

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species White-winged Scoter 2. Number: 2 (♂, ♀)
3. Location Coralville Reservoir, about 0.5 mile up from dam
4. Date: 3/23/1977 5. Time Bird seen: 4:25 to 4:40 PM

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): Two large ducks, one black, the other dark brown, both with sharply defined white speculum. Both flew off when motorboat approached. Male circled overhead and settled down again. Large size obvious by comparison with L. Scaups and Hooded Mergansers in same scope field. White speculum quite evident even in swimming bird. Rest of visible plumage black; however, when the bird preened or scratched, lighter underparts were seen to merge gradually with black sides. Head has sloping profile, black extending far down (knob not seen as such); rest of bill light, flattened with dark. Eye light.

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: swimming, preening and scratching; also repeatedly stretching neck; flying in circles, low on water before alighting
9. Habitat - general: reservoir lake
specific: Coralville Reservoir, deep portion



no white around eye, as shown

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: Other scoters: prominent white speculum. Gadwall: different shape, black coloration of most of plumage.

11. Distance (how measured)? 200-400 ft. (est.)

12. Optical equipment: 7x35 Trinoid, Bushnell 20-45x Zoom Scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): bright day; angle between observer-sun-observer-bird 110° when scoped; 80-130° when in flight

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: saw all scoter (100s of wh.-w.) at Washington St.; Surf Scoter in Iowa City spring 1975

15. Other observers: Tom Shires - saw the bird around 5:30, from closer up (♂ only); also R. DeCoster & Judge and Mrs. R. Osmondson (cite later)

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: T.S. saw the bird upon being alerted by me, but separately; others ditto

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Standard field guides, Bellrose. Confirmatory: light belly and apparent lack of knob suggests ♂ may have been juvenile (first-year)

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

Signature: A. H. Halmi Address: R#6, Iowa City, IA 52240

Date: 3/23/1977 City, State: _____