

BLACK SCOTER

Melanitta nigra

8-93-99

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name)

DATE OF OBSERVATION	TIME OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN	SEX	PLUMAGE
11-16-1993	1115 TO 1130 MST	One	Female	Adult
	1310 TO 1345 MST			
11-22-1993	1130 TO 1145 MST			

LOCALITY: Cherry Creek Reservoir State ParkELEVATION: 5400' COUNTY: Arapahoe

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD (Names, Addresses, Telephone Number):

None that I am aware of.OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: 9.5x44 Celestron Binoculars; 15x-60x B/L Zoom TelescopeWEATHER CONDITIONS: Clear; Wind calm to 5 MPH; 45°-50° F.BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: Bright sun directly upon bird coming from behind observer.DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 100 yds up to 500 yds; estimated.

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: Observed swimming and diving along the face of Cherry Creek Dam just prior to noon. Was all by itself (no other birds nearby). Returned after lunch swimming out in the middle of the reservoir with a small flock (10-15) of Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*). Eventually drifted off by itself and went to sleep with head tucked back.

Seen again from the "Prairie Loop Overlook" on 11-22-93 swimming & sleeping with a small flock of Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION (EMPHASIS ON KEY FIELD MARKS): Relative size and shape; plumage and color pattern of head, upperparts and underparts; shape and color of bill, wings, tail, feet and legs; eye color.

Dark brown crown and nape; chin, throat, foreneck and face grayish-white contrast sharply with dark crown; rounded head with high forehead. Black bill, comparatively smaller than other scoters with no obvious protuberances. All upperparts blackish overall; underparts not clearly seen although the sides and flanks were slightly paler (dark brown). Short, stubby dark tail. Wings black (did not see the bird fly).

HABITAT: Fresh-water reservoir on high plains adjacent to foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

VOCALIZATION (call/song; how delivered-perched, in flight; frequency; duration):

None heard.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES: (Adult females unless otherwise noted):

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*): Normally show two prominent, whitish facial spots rather than pale, whitish cheek and throat area of *M. nigra*. Much larger, swollen bill with flattened profile.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (*Melanitta fusca*): Have two, somewhat diffused, whitish facial spots similar to *M. perspicillata*. Much larger, swollen bill; Has white speculum which is usually hidden when at rest on water; usually seen as bird prepares to dive.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*): Somewhat smaller. Female has a dark line extending from lower mandible back below eye, across pale face to a point below the auricular area. Bill is proportionately larger in *O. jamaicensis*. Sides and flanks paler. The immature male Ruddy Duck provides the nearest resemblance to the female *M. nigra*, but again the Ruddy's smaller size, more paleness and larger bill would tend to eliminate it.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

BLACK SCOTER: Seen perhaps 6 times in the past 30 years in Colorado. Have seen many times off Long Island, New York since the early 1950's especially at Montauk Point where hundreds of thousands gather in some winters. Have seen in Alaska on the Seward Peninsula (Nome area).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: Seen a few every winter in NE Colorado. Seen off Montauk Point, Long Island, N.Y. where hundreds of thousands gather in winter. Seen in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, off the Carolinas' coasts, Alaska and California.

SURF SCOTER: Seen many times in Colorado in winter during past 30 year. Also great numbers off Montauk Point, Long Island, N.Y. where it gathers in winter with other scoters. Also seen in California, Washington, Alaska and off the coasts of Carolinas.

Ruddy Duck: Seen over most of "lower 48" during past 55 years.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

None Required

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING AFTER X OBSERVATION; FROM MEMORY X

NAME: Jack REDDALL

SIGNATURE:

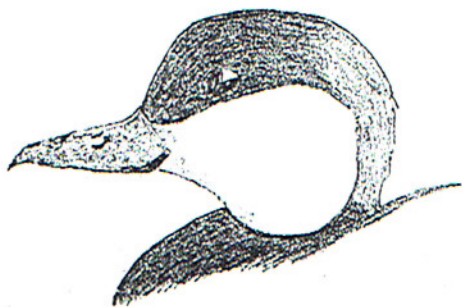
Jack Reddall

DATE:

11/18/93

4450 S. ANTON ST. GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO

8.93.99



Melanitta nigra ♀
Cherry Creek S.P.
11-16-93
11-22-93