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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN THE WINGTIP PATTERNS OF BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES

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Abstract. This paper reports geographic variation in wingtip patterns of Black-legged Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*) from the circumpolar Arctic. The amount of black in the wingtip increased and the amount of white decreased from Arctic Canada–west Greenland, counterclockwise to the Pacific. Differences were greatest between Pacific and Atlantic, but were also apparent within the Atlantic sample. Patterns of variation were not clinal. Known levels of philopatry in kittiwakes would tend to maintain both phenotypic and genotypic differences between regions, but the similarity of birds from Newfoundland, British Isles, and Barents Sea suggests some degree of dispersal over this wide area. Wingtip pattern data support continued separation of Pacific and Atlantic kittiwakes into two subspecies under the biological species concept. Under the phylogenetic species concept, Pacific and Atlantic Black-legged Kittiwakes may represent two species.

Key words geographic variation, kittiwakes, *Rissa tridactyla*, taxonomy, wingtip patterns.