

Louisiana Ornithological Society's  
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1 ± adult male
3. Locality: LOUISIANA: Cameron  
just offshore at West end of Holly Beach  
(parish)  
(specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 3 May 1992
5. Time(s) of day when observed: ± 10 AM
6. Reporting observer and address: Steven W. Cardiff, Donna L. Dittmann  
LSUMNS
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):  
found previous day by Dave Muth, et. al. Seen by M. ob. on 2-3 May
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):  
J. V. Rensen, Curtis Marantz
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): excellent
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 15-60X Binoscope in good cond.
11. Distance to bird(s): 200-300 m
12. Duration of observation: 15 min.
13. Habitat: open gulf just off erosion-control breakwaters



14. **Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):  
Bird mainly sleeping / loafing, accompanied by a Lesser Scaup.

15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen; include if possibly: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

see attached notes made during observation  
by DLD.

16. **Voice:** N/A

17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation):  
bill shape, small white patch below eye, white secondary patch,  
blackish color, paler tan belly combine for diagnostic ID.

18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): None

19. **Previous experience with this species:**

New for DLD in LA. Only 2nd time for SWC in LA.  
Both observers have seen hundreds - thousands in CA.

20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: None

b. after observation: li

21. This description is written from: ☒ notes made during the observation  
(☐ notes attached?); ☐ notes made after the observation (date: );  
some memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: Yes

23. Signature of reporter: Steven W. Cardell 7/9/92  
Donna L. Dittmann (date) (time)



## LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

Species: White-winged Scoter, *Melanitta fusca*

Number: One, ad. male.

Locality: Gulf of Mexico, 2 mi. w. Holly Beach off Hwy. 82, Cameron Par., Louisiana.

Date: May 2-3, 1992.

Time: First seen about 1:00 p.m. 5/2.

Reporter: David P. Muth, 1617 Charlton Dr., N.O., La. 70122

With Reporter: Peter Yauckey, Mac Myers

Other Observers: Numerous thereafter (I don't know if anyone had seen it before we did).

Light: OK 5/2, good 5/3.

Optics: Zeiss Dialyt 10x40, Bushnell Spacemaster 25x Scope.

Distance: 150 m.

Duration: Several minutes.

Habitat: open gulf near rock cairns.

Behavior: Mostly sleeping, dived a few times. Always in loose company of a lone m. Lesser Scaup.

Description:

A large black duck, sitting low in the water. Trapezoidal white patches were visible in each of the folded wings. When it flapped its wing these were seen to be broad white patches in the secondaries. The face was black with a tiny white teardrop eye-patch. The bill was long and formed a continuous slope from the tip up through the forehead, giving it a characteristic Surf/White-winged scoter head-shape. The tip of the bill was orange.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar Species:

No other duck shares these characteristics.



Photos: Unknown.

Previous Experience: I've seen half a dozen in Louisiana and a few in Montana.

Aids: None.

Circumstance of Description: Written from memory.

Confidence Level: I am certain of the i.d.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David P. Muth", written over a horizontal line.

David P. Muth

Date: June 5, 1992





### L. O. S. Bird Records Committee Report Form

1. English and scientific name: White-winged Scoter. Melanitta fusca
2. Numer of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage: One male, presumably first year.
3. Locality, Louisiana: Cameron Parish between Holly Beach and Johnsons Bayou, 6 miles west of Holly Beach.
4. Date(s) seen: 3 May 1992.
5. Times of day seen: 1110 hours.
6. Reporting observer(s) and address: Al Smalley and Gwen Smalley, 88 Egret Street, New Orleans, LA 70124.
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird: John Sevenair.
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird: This bird was seen by many observers. We do not know who first found the bird.
9. Light conditions: Fair. Looking south over the Gulf did not result in excellent lighting.
10. Optical equipment: 7 X 42 and 10 X 40 Zeiss binocular, and Kowa scope with 40X eyepiece.
11. Distance to bird: About 120 feet.
12. Duration of observation: about 10 minutes.
13. Habitat: Off a beach near a rock jetty.
14. Behavior: Sleeping with head tucked under wing, lifted head for a few seconds.
15. Description: A medium-sized to large duck. Profile of head and bill almost a straight line. Tail cocked. Head black with a tear-shaped white



mark around eye. Wings were somewhat relaxed or "fluffed out" showing white markings on both wings. The exact feathers involved in the white patches could not be identified (although we know they were the secondaries). Remainder of wing and back a dark brown; head and tail black.

