

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

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 first winter sex unknown
3. Locality: Cameron Parish
Specific Locality: Holly Beach, offshore from community
4. Date(s) when observed: January 03, January 8, Jan 28, 2017
5. Time(s) of day when observed: mid morning, about 10 a.m. for each observation
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul Conover, Lafayette, LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Not sure. Someone later reported seeing all 3 scoter species, but I don't recall who. Charlie Lyon and Jeff and Jean Trahan reported WWSC at this spot as well, although they were unable to get photos.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Sunny, and light at an angle I could work with.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Nikon scope 20-60x, Samsung s4 smartphone camera
11. Distance to bird(s): Several hundred yards
12. Duration of observation: About 30 minutes for each observation.
13. Habitat: Gulf nearshore
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Among a large number of scaup, and Black and Surf scoters. Seen only in flight on 1/28.
15. Description: A large dark sea duck, noticeably larger than associated scaup, with vague whitish face patches and white secondaries clearly visible when bird flapped, and intermittently visible when the bird's wings were closed. Viewing conditions were not optimal due to distance and waves, but pattern of facial spots on the two sides of face seemed slightly different from one another. Each side showed a whitish patch at the dorsal base of bill, and a spot below and behind eye. On one side, the rear spot seemed to be a single oval, whereas on the other side the spot seemed either smaller, or divided and less visible.

The belly was paler than the upperside of the bird, a warm brown.

Bill was dark, eyes dark.

The bird seen on 1/8/2017 shared enough features of the 1/3 bird that it could have been the same bird. Viewing conditions prevented eliminating the possibility of it being a different individual.



Photos above from January 3, 2017. Photos below from January 8, 2017.



Photos below from 28 Jan. 2017.



16. Voice: not heard

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Some dabblers show pale

secondaries, and scaup wings can appear to as well, but the size compared

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Video was obtained. The many minutes of floating bird yielded some spread wing shots clearly showing diagnostic white secondaries. Attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: More intensive than extensive; I've documented several of this species in the state and have studied them well.

20. This description is written from mental notes and comparisons during observation, and from study of photos.

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

22. Date: 01/20/2017 (extra material added afterward)