

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

CFO-ORC FILE #

2000 - 25

7-0 (A)

Species: Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Date: 28 November 1998

Number seen: one

Sex: female

Plumage: Basic I

Rcd 9/2/00 upl

Locality: Walden Ponds

Elevation: about 5350'

Nearest town: Boulder

County: Boulder

Time observed: 09:15 - 09:30 MST

Duration of observation: off and on for about 8 minutes during that time

Description: I finally got a chance to go see the female Black Scoter that had been present at this location for a week. It was in one of the eastern-most ponds that had a sizable island. It was the only bird on the pond. It was a sizable diving duck that was dark brownish-black all over, but with a paler grayish-brown face. It had an all-black bill that was small for that of a scoter. The eyes were dark. The crown and back of the neck were blackish and contrasted fairly strongly with the paler face, but not as strongly as would have an adult female's. This paler color extended almost to the breast where it ended abruptly. The breast and belly were very dark blackish-brown and were slightly paler than the back and wings. The tail was blackish and held along the water's surface. The legs were dark. The head was round, unlike the long, slanted heads of the other two species of scoter or of Ruddy Duck.

Similar species eliminated: Both other scoter species are eliminated by size, bill size, and head shape and pattern (face all the same color - no whiter spots anywhere). Ruddy Duck female eliminated by lack of dark eyeline; all Ruddy Ducks eliminated by size, head shape, and coloration. Other female diving ducks by head pattern and lack of back/side color contrast. Male Gadwall eliminated by plumage pattern and consistent diving. Female Gadwall eliminated by diving behavior and lack of strong brown in the plumage.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 10s of 1000s each of all three scoter species. I have also seen large numbers of all confusable species.

Light conditions: sun behind me and to my right

Optical equipment used: Kowa 30x and Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at 12-20 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: apparently, many

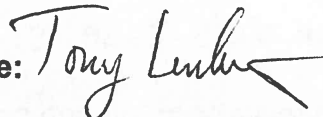
If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature: 

Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 28 August from notes taken while studying the bird