16. Voice: Not heard.

17. Similar species: No other sea duck shows the combination of dark plumage with white wing markings. The white marking at the eye is also diagnostic, although normally a male would also show white patches on the head.

18. Photographs: None taken by us.

19. Previous experience with species: Scattered observations in New Jersey, Alaska, and Louisiana.

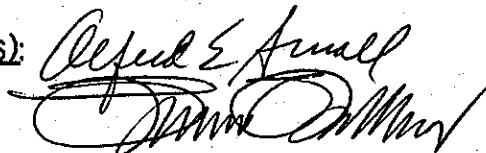
20. Aids: Books, photos, specimens, consultation with other persons, etc.  
(a) at time of observation: None.

(b) after observation: None.

21. This description written from: X notes made during observation;  
notes made after observation: X memory.

22. Are you positive of your observation? Yes.

23. Signature(s) of reporter(s):

The block contains two handwritten signatures in dark ink. The first signature, 'Alfred E. Arnold', is written in a cursive style. The second signature, 'John D. Munn', is also in cursive and appears to be written below the first one.

24. Date and time of this account: May 17, 1992, 10 PM.



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1. English and scientific name: WHITE-WINGED SCOTER MELANITTA FUSCA
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2ad. in breeding plumage): ONE, ADULT MALE
3. Locality: LOUISIANA, CAMERON  
state parish  
SIX MILES WEST OF HOLLY BEACH IN THE OPEN GULF OFF  
specific locality LA. HIGHWAY 82
4. Date(s) when seen: MAY 3, 1992
5. Times of day when seen: APPROX. 10:00 AM.
6. Reporting observer and address: CURT SORRELLS  
8654 PONTCHARTRAIN BLVD  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:  
PHILLIP WALLACE, CECIL KERSTING
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:  
CHARLES LYONS
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): LIGHT CONDITIONS EXCELLENT. CLEAR AND BRIGHT. SUN ABOUT 45° ABOVE HORIZON TO OUR LEFT (EAST). WIND: CALM
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): ZEISS 10X40, QUESTAR SCOPE - GOOD CONDITION
11. Distance to bird: 300 YARDS.
12. Duration of observation: 5 MINUTES
13. Habitat: OPEN GULF
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc. - include and stress any habits used in identification):  
BIRD WAS RESTING AND PREENING.  
OCCASIONALLY FLAPPED AND SPREAD  
ITS WINGS.



15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen). Include if possible: total length or relative size compared to other species present or familiar species; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, leg and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species:

A LARGE DUCK. THE ENTIRE BIRD WAS BLACK (NOT SHINY). A TRAPEZOID SHAPED WHITE PATCH WAS PRESENT ON THE WING WHEN THE BIRD WAS AT REST. WHEN THE DUCK STRETCHED AND FLAPPED ITS WINGS WHILE STILL RESTING ON THE WATER, IT COULD BE SEEN THAT THE WHITE PATCH WAS THE SPECULUM. A WHITE SPOT WAS AT THE EYE, GIVING A WHITE EYE APPEARANCE. THE OUTER BILL (UPPER MANDIBLE) WAS ORANGE. THE BIRD HAD A COMPARATIVELY LARGE BILL AND A FLATTENED FOREHEAD, GIVING THE APPEARANCE THAT A STRAIGHT LINE COULD BE DRAWN FROM THE TOP OF THE HEAD TO THE END OF THE BILL.

16. Voice:

NONE

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

THE ONLY OTHER BLACK OR NEARLY ALL BLACK DUCKS ARE THE TWO OTHER SCOTERS, SURF AND BLACK, AND THE MUSCOVY. THE SURF SCOTER HAS WHITE SPOTS ON THE HEAD AND NAPE LOCATED IN DIFFERENT PLACES, DOES NOT HAVE A WHITE EYE SPOT, AND DOES NOT HAVE THE WHITE WING PATCH. THE BLACK SCOTER DOES NOT HAVE THE WHITE EYE SPOT OR THE WHITE WING PATCH. A WILD MUSCOVY IS ALL BLACK WITH A WHITE WING PATCH, BUT DOES NOT HAVE A WHITE EYE SPOT, AND HAS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SHAPED HEAD. ALSO A MUSCOVY WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained (By whom? Attached?): IN THE OPEN GULF WATERS.

