

☒ RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD☐ NEW STATE RECORD☒ ACCEPTED☐ REJECTED 10/15/76Species: BLACK SCOTERMelanitta nigra

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 12, 1976Time Bird Seen: 4:30 P.M. to 5:15 P.M.-MDTLocality: Cherry Creek ReservoirNearest Town: DenverCounty: Arapahoe

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

John R. Cooper - 1041 Field Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215Van Remsen - 7160 West 9th Place, Lakewood, Colorado 80215Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: Bright late afternoon sunlight directly upon birdsDistance from bird (how measured): Variable: from 300 feet to 75 feet (estimated)Number of Birds Seen: Three Sex: Unknown Plumage: Non-breeding females or immatures

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Birds first observed swimming together far out on reservoir (about 300 feet distant). Birds were alternately swimming and diving. With the approach of a sail boat, the three birds began swimming toward shoreline where observer was standing. The birds approached slowly to about 75 feet, then took off in rapid flight toward Cherry Creek Dam and finally flew over to the other side of the reservoir, practically out of sight.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

An overall dark brown duck about the size of nearby Redheads (A. americana) with prominent white face. Bill, gray, short and stubby. Crown and back of neck, black. Face whitish, contrasting vividly with crown, neck and remainder of body. Wings, dark brown and unmarked. Tail, short and stubby, dark brown. Remainder of body, dark brown, slightly lighter on sides. Flight, quick, direct on rather short wings.

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

The birds were silent.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water reservoir on high plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Surf Scoter (immature or female): Heavier, thicker bill. Face with two prominent white spots—one between eye and beak and one over the ear. Lacks prominent dark crown and back of neck.

White-winged Scoter (immature or female): Heavier, thicker bill. Face pattern very similar to Surf Scoter. Displays prominent white wing patches.

Ruddy Duck: Much smaller. Much paler on flanks and sides.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen all three North American Scoters on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Vast numbers seen off Long Island, New York in winter months. Have seen all three scoters in Colorado over past twelve years.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard Field Guides substantiated identification.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: JACK REDDALL SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: 11-3-1976
Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: Black Scoter

Melanitta nigra

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 12 October 1976

Time Bird Seen: 1130

to 1200

Locality: Cherry Creek Reservoir

Nearest Town: _____

County: Arapahoe

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

John R. Cooper

237-4855

Optical Equipment: 20x spotting scope, 10x50 binocs

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: perfect - light from behind observer

Distance from bird (how measured): 15 yds to 1/4 mile - estimated (3/4 of a football field)

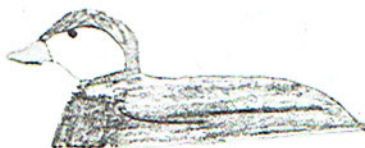
Number of Birds Seen: 3 Sex: ♂ Plumage: _____

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: The three birds stayed together during the entire 1/2 hour of observation, swimming on the water, usually slightly apart from the other ducks. Occasionally they would dive and twice, all three birds dove synchronously. Both male and female Ruddy Ducks were seen swimming within 1 foot of these birds, and the scoters dwarfed them and were much blacker overall. The darkness of the scoters stood out from a great distance.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

These were large, blackish ducks, much larger than nearby Ruddy Ducks. The crown was blackish from forehead over top of head and extending down nape to back. The entire body plumage was blackish without any marks of any kind. The breast was slightly darker than the remainder of the body plumage. The wings were blackish without any white patch - one bird "stood up" and flapped wings several times. The bill was a dark bluish-gray, uniform in color. The bill shape was not unlike that of a goldeneye, except that it was stockier and the culmen was straight; it was also very slightly upturned. The most conspicuous feature was the whitish face which was sharply outlined by the blackish crown and neck and was uniform pale throughout.

[tracing of
drawing made
at time of
observation]



Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Silent

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Deep reservoir. At first they were out in the middle of the reservoir, but they swam straight towards us with a flock of Ruddy Ducks, coming as close as 75 yards.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Surf Scoter (♀)

1. bill is much heavier, thicker, and longer
2. paleness on face is restricted to 2 rather fuzzily-outlined spots - not uniform white. No sharp border between face and crown nape.
3. bill actually extends back into face - in these Cherry Creek birds there was a normal division between bill and head
4. overall larger

White-winged Scoter (♀)

1. white wing patches (our birds had all blackish wings when flapped)
2. face pattern similar to Surf
3. feathering extends part way out upper mandible
4. bill much heavier and thicker
5. overall larger

Ruddy Duck (winter ♂)

we had a direct comparison between the three scoters and this plumage of the Ruddy Duck - within 1 ft. of each other

1. dwarfed by scoters
2. much paler overall
3. thinner, more upturned bill
4. prominent pointed tail

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I am very familiar with all three scoters from extensive experience in California and I've seen as many as 60 Blacks in a day (and as many as 20,000 Surfs in a day in San Diego Bay, searching specifically for Blacks)

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Van Remsen SIGNATURE: Van Remsen DATE: 10/22/76
Street Address: 7160 W. 9th Place Town and State: Lakewood, Colo ZIP: 80215

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 14450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110