

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Surf Scoter (Melanitta perspicilata) How many? 1 femaleLocation? Oxbow near Lakeview area of DeSoto Bend N.W.R., Harrison Co., IAType of habitat? Open water in Oxbow of Missouri RiverWhen? date(s): November 15, 1985 time: 9:45 am to 10:00 amWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Tom Kent, Iowa Cityothers before or after you: several

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.

We were looking over the ducks North of the Lakeview portion of the Oxbow when I spotted a very dark duck with some white on its head and the rest of the birds body being blackish-brown color. After some time the bird raised its head and I could see that there were two white spots on its head. One was in the loreal area immediately behind the bill and in front of the eye, this spot was a sort of shallow crescent shaped or tear-drop shaped following the curve of the base of the bill. The second white spot was behind and below the eye and was an oval shaped spot. Both of the spots were fairly distinct and had a good outline to them. The eye was a light color. The bill was black. The breast, sides, back, wings and tail were a blackish-brown color. The bird, at one time, stretched and extended its wings so that I could see the speculum area of the wing. The entire wing was the same color as the rest of the body of the bird, there was not a white area on the wing. The speculum was black in this bird. The top of the head was a darker color than the rest of the body. The bird did not make a sound while we watched it.

Similar species and how eliminated: Black Scoter female has white throat and face, White-wing Scoter may have white spots on the side of the head but also has a white speculum. This bird did not have the white speculum.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Bright overcast, good viewing conditions. Seen from approx. 50 yards at closest using Leitz 10X40 binoculars and Celestron C90 33X Telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: My first Surf Scoter for Iowa, have seen both of the other scoter species in Iowa and have seen many of all three scoter species
References and persons consulted before writing description: None in Virginia.

How long before field notes made? 5 hrs. this form completed? 8 hrs.

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