NONE

19. Previous experience with this species:

LIMITED - ONLY SEEN ONE PREVIOUSLY

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification:

a) at time of observation: NGS GUIDE

b) after observation: NGS GUIDE, AUDUBON MASTER GUIDE

21. This description written from: X notes made during observation; \_\_\_\_\_ notes made after observation (date: \_\_\_\_\_); \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? YES. If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter:

Curtis C. Sorells

24. Date and time of writing this account:

JUNE 2, 1992 - 8:00 P.M.





## LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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1. ENGLISH AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *White-winged Scoter* *McLanitha fusca*
2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, SEXES, AGES, GENERAL PLUMAGE (e.g., 2 ad. in breeding plumage): 1 - not able to determine sex or age. No white patch behind the eye observed. All black plumage except for white wing patch
3. LOCALITY: LOUISIANA; LA CAMERON  
(state) (parish)  
1st set of pilings at west end of Holly Beach  
(specific locality)
4. DATE(S) WHEN SEEN: Sunday, May 3, 1992
5. TIMES OF DAY WHEN SEEN: 10:30 AM
6. REPORTING OBSERVER AND ADDRESS: Bill Wood  
6260 Greenwood Rd. #907  
Shreveport, LA 71104 318-631-0412
7. OTHER OBSERVERS ACCOMPANYING REPORTER WHO ALSO IDENTIFIED THE BIRD:
8. OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD: Charles Lyon  
Grant Sorensen, Phillip Wallace
9. LIGHT CONDITIONS (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Partly cloudy with little haze. The scoter was at a 45° angle to the sun.
10. OPTICAL EQUIPMENT (type, power, condition): Bushnell Spacewatcher w/40x & 60x spotting scope. New scope very clean & sharp.
11. DISTANCE TO BIRD: about 175-200 yards
12. DURATION OF OBSERVATION: 15 minutes



13. HABITAT: open water, waters where very calm

14. BEHAVIOR OF BIRD/CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION (flying, feeding, resting, etc. - include and stress any habits used in identification; relate events surrounding the observation):

species was at rest in open waters most of the time. On two occasions the scoter plopped its wings to expose the white wing bars.

15. DESCRIPTION (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length or relative size compared to other species present or familiar species; body bulk, shape, and proportions; bill, eye, leg and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

an all black bird with a horizontal white wing patch. Head was rounded with an obvious scoter-type bill. It was slightly larger than the lesser scaup that it was next to. The white wing patch separates it from both Surf & Black Scoters.

16. VOICE: None Heard

17. SIMILAR SPECIES (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

Black & Surf Scoters don't show white wing patch on white in the secondaries.

18. PHOTOGRAPHS OR TAPE RECORDINGS OBTAINED (By whom? Attached?): NO

19. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES: NONE

20. IDENTIFICATION AIDS (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a) at time of observation: FG to NA Birds, Peterson's Eastern

b) after observation: Lowery's LA Birds

21. THIS DESCRIPTION WRITTEN FROM: L notes made during observation;        notes made after observation (date:       );        memory.

22. ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? Yes. If not, explain:

23. SIGNATURE OF REPORTER: Cecil "Bill" Wood Date: 5-7-92 Time: 6:00 pm



**REPORT TO THE  
LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

1. Common and scientific name:  
White-winged Scoter, *Melanitta fusca*
2. Number of individuals seen, sexes, ages, general plumage, etc.  
One bird, apparently an adult male
3. Locality:  
In Cameron Parish, LA, in the Gulf of Mexico between Holly Beach and Johnsons Bayou, near the point at which LA Hwy 82 leaves the immediate coast.
4. Date(s) when seen:  
Sunday, 3 May 1992 (the date in the field notes is incorrect; I forgot to reset the date on my watch at the end of April).
5. Times of day when seen:  
About 11:15 AM
6. Reporting observer and address:  
John P. Sevenair, 325 Stafford Place, New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:  
Gwen Smalley, Al Smalley, David Muth, Mac Myers, Peter Yawkey
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:  
The bird was found the previous day, and many people saw it (this was the spring Louisiana Ornithological Society spring meeting weekend).
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and amount of light):  
The bird was in the open. The sunlight was bright, and the bird was at about a 45° angle to the right of the sun (and was therefore partially backlit).
10. Optical equipment:  
Bushnell Spacemaster scope with 20x eyepiece.
11. Distance to bird:  
Roughly 100 yards
12. Duration of observation:  
About 20 minutes.
13. Habitat (general and specific):  
The bird was in the open Gulf of Mexico, perhaps 20 yards beyond a rock jetty parallel to the beach. The shore here is naturally sandy, but there are lots of rocks and concrete riprap in the area, in addition to the jetties.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):  
The bird was floating on the water asleep. His head was tucked under one wing. A scaup was floating nearby, also asleep.
15. Description (Include what was actually seen, not what should have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc.

