

Species: BLACK SCOTER

Oidemia nigra

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 23, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 10:35 A.M. to 10:55 A.M.-MDT

Locality: Valmont Reservoir

Nearest Town: Boulder

County: Boulder

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
None		

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: Bright sunlight at right angles to birds; air still.

Distance from bird (how measured): 750 feet (estimated)

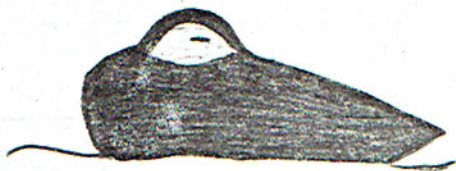
Number of Birds Seen: Two Sex: Unknown Plumage: Immature or female

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Two birds at rest on water. Most of the time sleeping with heads tucked over back. Once in a while awakening with heads upright, then returning to sleep.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

Plump, stubby duck, appearing all dark at the distance from which I observed the birds, except for the characteristic dark cap and grayish-white face of the immature or female.



O. nigra (asleep)



O. nigra (depicting "cocked" tail or possibly dragging feet as Western Grebes often due).

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Too far to hear call if one was uttered.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water reservoir adjacent to foothills

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Ruddy Duck: Considerably smaller. Appears "big headed" when floating on water. Also has light face, but is differently shaped from O. nigra. Occasionally "cocks" tail (which I have also seen O. nigra do also when floating lazily on water - but not nearly as high). Female Ruddy (which this species could be confused with) has light flanks and sides in contrast to dark flanks and sides of O. nigra.

IMMATURE White-winged Scoter and Surf Scoter: Also overall dark appearing ducks with short, stubby bodies. However, both of these species in the female (or more probably) the immature, have dark heads with light areas (two) which is completely different from the gray face outlined with a dark cap of the Black Scoter.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen all three North American Scoters on both coasts and in Colorado. On Long Island, New York, these three species are abundant in winter where I have seen them for over twenty-five years.

I saw three immatures or females at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 12, 1976.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

I didn't feel the need to check the standard field guides since I have seen so many of these Scoters and consequently was sure of my identification.

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

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