

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X: **2001-114**

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name): BLACK SCOTER		(Scientific Name) Melanitta nigra
Date(s) of occurrence: December 8, 2001		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Femalish	Plumage: Possibly alternate
Exact Location: Horsecreek Reservoir		
County: Larimer	Nearest town: Loveland	Elevation: 4980 feet msl
Length of observation: Approximately 20 minutes overall.		Time(s) of observation: Approximately 1:00 PM MST
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Tony Leukering, Rachel Hopper, Nick Komar, Joe Fontaine		
Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Possibly others, but do not know whom.		
Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Good. Sun was mainly from the south while the bird was to the north of myself.		
Optical equipment used: 20x60 Leica Televid 77 Scope		
Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): Approximately 100 yards at the closest.		
Was bird(s) photographed? Yes (video)	If so, have you submitted photos? Yes, one poor quality video still	
Who took the photographs? Myself		

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: **Open water reservoir along Colorado's Front Range.**

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): **The subject bird was swimming in lacustrine portion of reservoir.**

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):

Tony Leukering and I had been scoping Horseshoe Reservoir and had seen a multitude of interesting birds amongst the many mergansers and gulls present on the reservoir. While scoping the massive group of birds, I noticed a female Black Scoter amidst the Common Mergansers. The bird was perceptibly smaller than the mergansers and was stockier overall. The head was more rounded and the bill was shorter and thicker, and slightly concave, more dabbling duck-like than the obtuse bills of other scoters.. The body was relatively short and the tail was also short and sometimes was held up, quite Ruddy Duck-like. General plumage color was a dark brown. The bill appeared black. The crown was blackish, extending vertically to the lower edge of the eye. The dark crown contrasted with a lighter brownish-white side face that extended posteriorly to the nape (which was darker – similar in shade to the crown) and upper breast. The breast and mantle were a dark brown and contrasted only slightly with a lighter-shade brown of the side breast and flanks. The upper- and lower tail coverts were a similar cast to the upperparts, crown, and upperbreast.



Describe bird's call or song: **None heard**

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **The closest appearing waterfowl species would be other members of the scoter group, Harlequin Duck, Scaup, and Ring-necked Duck. Other female Scoters were eliminated by the absence of white secondaries (White-winged Scoter), bill shape (all Scoters), and lack of separated white facial spots (Surf and White-winged Scoters). Female Harlequin Duck was eliminated also by that species facial pattern. Female Scaup and Ring-necked Ducks differ in structure and plumage as well.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **Have observed hundreds (if not thousands) of other Black Scoters in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the East Coast. I have observed a few other vagrant birds in Texas and Colorado.**

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation):
None

This report is from notes made during or after observation or later from memory **XX**

Date of written report: **April 3, 2002**

Reporting observer: **Larry Semo**

Signature:



Reporting Observer's Address: **9054 Dover Street**

City: **Westminster**

State: **Colorado**

Zip: **80021**

Send report to:
Colorado Birds Record Committee
c/o Tony Leukering
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

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CBRC FILE #: 2001-114		
RESULTS:		
Species: (Common Name) Black Scoter		(Scientific Name) Melanitta nigra
Date(s) of occurrence: 12/08/01		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Female	Plumage: Adult
Exact location: Horseshoe Lake		
County: Larimer	Nearest town: Loveland	Elevation: Approx. 5300 ft.
Length of observation: 10 minutes or so		Time(s) of observation: Afternoon
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Joe Fontaine, Nick Komar, Tony Leukering		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s):		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position:		
Optical equipment used: Leica 8 X 42 binocs & Swarovski Scope with 20-60 zoom		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): A long way!		
Was (were) bird(s) photographed? No		If so, are you submitting photos?
Who took the photograph(s)?		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: Open lake		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: Swimming and sleeping.		
DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird, how you placed the bird in the general group that you did, and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Features to include are the color(s) and/or patterns of the head, eyes, bill, back, folded wings, open wings, tail, chin, throat, breast, sides, flanks, belly, vent, and legs. Also, please include, where possible, shape of the whole bird, of the wings -- folded or open, of the bill, and of the tail. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. We welcome attachments of additional sheets of description, drawings, field sketches, or copies of field notes. Overall dark duck. Dark head, neck and body with pale cheeks and throat. Rounded head.		
Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted:		
SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration: Could not be another species.		
What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have seen several.		
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): None		
This report was made from (check one) ___ notes made during observation ___ notes made after observation <u>X</u> later from memory.		
Date and time of written report: 03/09/02		
Reporting observer: Rachel Hopper		Signature: <i>Rachel Hopper</i>
Reporting observer's address: 1721 Cottonwood Pt. Dr.		
City: Ft. Collins	State: CO	Zip: 80524
Send report to: Colorado Bird Records Committee Tony Leukering PO Box 660 Brighton, CO 80601		

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-114

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Date: 8 December 2001 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** female? **Plumage:** Alternate?

Locality: Horseshoe Res. **Elevation:** about 5000'

Nearest town: Loveland **County:** Larimer

Time observed: ~1330-1420 MST

Duration of observation: off and on for about 5 minutes during that time

Description: While looking over the large number of birds at Horseshoe Reservoir, I found a dark duck preening that appeared to have a whitish cheek. I waited for it to pick its head up and when it did I confirmed my preliminary identification of the bird as a Black Scoter in a non-adult male plumage. I quickly got my friends, Larry Semo and Mark Hopey, on the bird and Larry digitally photographed it. We watched the bird for a bit and I saw it dive underwater once. After calling others in Ft. Collins, I found out that Nick Komar had found it independently earlier that day.

The bird was a medium-sized diving duck that was basically dark brownish-black with a paler grayish-white face. This pale patch on the head appeared a bit mottled with some slightly darker color, but this "pattern" was very vague and without careful scrutiny, was impossible to discern. It had an all-black bill that was fairly small for a scoter. The crown and back of the neck were blackish and contrasted fairly strongly with the paler face. The paler color of the face extended onto the throat where it ended abruptly. In flight, I could discern a small, whitish belly patch. The tail was blackish and held along the water's surface. I did not see the legs. The head was round, unlike the long, slanted heads of the other two species of scoter.

Similar species eliminated: Both other scoter species are eliminated by size, bill size, and head shape and pattern (face all the same color - no whiter spots anywhere). Ruddy Duck female eliminated by lack of dark eyeline; all Ruddy Ducks eliminated by size, head shape, coloration, and tail posture. Other female diving ducks by head pattern and lack of back/side color contrast. Male Gadwall eliminated by plumage pattern. Female Gadwall eliminated by diving behavior and lack of strong brown in the plumage.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 10s of 1000s each of all three scoter species. I have also seen large numbers of all confusable species.

Light conditions: sun behind me and to my left

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of about 250 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Larry Semo, Mark Hopey, Rachel Hopper, Joe Fontaine

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Nick Komar

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none **b) after observation:** none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature: 

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 8 December 2001 (in early evening) from memory