

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Surf Scoter How many? 1Location? De Soto Bend, Horseshoe Bend, LakeviewType of habitat? horseshoe bend, center of channel, & nearingWhen? date(s): November 16, 1985 time: 9:20 to 9:35 Iowa shore.Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Jim Fuller, Mark Proescholdtothers before or after you: Jim + Steve Dinsmore, Mark Dixon

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Just after a white-winged Scoter flew, we noticed another Scoter, a female or immature, a dark-brown heavy duck with 2 white spots on each side of its face. We were impressed with the difference in the facial spots of the two scoters. These were more vivid, a brighter white, with the one between eye & bill very white, large, & perpendicular to the bill (all the books show the perpendicular mark by the bill, as compared to an oval for white-winged.) We saw no white wing mark, although the bird neither flew nor flapped its wings. It swam all the time, turned around, & in the 15 minutes we watched, it seems we would have seen a bit of the white wing patch had there been one. Due to the prominent facial spots we're convinced it was a Surf Scoter. Unfortunately, just then

(Continued on back)

Similar species and how eliminated: White-winged Scoter - by the difference in shape of white facial spot by bill - the much larger, much whiter spots, & perpendicular to bill, not oval, we decided it was a Surf Scoter.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?

Yes

If yes, explain: since we didn't see bird fly or flap wings we studied guides a lot to find the other positive identification - the prominent white spot by bill, perpendicular & not oval.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Cloudy to a bit of sun, light at slight angle but mostly behind us, 60-70 yards estimate, binoculars & three scopes watching constantly.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Never a ♀ or imm. Surf Scoter, but ♀ white-winged ScoterReferences and persons consulted before writing description: 6 Field Guides ^{old & new} Peterson, National Geographic, Audubon's Master Guide, Robbins Pough - plus Kim Eckert'sHow long before field notes made? next day this form completed? Nov. 17, 1985

Jim spotted the Common Eiders we were hunting
and our attention was diverted, & we never saw
the scoter again.

Location: As of Bend, Massachusetts
Type of habitat: marshes, pond, center of channel, near
When date(s): November 1972 time: 9:15 to 9:32
Who/your name and address: Beth Prosschold, 1500 Fawn
Others with you: Jim Fuller, Mark Prosschold
Others before or with you: Jim + Steve Pinnare, Mark Pinnare
Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details
of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under
tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.
Just after a white-winged scoter flew, we noticed another
scoter, a female or immature, a dark-brown head duck
with 2 white spots on each side of its face. We were impressed
with the difference in the facial spots of the two scoters.
These were more vivid, a brighter white, with the one
between eye & bill very white, large, & perpendicular to the
bill (on all the backs show the perpendicular part of the bill
as compared to an oval for white-winged). We saw no white
wing mark. Although the bird neither flew nor flipped its wings.
In swim all the time, turned around, & in the 15 minutes we
watched it seems we would have seen a bit of the white wing
patch had there been one. Due to the prominent facial spots
we're convinced it was a surf scoter. Unfortunately, just then
(continued on back)
Similar species and how eliminated: white-winged scoter - by the
difference in shape of white facial spot of bill - the much
larger, more white spots & perpendicular to bill, not oval,
we decided it was a surf scoter.
Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? Yes
If yes, explain: since we didn't see bird fly or flip wings we studied
the prominent white spot of bill perpendicular & not oval.
Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment
Closer to a bit of sun light at slight angle but mostly behind us
but towards estimate, binoculars & three scopes watching constantly.
Previous experience with species and similar ones: never or 1 or 2 surf scoters
But 1 white-winged scoter
References and previous consulted before writing description: Field guides & Peterson
Natural Geographic, Audubon's Waterfowl, plus Kim Eckert
next day - this time checked - Nov 17, 1972