

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? White-winged Scoter How many? 1Location? Big Creek State Park, Polk CountyType of habitat? Man-made lakeWhen? date(s): Nov. 7, 1984 time: 3:50 to 4:20 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Beth Proescholdt, Phyllis Harrisothers before or after you: none

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.

I saw a dark duck around 160 yards away by itself. It raised up and flapped its wings showing lightish gray underneath its body. We saw white spots on its head and I thought it might be a surf scoter. But we saw white in its wing patch area as it was swimming and decided it was an immature white-winged scoter.

I went to call Hank Galetel. When I was gone, the scoter flew toward Mom and Phyllis showing its definite white secondaries. The scoter then was around 60 yards away from us.

(over)

Similar species and how eliminated: Surf scoter does not have a white wing patch or show white secondaries in flight.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Sunny day - sun behind us. Distance estimated - 60 yards at closest to 160 yards when first seen. 7X35 Binoculars. 22X Telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen scoters in Puget Sound in Washington state. References and persons consulted before writing description: Field guides of Roger Tory Peterson, Natl. Geog., and Robbins. Notes of Beth Proescholdt consulted.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? Nov. 23, 1984

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The scoter had a dark gray bill, a blackish body, and a white line in its black wing area which was sometimes not seen as it rode in the water. The scoter had two distinct white spots on its head — one before the eye and one after. The spots were larger and more distinct than the field guides show. The scoter seemed about twice the size of two ruddy ducks swimming beside it later. We watched it for 30 minutes before we left.