

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Black Scoter ♀ How many? 1Location? Big Creek State Park - (Polk Co.)Type of habitat? Large to medium-sized lake with many baysWhen? date(s): Nov. 12, 1986 time: 3:20 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Beth Proescholdtothers before or after you: Bob Myers, Steve Dinsmore

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.

At the north end of Big Creek, ^{there} was open water in a protected bay which was quite calm on this very windy day. About 10 Buffleheads were swimming there along with a dark brownish duck. This duck was all dark brown except for light cheeks and throat which were accented by a dark brown cap and dark brown nape extending to its back. It had a very dark bill and occasionally we could see yellow on its nostril which made it look like a hole in the bill. While looking through the scope once, I saw it scratch its head with a black foot. When it was first seen, it was swimming and preening. Later, it was diving. It was larger than a Bufflehead beside it once. It was slightly a lighter brown on its breast and had a rounded head. We had very good looks at this Scoter.

Similar species and how eliminated:

A winter Ruddy Duck is much smaller than a Scoter, has a different look than a Scoter, is lighter in coloration, and the cheek patch is different color or markings of ♂ and ♀ Ruddy than a Scoter.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Mostly clear and sunny with the sun behind us. Viewed from 40-70 yards away (estimated). 8X30 Binoculars and 22X Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen one ♀ Black Scoter before and many winter Ruddy Ducks.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Robbins' Birds of N. America, Nat'l. Geog. Birds of N. America, Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds

How long before field notes made? Made Right away this form completed? Nov. 20, 1986

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