

accepted

9-1984 (a)

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Species: Black Scoter *Melanitla nigra* Date: Dec 1-2, 1984

Number: 1 Age: immature Sex: Female

Locality (exact address or other specific information to describe location, such as x miles north of x intersection):

Great Salt Lake Saltaire resort

County: Salt Lake City: Elevation: 4212

Time: Dec 1 3:30-4:00 Length of time observed: 3 1/2 hours
Dec 2 8:00-11:00

Habitat: Pond on great Salt Lake

Distance to bird: 3 1/2 meters Light conditions: ok

Optical equipment: 7X35 binoculars 15X60 Scope, Nikon FE 2, 300mmlens

Observer: Richard and Ella Srensen

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Bob & Georgeen Bond Clyde Morris Joelle Buffa

DESCRIPTION. Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern color, and any unique features.

A large, short necked bird. Body blk/brown above water line, white on the belly when bird was on the shore. Top of head(crown) from slightly below the eye and continuing down the back of the neck were dark. Contrasting ~~down the back of the neck were dark~~ boldly was a whitish area which included the face and throat, this met a dark breast in a horizontal line. The forehead was steep giving the head a rounded appearance. This feature was very apparent because it could be directly compared with the more flat profile of the two Surf Scoters which were also present. The bill was gray

It was held level to the water. The bill was flatter appearing than on either of the other two scoters. The bird had dark legs and feet, size comparable to the Surf Scoters.

Behavior' The bird repeatedly dove, would surface briefly ,often extending the neck, throwing the head back and snapping at something then would swim and dive again.

The next day we watched this action and finally decided the the bird was actually pumping its feet while remaining in the same spot. We theorized that it was churning up the water and the algae (Obviously this must have been somewhat fresh water from the floods) and then diving down to eat whatever it had churned up. This was fascinating since several comented they have seen this behavior on the ocean.

Voice and/or call notes:

Behavior: None
 See above

Describe what specific feature(s) you saw and/or heard that caused you to come to your conclusions:

What similar species might it have been, and how were these eliminated?

Ruddy Duck smaller, lighter, Completely different profile
Surf Scoter Two were present Much more sloped profile, thicker bill
 facial marks completly wrong.

What experience have you had with this and similar species?

I have seen all three scoters on many occasions in California

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

Photographs verified by Guy McCaskie and Paul Lehman

Significance of record in the area and/or the state:

First Photograph

Additional material (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available):

Photograph available

Signature:

Address: 3868 Marsha Drive
 West Valley City Utah 84120

Date prepared: Dec 2, 1984.