The bird was floating near a scaup (species not known for sure, but probably Lesser), and had the same ducklike outline. I would estimate that he was a couple of inches longer than the scaup at the waterline; he was a noticeably larger bird. He was entirely black as far as I could see, with the exception of three relatively small white marks.

One of the marks was a small, well-defined patch on the side of the head, where the eye would be. The mark was smaller than that portrayed in the field guide for White-winged Scoter, probably because it was partially concealed under



the sleeping bird's wing. The other two marks were on the wings, one on each side (see the sketch in the field notes). They appeared as narrow lines of white, partially hidden (the wings were folded).

16. Voice:

Not heard

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observations):

The only ducks that are mostly black are male scoters and the Muscovy Duck. The Gulf of Mexico is the wrong habitat for the Muscovy, which is much larger than this bird anyway.

Of the scoters, only the White-winged has a white patch on the wing that's visible from above. The well-defined white patch in the eye area is unique to the male White-winged Scoter, though female and immature male White-winged and Surf Scoters have a more diffuse white area on the side of the head, further back. Female and immature male scoters are brown and not black, though the back lighting may have made this bird appear to be darker than he really was.

18. Photographs:

None were taken that I know of.

19. Previous experience with this species:

I've seen some in Louisiana in the same area, another in Lake Pontchartrain, and more along the New England coast.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) At the time of observation:

None

b) After observation:

National Geographic Society, *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, second edition

21. This description written from: x Notes made during observation; \_\_\_\_\_ notes made after observation; \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

A copy of the notes is enclosed.

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter:




John P. Sevenan

24. Date and time of writing this account:

May 5, 1992, at 10:30 PM





③ Went to Hall's Beach rookery Gulls.  
2 birds 13 camp & 1 rookery black w. white  
on wings v. us.  sleeping  
w/  

Species less frequently seen or else extinct (E) or extirpated (~~E~~). An asterisk following a name denotes a species rare.

corded only once. Red-throated Loon ( ); Red-necked Grebe\*

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( ); least Grebe* ( ); Western Grebe ( ); Yellow-nosed Albatross* ( ); Greater Shearwater* ( );
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Leach's Storm-Petrel† ( ): Wilson's Storm-Petrel ( ); Audubon's Shearwater ( );

Masked Booby ( ); Brown Booby ( ); Red-tailed Tropicbird\* ( ); Wilson's Storm-Petrel ( ); White-

Footed Booby\* ( ); Northern Gannet ( ); Greater Flamingo\* ( ):

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Whistling Swan ( );Trumpeter Swan* ( );Common Brant ( ); Black  
Brant ( );Red-G... ( )
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namon Teal ( ); Oldsquaw ( ); Black-bellied Tree-Duck ( ); Cin-

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Scoter ( ); Surf Scoter ( ); Black Scoter ( ); Masked Duck ( );
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White-tailed Kite* ( ); Goshawk* ( ); Swainson's Hawk ( ); White-
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tailed Hawk ( ); Rough-legged Hawk ( ); Ferruginous Hawk ( );

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Greater Prairie-Chicken (Extra); H:14; T:11;
Hawks (); Golden Eagle (); Audubon's Caracara ();

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( ); Sandhill Crane ( ); Yellow Rail ( ); Black Rail ( ); American Coot ( ); Wild Turkey ( ); Whooping Crane ( );

ican Oystercatcher (2); Eskimo Curlew ( ); Northern Phalarope

( ); Red Phalarope ( ); Purple Sandpiper\* ( ); Curlew Sandpiper\*

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Jaeger*(): Glaucous Gull / Parasitic Jaeger (); Long-tailed
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Kittiwake ( ): Roseate Tern ( ); Sooty Tern ( ); Black-legged Kittiwake ( ); Little Gull ( );

