I photographed it on 9 November 1986. This photograph was submitted to the Bird Records Committee of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society. John S. Shackford also obtained a nice photo of the bird in flight, and this one, together with another of the bird resting on the water, was published in American Birds (1987, 41:563).

The year 1987 passed without any report of Black-legged Kittiwakes in

Oklahoma, but on 27 March 1988, M. Gustafson, J. Hoffman, *et al.* reported one at the Kaw Lake dam on the Kay-Osage County border (1988, *The Scissor-tail*, 38(3):37).

Early in 1989, there appeared what has probably become the most thoroughly documented Black-legged Kittiwake sighting ever in Oklahoma. On 18 February, John Newell spied a kittiwake that he felt was a first winter bird standing on ice near the Lake Overholser dam in Oklahoma City (pers. comm.). He informed me of it the next day, and I immediately began searching for the bird. On 24 February I finally located it, again near the dam. During the next few weeks, scarcely a day went by on which someone failed to observe the kittiwake. With a video camcorder I obtained more than an hour of footage of the bird flying about, sometimes passing by only a few feet away. Steve Metz took several excellent photographs of it in flight, one of which was published in *American Birds* (1989, 43:231).

On the morning of 19 March 1989 — the last day the bird was seen — Esther A. Key and I were watching the kittiwake from the dam as it made wide circles overhead, occasionally swooping down almost close enough to touch, when, to our astonishment, it suddenly landed on one of the dam's concrete buttresses which face downstream. Here it remained for about 15 minutes while we photographed it with both still and video cameras from as close as 20 feet. It was very tame, as if affording us one last opportunity to study this visitor from afar. Despite intensive searching during the next few days, we never found it again.

A review of the historical record of Black-legged Kittiwake sightings in Oklahoma has revealed that during the last 30 years, 13 birds have shown up in the state, an average of more than one sighting every three years. Most (if not all) of these were in their first winter feather. The dates of occurrence have ranged from 12 October to 5 April (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*). Thus, the Black-legged Kittiwake may be described as a rare transient or winter resident in Oklahoma. It is to be looked for around any large impoundment in the state.

3116 N. VIRGINIA, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73118, 2 NOVEMBER 1989

GENERAL NOTES

Ringed Turtle Dove in Oklahoma. — On 24 February 1989 at about 0730, I noticed a very pale dove in the branches of a large silver maple tree (*Acer saccharinum*) in our backyard in Norman, Cleveland County, Oklahoma. Upon closer examination with 8x40X binoculars, the black half-ring about the back of the neck identified the bird as a Ringed Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*). It flew off shortly thereafter. About two weeks later, on 12 March 1989, apparently the same bird again appeared in our backyard. This time, I obtained photographs of it on the ground where various songbirds had scattered sunflower seeds from our feeder. I also heard its distinctive, trilled "coo." During the next two months I saw or heard this bird six times more, the last on the morning of 14 April 1989.

D. Goodwin (1983, *Pigeons and doves of the world*, Brit. Mus., London, pp. 117–119) describes *S. risoria* as: "Domesticated. Often locally established in a