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DISTRIBUTION

A sighting of a Black-legged Kittiwake in Saint Lucia

A first record for the Lesser Antilles

Douglas J. Graham

ON FEBRUARY 16, 1982 the author and W. M. Graham were observing a flock of seven Royal Terns (*Sterna maxima*) that were perched on a small rock about five meters off shore at Pigeon Island National Park, Saint Lucia (14°5'N, 60°58'W). As we were watching the terns, about 20 meters away, a gull rounded the headland and landed next to the terns. The gull initially stood about 20 cm apart from the terns. At first there were no interactions but after several minutes the gull faced one of the terns and they appeared briefly to touch bills. Immediately thereafter the gull flew off and was quickly lost to sight.

The gull was observed with 9 × 25 binoculars while it was both perched and in flight. Viewing conditions were excellent. The following description of the gull is based on the field notes of both observers. While it was standing among the terns it was noted as being slightly smaller than them. The bill was fairly small and of an unmarked clear yellow color. The head was pure white, except for the hindneck and rear crown, which were a dark gray, and a distinct, well-defined gray spot (about twice the size of the eye) just behind and below the eye. The mantle, upperparts, and wing co-

verts were dark gray, slightly darker than the hindcrown. The wing tip was black, forming a clearly defined triangle at the tip. No white was observed on the wing tip on the standing bird nor during excellent views in flight. The underparts, underwing, and tail were all pure white. One of the observers (W.M.G.) noted the leg color as being dark.

Based on the plumage descriptions in Grant (1982), the gull was an adult, winter-plumaged Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). The complete lack of black markings on the bill and on the wing except at the tip would likely indicate an adult plumage although apparently some second-winter plumages are almost indistinguishable from adult winter plumages (Grant 1982).

It would appear that this sighting represents the first record for this species in the Lesser Antilles and indeed, one of the most southerly records ever published. In the western Atlantic the species winters south to North Carolina and less frequently as far south as Bermuda and eastern Florida (American Ornithologists' Union 1983). Bond (1979) records it as a vagrant in the West Indies, with winter records from the Bahamas, Cuba, and off Jamaica. Neither Bond (1979) nor the

American Ornithologists' Union (1983) mention any other more southerly records although Jourdain (*in* Witherby 1941) include an otherwise undocumented record from "off Venezuela", this record is not mentioned by Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps (1978) in their account of Venezuelan birds.

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