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1982-42 afo

Lat/long _____ Reporter _____ Sci Name _____
 Habitat _____ Record type _____ Serial No. _____
 Date/time _____ Disposition _____ Cx Nos. _____

Common Name White-winged ScoterScientific Name Melanitta fuscaSight date 11/24/82 time 3 p.m. duration 1/2 hourDistance from bird ca. 40-100+mLight conditions sunlight from side (left) and behindOptical equip. 10X50 binoculars, 22X60 spotting scopePhoto. equip. ---Number of this species seen one (1)Notes made at time of sighting Date this report was prepared.Notes made later from memory Photo available Photo enclosed 5/16/83

Weather at time of this observation.

partly cloudy, cool (ca. 40°F.)

light wind

Prior weather & number of days since change

scattered heavy snowstorms,

at most 5 (five) days earlier

Locality: water of the Great Salt Lake,
 north of the Antelope Island causeway,
 closer to the mainland than the island.
 (Utah 127, east of Great Salt Lake State
 Park, prob. Davis Cty., UT)

Male Adult Age unk. Basic Plumage Light Phase
 Female Subadult ♀ or Imm Breeding Dark Phase
 Sex Unk. Juv/Imm _____ year bird Eclipse Molting

Description of bird. Size, Colors, all field marks OBSERVED - Unique features of this bird, if any

The bird was a large, dark duck, larger than nearby Common Goldeneye, and overall black to very dark brown. The body, head, and bill were proportionately longer than the nearby goldeneye. Each side of the face had two whitish face spots, shading into the brown-black of the face. These spots were rounded, one below and before the eye, the other below and after the eye. A contrasting, bright white speculum was visible on either side almost constantly as the bird swam, and especially when the bird flapped. All other feathers were of the brown-black color. The bill was fairly heavy, almost lumpy. This bird was also larger than a nearby Oldsquaw.

Field marks which were not seen. Why not?
There are no major field marks of female or immature white-winged scoters which were not visible, to my knowledge.

Variations from expected field marks.

none noted

List similar species and describe why or how you eliminated them.
The only fairly similar species is the female or immature of the surf scoter, with two white face spots and an overall brown/black plumage. This species, however, totally lacks white in the wing, and the facial spots are oriented slightly differently (more vertical).

Behavior of this bird. Include names of other birds with this one and any interaction.
This bird was among a flock of Common Goldeneye which also had one Oldsquaw. Its major activity was repeated diving, possibly feeding (on brine shrimp?), sometimes partially opening its wings as it dove. It did flap and preen some during the half hour of my observation. I saw no interaction with other birds. Eventually, I lost sight of it as I observed the Oldsquaw.

Habitat this location and near by or adjacent habitat if significant.
Cold, very saline water of the Great Salt Lake, adjacent to the road causeway. The water had many visible and easily captured brine shrimp (swimming very slowly).

Describe birds song or sounds.
none noted

Names of other observers. A/C+phone
none present

What is your experience with this or similar birds?
Before seeing this bird, I had seen two similar female or immature white-winged scoters in Cache Cty., UT (11/11/79) and since then many (scoters of 3 spp.) off the coast of N. CA. Nothing leads me to believe that this bird was anything but a white-winged scoter.

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