

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species White-winged Scoter 2. Number: 4 (1♂, 3♀)

3. Location Iowa River in Iowa City, Iowa, near Univ. Theater

4. Date: 3/26/1977 5. Time Bird seen: 10:40 to 12:00 noon

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): all 4 are probably 1st-yr. birds.

Male: head black, rest of plumage brownish; small white spot below eye, white speculum; lower mandible black, rest of bill partly white, partly reddish; Alca Knob no more than a very flat protuberance; females: all three alike; indistinct white spot in front of dark eye (not behind); basically brown plumage liberally mixed with white, especially on underparts; white speculum. Bill dark.

7. Description of voice, if heard: none

8. Description of behavior: swimming, occasionally diving, preening, stretching necks, drinking

9. Habitat - general: river  
specific: Iowa River

Not ♂ seen again on Reservoir 3/27, while 4 SCOTERS still on river.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

white speculum rules out other scoters - no differential diagnostic problem. Although ♂ seen 3/23 on Coralville Reservoir looked darker, 2 of these ducks may have been identical with those previously seen.

11. Distance (how measured)? est. 70-150 ft.

12. Optical equipment: 7x35 Trinoid; 20-45x Bushnell zoom scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): light overcast to sunny; sun + observer - bird angle 80-120°

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: most recently seen nearby on 3/23/1977

15. Other observers: first seen by Rob Vane, separately; subsequently by Tom Kent, also separately; then Fred Kent, Cole Rendorf; Rich DeCoster

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Rob Vane's initial identification was confirmed by all

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Bellrose, Roberts "Key" and Bent for aging of the birds. Descriptions point to these being 1st-year birds (no distinct knob in male, much white in the plumage of the ♀♀).

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 30 min

Signature AH Almi Address: R#6

Date: 3/26/77 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240