

What species? White-winged Scoter (Melanitta deglandi) How many? 8 1985
TB

Location? Mississippi River, Lee County, Iowa (near Keokuk)

Type of habitat? Upper pool of Miss. River Lock and Dam 19

When? date(s): Nov. 11, 1985 time: 11:10 A.M. to _____

Who? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil, 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, IA 52632

others with you: No

others before or after you: No

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.

While glassing a portion of the river with my 20x spotting scope, I observed a string of 8 black-colored ducks flying single file very low over the water. My first impression was of heavy-bodied, relatively heavy-necked black ducks with conspicuous flashing white wing patches.

Not knowing precisely what to look for in terms of field marks, I attempted to locate the position of the white wing patches in relation to the wing, and determined it was a large, squarish or rectangular patch near the body, and on the wing's trailing edge (like a speculum). As it turned out, by the time I determined the location of the wing patch, no other significant field marks were visible, except to confirm the conspicuous "black and whiteness" of the birds. I observed no white about the bird's heads, although I did not look closely. All of the birds observed appeared to share the field marks described above.

The birds were not found again.

Experience, (cont.)

in flight. I saw the West Coast birds under less than the best circumstances, and again, field marks observed limited primarily to wing pattern. When I first saw the pattern of these Miss. River birds, I recalled the West Coast birds and assumed I ~~was~~ was seeing White-winged Scoter.

I am very experienced with Coots. Also, I observed Am. Black Ducks next weekend with F.L.M. in N.E. Iowa. I specifically looked for the whitish underwing and found it to be, at least on birds I observed, far less conspicuous than on the Scoters, as well as differently shaped. Birds also had different general shape.

No other Iowa bird I know of is totally black with white speculums.

Similar species and how eliminated: Am. Coots have thin white band of white on trailing edge of wing, not conspicuous flashing patches. Am. Black Ducks have whitish underneath wings, but not confined to speculum, not visible on wing upper surface, as ~~was~~ was on birds I observed.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? N.A.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: 400 yards, estimate. Spotter: Nikon at 20x

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen White-winged Scoters both in flight and sitting on West Coast. Was also struck by "black and whiteness" of those birds in flight. References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 10 minutes this form completed? 1 week

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