

Mr Gerald McWilliams

July 11, 2010

Jerry,

Thank you for your submission of your sighting of a King Eider in Presque Isle, Erie, Pa from December 30, 2008. The Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee appreciates the time and labor involved in submitting your record.

After two rounds of voting, the sighting was unfortunately not accepted. Although the committee members felt that the bird could have been a King Eider, and that the description was suggestive of one, some members thought that there were still some reasonable doubts about the identification.

Your sighting could very well be correct, unfortunately the committee has to go by the written description and some members felt that description fell a little short of a positive identification. They felt that a female Eider at that distance would be a hard call to make by size alone. The committee felt that Eider sp would be more appropriate.

Thanks again for your report and please don't let this discourage you from future submissions. The committee depends on reports like yours to further the knowledge of Pennsylvania ornithological studies.

Sincerely,

Al Guarente
Chairman

Record #

145-01-2008

KING EIDER

Somateria spectabilis

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Location: Sunset Point at Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., Pa.

Date: December 30, 2008

Time: 8:50 AM

Weather: Cloudy, wind northwesterly to about 10 mph, temp. 25 mph

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 with variable objective lens set=2 0at 35X

Details: I was conducting my waterbird count when a flock of about 75 Red-breasted Mergansers approached from the east flying west about 3/4 mile offshore. I noticed two large blackish ducks and one large evenly dark brown duck among the mergansers. The three dark ducks were clearly much more robust than the mergansers. As they got closer white-winged patches became evident in the two blackish ducks identifying them as White-winged Scoters. At this time it became clear that the brown duck was a female eider. Even though the eider stayed near the front of the merganser flock it would occasionally drop back and fly with the White-winged Scoters long enough to see that it was the same size and shape as the scoters. The scoters and eider stayed low over the water the entire time I saw them fly past the point. The upper wings were entirely dark brown, the undersides were brown with whitish scapulars. The breast, head, and neck, were a paler brown, almost buff in color. This paler look, at least in part, is created by the 20 wings shadowing the bird, making the rest of the body look slightly darker, especially the underside. The rest of the bird was an overall even brown, not black of sooty colored. The distance was too great to determine any feather patterns or detailed head shape, though even at this distance I could see the head had the Surf/White-winged Scoter shape and the neck was very thick. The head was only slightly broader than the neck, giving the overall appearance of the bird looking quite robust and heavy. Confusion with distant American Black Duck and female Mallard, which both look dark at a distance, can be eliminated by body, head, and neck shape and lack of extensive white underwing coverts. American Black Ducks and Mallards have longer and slimmer necks and longer wings. American Black Ducks have blackish bodies and upperwings and female Mallards show white bands bordering the secondaries on the upperwing. Female or immature Surf Scoters are smaller, slimmer, and evenly sooty colored, with relatively pale bellies. They are not brown and don't show paler breasts, heads, and necks.

Common Eider is larger than White-winged Scoter, so the fact that I had direct comparison with White-winged Scoter and I could clearly see that the eider was the same size, I based my determination separating King from Common by size alone.

I have seen many King Eiders, most of which I have recorded flying past Sunset Point. I have also seen many Common Eiders on the east coast

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round Two

Species: King Eider Somateria spectabilis

Date of Sighting: 30 December 2008 to 30 December 2008

County : ERIE

Location : PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2008

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
R. Wiltraut			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson				X				
B. Coulter				X				
C. Rutt				X				
J. Heller				X				
G. Malosh				X				
TOTALS			2	5				
DECISION				X				

Comments: 2/5

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

2/25/10

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: King Eider Somateria spectabilis

Date of Sighting: 30 December 2008 to 30 December 2008

County : ERIE

Location : PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2008

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

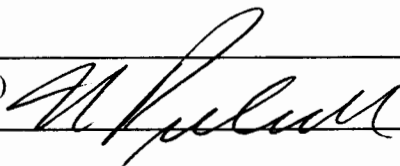
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter				X				
C. Rutt K. Fayberge				X				
J. Heller				X				
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			4	3				
DECISION								

Comments: 4/3 GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

7/1/09