

Black Scoter
21 Nov 1980
Volga Lake, Fayette Co., IA
*Joe Schaufenbuel
IBL 51:25, 26; 52:41

Record Number: 80-23
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Joe Schaufenbuel

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 51:25, 26

Records Committee: IBL 52:41

VOTE: 7-III

Outstanding description by competent observer.

Good description. Time and place OK but: drawing made afterwards, not on the spot.

Good detail and drawing. A very unlikely escapee.

Description convincing.

Well described by very good observer. Sketch convincing.

11 March 1981

Joe Schaufenbuel
St Lucas Ia

Dear Joe,

The Records Committee of the IOU unanimously agreed with your identification of a female Black Scoter on 21 Nov 1980 at Volga L.

Comments were as follows:

"Outstanding description by competent observer"

"Good description. Time and place OK but: drawing made afterwards, not on the spot."

"Good detail and drawing. A very unlikely escapee."

"Description convincing"

"Well described by very good observer. Sketch convincing."

Thank you for sharing this important observation with the committee.

Tom Kent
Secretary, Records Committee

Species: Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), a female. Date: November 21, 1980.
 Time: 1:20 to 2:45 P.M. Location: Northwest area of Volga Lake, in the Volga Lake
 Recreation Area, Fayette County, Iowa. Distance: When first seen and identified the
 bird was at most 1600 feet away, my subsequent movement brought me within 200 feet
 of the bird. Light: Excellent light conditions were in existence during the time of
 observation. The sky was clear, little or no wind, with the sun in the southern sky,
 behind me, while the Black Scoter was viewed to the northwest. Previous experience:
 Though I am very familiar with all species of duck that regularly occurs in Iowa and
 their many plumages, I have no experience with this species. However I have seen
 the White-winged Scoter. I observed the bird with a Bushnell Space Master Zoom 20X
 to 45X and through Bushnell 7X35 binoculars.

Description: On the water surface the bird was about the same size as that of a
 Common Goldeneye that it swam near. The shape of the bird is not distinctly remembered
 since I did not take notes on the shape at the time of observation; though it could be
 described as being typically duck-like. The drawing accompanying this documentation
 was made by memory shortly after the sighting and it can be considered a fairly good
 representation of what the bird looked like. The bill was grayish without distinctive
 markings. In size, the bill seemed average for the size of the duck and it had a bump
 (see drawing) on the upper mandible at the base. The body color of the bird was a dull
 dark brownish gray. With a distinct light off-white area beginning at the base of the
 upper part of its bill extending back through the eye, then curving downward and becom-
 ing less distinct as this patch reached the neck. The light area totally encircled
 the lower mandible and fusing with the dark coloration of the rest of the body on the
 upper breast. In flight the duck had a typical duck flight and pattered the water
 before taking off. While in flight the white head patch became more distinct, giving
 the duck a white headed look. Other than a light patch on the belly the Black Scoter
 was devoid of markings. The wings, tail, and back were uniformly colored--and, I
 emphasize, without markings. So, overall the bird was rather nondescript, with drab
 coloration, lacking any markings other than the patch on the head and belly. Eye
 color was not distinctly seen, it seemed dark however. Foot color was not noted.

Similar species: The only bird that this duck reminded me of was a Ruddy Duck female,
 but this bird was definitely not this species, and is mentioned because of vague plumage
 characteristics similarities.

JOE SCHAFFENBUEHL ST. LUCAS, IOWA 52166
 Joe Schaffenburg
 NOVEMBER 23, 1980

