

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Black ~~Common~~ Scoter ♀ 2. Number 1

3. Location Conesville marsh, Louisa County Iowa

4. Date: 3-31-79 5. Time Bird Seen: 2:45-3:15 to 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):

50%. Larger than hooded mergansers it was with, probably as large or larger than scaup. All dark duck (not quite black) except for face and neck patch which was grey-white. Black over top of head and down neck and just behind bill; other light face and neck. Chunky bird, mostly swimming, occasionally diving. In flight, all dark - no white on wings, body, tail or legs. Head and bill shape as appears in books. Tail inconspicuous and short.

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: swimming, occasionally diving, flew away from us

9. Habitat - general: marshy lake

specific: west arm of Conesville marsh

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

White-winged scoter - no white in wing, wrong face pattern

surf scoter - wrong head shape and tail pattern

Ruddy duck - much larger, wrong shape, short tail, all dark body

11. Distance (how measured)?

75-100 yards (estimated)

12. Optical equipment:

20x scope, 8x Leitz binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

overcast, grey

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

seen in Washington + Alaska

15. Other observers:

Noel and Mona Brown

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Mike Newton - found the bird 2 1/2 hours earlier

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Robbins: Birds of North America, influenced our checking of field marks

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? next morning

Signature: Thomas H Kent Address: 211 Richards St

Date: 4-1-79 City, State: Iowa City IA 52240