

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Black Scoter How many? 2 ♀

Location? Montrose, Lee County, IA

Type of Habitat? Mississippi River Pool

When? date(s): 30 March 1991 time: 5:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

Others with you: Dick Tetrautt

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.

I saw two bulky black ducks with white face patches fly by and land. We watched them on the water and diving for a half hour. The birds were all dark black-brown except for the white face patch and some light gray on the belly when one bird lifted out of the water. One bird spread its wings and they were all black. The face patch was quite white, whiter than the black scoters I have seen in fall. The white was at or below the eye and extended down the neck and to the forehead. The body was bulky and tail fairly short and straight, never cocked. The bill was dark and extended out from the lower face. The neck was upright, not crouched like a Ruddy Duck. The bird was as large or larger than a scarp, but no birds were seen in direct comparison. The bird was larger and much bulkier than the several Ruddy Ducks seen in the same area. The birds dove forward with good strength.

Similar species; how eliminated:

The only other duck with similar face pattern is Ruddy Duck. Male Ruddy Ducks in the area had white face patches, but the patches were more horizontal, bill more swept, necks shorter, tails cocked, and much smaller in flight. Female Ruddy had a much grayer face patch and gray on the sides.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no

If yes, explain: late afternoon sun behind us.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
100 to 500 yards (est). 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen several in fall and only other spring record for Iowa. Also seen on coasts.

References and persons consulted before writing description: looked at Peterson while viewing.

How long before field notes made? 1 1/2 hr this form completed? _____

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