

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Greater Scaup 2. Number 20
3. Location Mississippi River from I 80 north to Princeton
4. Date: 3-10-79 5. Time Bird Seen: 1:30 to 3 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):
- One flock of 8 males and 2 females and mixed flocks with lesser scaups with another 10 birds. The following features were noted and compared with lesser scaups.
- (1) Round head - smooth contour from side - flatter on top than lesser scaup, no crest - wider and not 2-tiered from front
- (2) Distinctly larger head than lesser scaup when seen together
- (3) Larger - wider bill than lesser scaup - inserted higher on forehead  
Bill blue with black tip
- (4) Some birds had short greenish cast to head (others black to slightly brown) - many of lesser scaup showed purple cast to head.
- (5) The flock of ten flew from close range + showed white wing stripe extending to primaries.
7. Description of voice, if heard: Lesser scaup flew and had short white stripe - not on primaries. One greater scaup flying with  
not heard  
lesser had distinctly long white stripe.
8. Description of behavior: birds actively diving, but also many stayed up for good looks
9. Habitat - general: mississippi river - partly ice covered but  
specific: mostly open
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
lesser scaup - There were about 40 of these for direct comparison, in the same field of view at times.
11. Distance (how measured)? 40 to 100 yards (estimated)
12. Optical equipment: 8x Leoty triward, 20x scope  
60x Questar scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Partly cloudy to sunny - sun behind observer. Ideal viewing conditions at close range for extended periods of time.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Seen once before in lawn, seen on east and west wastes
15. Other observers: T. K. Shires
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
none known
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Robbins: Birds of N. America - did not influence  
Russell: Birding 7: 232-236, 1975 - read after description written
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 3 hours
- Signature: TH Kent Address: 211 Richards St
- Date: 3-10-79 City, State: Iowa City Ia 52240