

9-1984 b

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Species: Black Scoter, *Melanitta nigra* Date: Dec 1, 1984
 Dec 2, 1984
 Number: 1 Age: 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. Immediately east of pavilion.

County: Salt Lake

City: —

Elevation:

Time: ^{Dec 1} 3:30-4:00

Length of time observed:

~~30~~ minutes
3 hrs

Habitat: ^{Dec 2 8:00-11:00 with a small break} Great Salt Lake

Distance to bird:

^{3.5 meters}
~~50 feet at distance~~

Light conditions:

OK

Optical equipment:

7x35 bin, 15-60 Scope, Nikon FE-2, 300 mm lens

Observer: Ella + Ri

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Joelle Buffa
Clyde Morris

Bob Bond
Georgien Bond

~~Harry Spitzer~~

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

a large, short necked

Body blk/brown above waterline. Top of head (crown) from

slightly below eye and continuing down the back

of the neck were dark. Contrasting boldly was a

whitest 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 present. The bill appear all dark gray/black. It was

held level to the water. The bill was flatter appearing than on

either of the other two scoter species (White winged + Surf)

Added Dec 2 Dark Legs + feet, size comparable to the

Surf Scoters.

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

Voice and/or call notes: None

Behavior:

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

Knowing what the bird looks like is knowing the bird!

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

Surf Scoter (Two were present) much more sloped profile, thicker bill, facial marks completely wrong
Winter Ruddy smaller, lighter. COMPLETELY DIFFERENT profile

What experience have you had with this and similar species? We have seen and studied Scoters on 4-5 winter trips to California. Were present for first sighting of Black Scoter for Utah. Worked with Scoter just 6 weeks ago in Calif. Ruddy Ducks are all over Utah. if we can't tell by now - should give up

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: None at present although I have used all of them in the past.

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

Second documented record. If photo turns out will be the first photograph of species.

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

Excellent photo's document sighting.

Signature: Ella Soursen

Address: 3868 Marsha Dr, West Valley City, UT 84120

Date prepared: Dec 2, 1984