

RARE SPECIES DOCUMENTATION
Records of Vermont Birds

The following form has been prepared to encourage full documentation, when requested, of rare or unseasonal birds in the state of Vermont. These reports are put into a permanent file and should be as detailed as possible. New reports are reviewed annually by the Vermont Bird Records Committee, which evaluates records for their acceptability to future researchers and for inclusion in the state bird list.

Please print or type

SPECIES: Common Eider

NUMBER OBSERVED: 3 adult males

OBSERVER MAKING REPORT: OTHER OBSERVERS

Frederick and Eleanor Pratt
49 Vermont Route 100
South Duxbury, VT 05660

LOCATION:

**Lake Bomoseen
Rutland County, Vermont**

DATE:

October 24, 2014

TIME AND LENGTH OF OBSERVATION:

Birds were discovered around 3:15 in the afternoon; we left about 4:30 by which time we had been joined by Roy Pilcher (whom we had notified by telephone), Sue Wetmore, and Sue and Marv Elliott

DISTANCES FROM BIRD: Maximum : 700 yards Minimum: 350 yards

These distances are estimates; when first seen the birds were easily identifiable by scope but not by binoculars. They later drifted south and closer to shore.

WEATHER:

wind direction _____ wind speed _____ Wind was relatively light; I did not make note of direction

sky cover: overcast light in relation to observer's position temperature: _we were facing west but the absence of sun made viewing conditions acceptable; as dusk approached viewing became more challenging_____

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: Swarovski 8.5X42 binoculars; Swarovski 20-56 power telescope

OBSERVER'S PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH THIS SPECIES OR SIMILAR FORMS:

Very familiar with this species; have seen thousands over the years off the coasts of Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. I am also familiar with King Eider which I have seen in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont

OTHER DOCUMENTATION: Photo

x



____ Tape Recording ____ Specimen ____

If yes to the above, where is this information deposited? _____

HABITAT: (be as detailed as possible, include associated bird species)

Birds were resting on the relatively calm waters of Lake Bomoseen. When first seen they were in the company of about a dozen scoters. Even with the scope I was not certain of the species of scoter except for two male Surf Scoters (could see the white patches on the back of their heads).

Presently a large flock of Black Scoters (they had been resting some distance from the three Common Eiders and the small group of scoters) put up and circled the lake once; when they landed they apparently joined the smaller group and the eiders. The entire flock began drifting south (but also closer to shore).

BIRD'S BEHAVIOR: (feeding actions, manner of flight, displays or interactions, reaction to observer)

As described above

VOCALIZATION: (song or calls)

DESCRIPTION: (Describe what you actually saw during the observation. We hope that observers will take field notes during the observation and before consulting field guides, etc. Additional pages with sketches and copies of field notes are encouraged.)

Relative size and shape:

Large and bulky; obviously larger than the scoters resting next to them

Head (crown, cheeks, eye, throat, nape):

Head was large and rather flat-topped; contrast between the black crown and the white remainder of the head was striking

Feet and Bill (shape, color, length):

Bill was large and sloping, merging with the sloping forehead

Upper back:

white

Lower back and rump:

Lower back was also white; not sure about rump

Wings (shape, length, markings):

Birds not seen in flight; at rest they appeared entirely black

Breast, belly, flanks, undertail coverts:

White breast contrasted sharply with black wings and flanks

Tail (shape, length, markings):

Tail was black

IMPORTANT: WHAT SIMILAR SPECIES WERE ELIMINATED WHEN MAKING THIS IDENTIFICATION AND HOW WAS THIS BIRD DIFFERENT?

No similar bird (including King Eider) shares the contrasting black and whites described above. Also, the large size and the sloping forehead and bill distinguish this species from King Eider

COMMENTS: (was age or sex determined?, etc.)

Birds were clearly adult males

This report was written from notes taken during _____ immediately after ___x___ the observation, or written from memory _____ (please attach copies of notes if available)

NAME (print)_Frederick A. Pratt SIGNATURE (not req'd)_____

MAILING ADDRESS

49 Vermont Route 100
South Duxbury, VT 05660

DATE _October 26, 2014

Return electronically (preferred) to: vbrc@vtecostudies.org or mail to: Vermont Bird Records Committee, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT 05055