

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):
2 age and sex unknown
3. Locality: Cameron Parish
Specific Locality: Rutherford Beach near settlement itself
4. Date(s) when observed: 12/23/2018

5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 9 a.m.

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):

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):
Overcast and foggy, but birds were within visibility range for about 1 minute

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Nikon scope 20-60x

11. Distance to bird(s): 200 yards and up

12. Duration of observation: about 1 minute

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): I was watching a Surf Scoter on the water when two large dark ducks crossed through my scope view. I followed them and saw that they had large, more or less rectangular (but not square), distinctly bright white secondary patches. The ducks were first seen at a quartering angle, going away, then turned and were flying directly away. Several hundred yards out, the birds turned and gave me a brief profile shot before resuming their course to the west.

15. Description: Large, bulky ducks seen in flight. What was visible of the body was all dark except for a broad, rectangular white panel on the secondaries. The ducks were more or less at eye level, mainly watched flying away. In profile, the birds clearly had a classic duck as opposed to merganser shape. The flight of the birds was fairly methodical, in a direct line without any zigzagging or tilting, parallel to the surface of the water with fairly shallow wingbeats.

16. Voice: not heard

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Not skinny and dart-shaped like mergansers; much bulkier and larger than Gadwall and with rectangular rather than squarish white wing patch.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): No; I might have been able to get a photo, but I wanted to watch the birds in flight to make sure I was assessing shape correctly (and shape became very obvious when the ducks gave me a side view).

19. Previous experience with this species: Increasing by the year. Also enough experience with other duck species to be able to recognize scoters.

20. This description is written from mental notes recorded right after sighting and memory.

21. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: Yes, even without photos. Distinctive.

22. Date: 12/25/2018