

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species Surf Scoter (Melanitta perspicillata) 2. Number: 1

Location Small farm pond in western Polk Co.

Date: 15 November, 1977 5. Time Bird seen: 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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):

Medium-sized duck, uniformly dark brown. Beak dark, feet not seen. Very sloping forehead, bill compressed. Two light spots, one before and one behind eye. No discernible color while in flight, but breast and belly dark gray.

Description of voice, if heard: not heard

Description of behavior: Swam around in leisurely fashion and twice took flight circling the lake

Habitat - general: Usual farm pond, no emergent vegetation at this season
specific:

Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Light spots eliminate Common Eider, and lack of white in wing eliminates White-winged Scoter

Distance (how measured)? 50-60 yards 12. Optical equipment: 20 X scopes and 7X and 8 X binocs

Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Dark, cloudy day, no sun

Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
2 previous records in county (Brown) and seen on west coast by both

Other observers: None present and bird gone the next day

Did the others agree with your identification?

Other observers who independently identified this bird: Not seen by anyone else

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Robbins, Kortright, and Peter Scott confirmed our identification

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?
Two weeks, form not available

Signature: R. D. Mooney Address: 3814 Carpenter

Date: 29 November, 1977 City, State: Des Moines, IA 50312

Mooney + Brown

432 Tonawanda Dr. Des Moines 50312

(over)