

6-1994 6-1994

DOCUMENTATION --
RARE BIRD SIGHTING

MOUNTAIN WEST REGION
AMERICAN BIRDS

Species: Black Scoter
(Vernacular name)

Melanitta nigra
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): October 24, 1994 Time Bird Seen: 10:30 to 10:35

Locality: Mallard Unit & Pintail Unit, Fish Springs NWR
21 mi. east of Callao, Juab Co., Utah.
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 8 x 35 Bushnell Binoculars, 30-60 x Spotting scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: N/A

Number of birds seen: 3 Sex: ♀ Plumage: Winter

Light conditions: Fair: mid morning light, overcast

Distance from bird, and how measured: 158 (yards) visual est (Mallard Unit)
50 yards. visual est. (Pintail Unit)

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

One female seen in a "raft" of birds in NW Mallard unit. Other birds in this group included Common Coot, American ~~Wigeon~~ Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Gadwall.

Two females seen in NW Pintail Unit. They were swimming along the tow of the dike, then flushed out toward the main impoundment a distance of approximately 50 yards and resumed swimming.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Marsh management impoundment. Approx. 200 acres of open shallow water, with little to no emergent vegetation.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

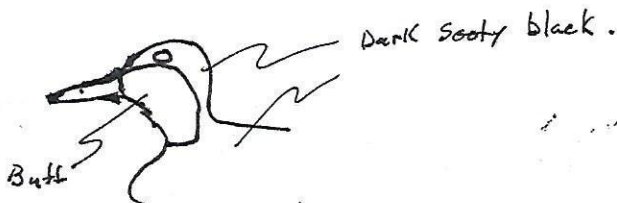
JAY BANJA

P.O. Box 568

DUGWAY, UT 84022

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

A large dark diving duck in overall appearance. The head was not round, but more ovate in shape. The bill was not notably long or short but was dark in color and of the shape of a common goldeneye but slightly longer in proportion to the head. The body color was a dark sooty black with no noticeable color pattern or other markings on wings, back, or sides. The cap and nape were of the same dark color as the rest of the body. There was a distinct tan or buff marking that was present beginning along the base of the bill, continuing posteriorly beneath the lower margin of the eye, down the neck, and ending at the top of the chest. ~~then~~ the area of this marking also included the chin & front of the neck.



Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

None.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

- Ruddy Duck - much smaller, shorter flatter bill, erect stiff tail.
- WIGEON - smaller, overall coloration very different, white patch on wing.
- GADWALL - BROWNER, no buff marking on side of face & neck.
- White-winged Scoter - white patch on wing, much smaller patch on cheek.
- Sand Scoter - larger sloping bill. Feathers extend down ~~to~~ on top of bill.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

No prior experience with this species. Have worked with waterfowl for over ten years.

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

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Signature: Matthew W. Derosier

Return to:

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