

Occurrence of Surf Scoter in Penobscot Bay, Maine

S. Dillon Ripley

RALPH S. PALMER (1976. Handbook of North American Birds, vol. 3. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, pages 303-304) notes that summering and southward movement records of Surf Scoters, *Melanitta perspicillata*, are fragmentary and scanty. To quote him, he states, "The earliest molters (prebreeders) begin migrating quite early in September and not all are at their most southerly destinations until early December. The females and young reach salt water beginning in September and, thereafter, shift farther southward."

In an earlier work, Palmer (1949. Maine Birds, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. Harvard, 102:123) notes that, "small numbers, usually two or three identified, occur in mixed flocks of summering scoters," and gives dates in June, 1941, for a flock of 100 of this species in Muscongus Bay (attributed to Cruickshank).

On August 19, 1978 off Spruce Island in Penobscot Bay southeast of Stonington, Deer Island, Maine, I saw a fully adult drake in with Common Eiders, *Somateria mollissima*, young and

adults mixed. The same afternoon off the northeastern edge of North Haven, I saw two small flying flocks of Surf Scoters, mostly females and young, varying between 30-40. Evidently the presence of such flocks confirmed that the species' presence in summer is not solely of birds such as an old non-breeder, that might explain a single drake in adult plumage earlier in the day.

In the earliest literature, O.W. Knight (1908. The Birds of Maine, Bangor, pages 117-118) there are records of summering birds in coastal waters. Perhaps the Surf Scoter breeding population is moving eastwards and southerly in eastern North America, and such summering records should be sought for more regularly. I am grateful to Mr. Thomas J. Watson Jr. for the opportunity to visit this area.

—*Smithsonian Institution,*
Washington, D. C. 20560

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CONTACT:
HILARY
THOMPSON

PHONE:
(089) 81 8826

TELEX:
AA85182