

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Surf Scoter How many? 5Location? near the dam at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk CountyType of habitat? Large reservoir, seen near rock damWhen? date(s): October 27, 1984 time: 1:30 P.M. to 3:45 P.M.Who? your name and address: Mark D. Dixon, RR 2 Box 963, Waukee, Ia. 50263others with you: no other observers

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.

Medium sized ducks, larger than coots or ruddy duck. They were basically all dark brown with two white patches on each side of the head. The bill was bulkier than in most ducks and was dark-colored also. It also appeared that feathering did not extend down onto the bill (as it does in white-winged). Features of the eye were not observed, except that there was one white spot in front, and one behind the eye (farther back on head). The front spot was distinct and smaller than the back, which was distinct but diffused somewhat into the brown color of the head. The top of the head and back of the neck appeared darker than the rest of the head, and no light spot was seen on the nape. At rest, the back and wings were dark brown, showing no white whatsoever. The tail was dark and was cocked up somewhat, although not to the extent seen in the ruddy duck. The belly was whitish or lighter brown, the undertail was not noticed, the legs and feet (occasionally seen when preening?) appeared grayish. The undersides of the wings, shown when the birds occasionally flapped, was a lighter brown, but contained no white patch. When seen in flight, the upper wing surface appeared all dark brown, with no white patch on the secondaries. The ducks raised their bills upward on several occasions, also sometimes stretched their necks out over the water. However, they never ~~dived~~ dove. No calls were heard. It was not noticed if they ran along the surface for takeoff.

Similar species and how eliminated: Distinguished from Black Scoter female or immature by two distinct white face spots. Distinguished from White-winged Scoter primarily back lack of white in secondaries.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no (no other observers)

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: good light, distance judged to be within 200 feet (at closest) observed with 20x Bushnell spotting scope, also used 48x lense but little observed with itPrevious experience with species and similar ones: Have seen Surf and White-winged Scoters in Washington, White-winged in Texas!References and persons consulted before writing description: looked at several field guides on same day. Used A Field Guide to the Birds by Peterson, in the field.How long before field notes made? 2 days this form completed? 2 days after sighting

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