( ); Brown Noddy ( ); Ancient Murrelet\* ( ); Band-tailed Pigeon

Passenger Pigeon (E); Inca Dove ①; Carolina Parakeet (E):

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    appeared Owl1 ( );
    Smooth-billed Owl1 ( );
    Flamulated Owl1 ( );
    Snowy Owl1 ( );
    Long-

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Black-chinned Hummingbird ( ); Broad-billed Hummingbird ( ); Northern Saw-whet Owl ( ); Vaux's Swift ( );

Buff-bellied Hummingbird ( ); Ivory-billed Woodcreeper ( );

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Kingbird ( ); Tropical Kingbird* ( ); Cassin's Kingbird* ( );
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Great Kiskadee ( ); Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher\* ( ); Wied's

Hammond's Flycatcher ( ); Ash-throated Flycatcher ( ); Say's Phoebe

Western Wood Pewee ( ); Curve-billed Thrasher ( ); Sage Thrasher ( ); Mountain Bluebird ( );

Northern wheatear ( ); Bell's Vireo ( ); Black-whiskered Vireo

); Bachman's Warbler ( ); Lucy's Warbler\* ( ); Black-throated

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way warbler ( ); Hermit Warbler ( );
Connecticut Warbler ( );

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Painted Redstart\* (); Scott's  
Bronzed Cowbird (); Lesser Goldfinch ();

Crossbill ( ); Green-tailed Towhee ( ); Lark Bunting ( ); Red-

headed Junco ( ); American Tree Sparrow ( ); Clay-colored Spar-

Golden-crowned Sparrow ( );

Longspur ( ); Chestnut-collared Longspur ( ); Snow Bun-

...

① ZC (to sun) (2 AM 1 PM)  
② ZC (E. side) (2 AM 1 PM)

31

Yellow-green Johnson's

Bayou 4 71 TB. 0 1 I

⑤ 5c - Bayou Beach Jagers Sp.

white belly white

from P. M. 100

East + 11<sup>th</sup>

36111472-7050

✓ nucleus

11.15 5/2/92

A hand-drawn diagram of a fish, likely a cichlid, showing its lateral profile. A line runs horizontally along the side of the body, labeled "white line". A small, dark, oval-shaped spot is located on the upper part of the body, labeled "white spot".

slipping  
cycle



92-32G

**White-winged Scoter**

(adult male)

*(Melanitta fusca)***3 May 1992****Holly Beach, Cameron Par.; Louisiana**

9:45-10:00 am

Clear, moderate SE breeze, low 70's

also seen by Van Remsen, Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann, Mark Swan, Andrew Kratter, and many others

**Description by Curtis Marantz**

I believe this bird was found the previous day by Dave Muth but I am not certain of this fact. The White-winged Scoter was associating with a Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) just beyond the small jetties that had been erected, apparently to keep the road from washing away, just offshore from the west end of Holly Beach. The scoter was sleeping for most of the time in which we were present; however, it did wake up and raise its head for a few minutes. The two birds were immediately obvious as soon as we stopped the car, and were present until we left. The ducks were maybe 200 meters offshore and the light was good (slightly side-lit and a little glaring), so when the bird was not sleeping the views were not bad at all. I used my 22X wide-angle scope to make the observations.

The bird was immediately obvious as a male White-winged Scoter. It was a good deal larger and more bulky than the Lesser Scaup and almost entirely blackish in color. Even when the bird was sleeping, we could clearly see the white speculum in the folded wing. Moreover, when the bird occasionally turned around we could see that the white patches were symmetrical on both wings. When the scoter raised its head, and less clearly when it was sleeping, we could see that there was a sharp, white crescent under the eye indicating a male in adult-plumage. Furthermore, it was also clearly obvious that the bill was pink in color and did not extend as far up the forehead as it does in Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*). Although the head was black in color, it was also apparent that the wings and body had a brownish cast to them, suggesting either that the bird was a first-year male or that it was somewhat worn or bleached.

Having grown up in California, I have seen many White-winged Scoters and am certain that the bird was a male of this species; there is no other species that has a plumage approaching that of the bird seen on Holly Beach. This description was written from memory, with no field guides consulted, on 5 May 1992.

