

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? SURF Scoters How many? 4Location? West SIDE of BIG SPIRIT LAKE in Dickinson County.Type of habitat? Glacial LakeWhen? date(s): Oct. 6, 1985 time: 4:15 to 4:30 pmWho? your name and address: Ed. Thelen RR 8725 Spirit Lake, IA.

others with you: _____ 51360

others before or after you: _____

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.

4 Large, non-descript, dark-brown ducks were with a large flock of coots. These birds had 2 white facial spots which were on the side of their head.

They were somewhat larger than the nearby coots and when diving would dive in scoter fashion - with wings up and in immediately prior to diving.

In all my observations I failed to see a white-wing spot. These birds dove readily and were fairly active in preening and wing-flapping.

Their bill was large and dark. Their dark-brown forehead, crown and nape contrasted with the white facial patches. They were approx. 150-200 feet from me.

Similar species and how eliminated:

White-winged scoter - has white-wing patch
SURF Scoter - white on side of head - These birds had 2 patches

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

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

Good - Sun at back
Distance est.

scope 30x40x

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

References and persons consulted before writing description: I've seen some scoters almost every fall

How long before field notes made? 6 wks this form completed? 6 wks

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