

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Greater Scaup How many? 2

Location? Highway 17 and Des Moines River - North end of Saylorville Lake - Polk Co., IA

Type of Habitat? river flowing into Saylorville Lake, fairly shallow, mud flats on both sides.

When? date(s): 20 Nov. '88 time: 3:45 pm to 4:15 pm

Who? your name and address: Mike Thomas, 2517 47th St., Des Moines, IA. 50310

Others with you: Ann Johnson

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

In a mixed flock of lesser scaup and oldsquaw. Male was larger than lesser scaup males by c. 2 inches (c. 17-19 inches, est.), and had a dark green head rounded on top, a dark front, white sides, dark tail and mottled back. The female had a dark front, rounded head with white at the base of the bill. Her sides were brownish with a darker back, estimated size also 17-19 inches.

Similar species; how eliminated: lesser scaup (size, head shape, head color on male, white sides on male in direct comparison to lesser scaups. Side by side comparisons with lesser scaup was thankfully easy. The male's rounded head contrasted clearly with the more pointed heads of the lesser scaup. Also, the dark green head of male was visible. The male bird's sides were whiter than male lesser scaup's sides and the difference in size was noticeable.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
mostly clear with 20% cloud cover, late afternoon light, 150-200 yards estimated
8x40 binoculars and 60mm scope @ 25-30x. The sun was to our left and behind us as we looked north at the birds.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: none with greater scaup - life bird.
familiar with lesser scaup.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide
checked at time to confirm field marks as this was a life bird for me.

How long before field notes made? 5-10 min this form completed? 1 week

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).