

on 11 December 2007 at White Oak Lake, which is a somewhat small residential lake at White Oak Park in Bloomington. I often walk the mile-long path around this lake over my lunch break. During waterfowl migration, I set up the scope and scan the waterfowl. The lake draws some good ducks and viewing conditions are excellent here. While scanning the ducks, I saw a bird that caused my jaw to drop. It was a gaudy Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). Matt Fraker was unavailable so I called a local Audubon Society field trip leader, Les Allen. He was excited to hear about the duck and asked if I thought it was male or female. Neither being familiar with the different plumages nor having a field guide handy, I had to describe the duck to Les over the phone. After talking it over we agreed it was an adult winter male. Les Allen and Dale Birkenholz came out to see the bird early that afternoon, and the dapper duck remained for many

birders to enjoy. It even got included on the Bloomington Christmas Bird Count on 20 December 2007.

The last sea duck sighting that season came at the end of winter when ducks were migrating through and resting at Evergreen Lake (McLean County). On 3 March 2008, I scanned the south end of the lake to see hundreds of ducks, mostly Mallards, but also Common and Hooded Mergansers, Northern Pintails, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, and a Canvasback. Among these I found a very different looking duck. It was rather bulky, heavy-billed, and flat, dark brown with two pale markings spots on the face. This duck reminded me of the scoter I had seen a few months earlier, but it was rather non-descript. I called Matt Fraker and informed him there was another scoter at Evergreen Lake. "Are you serious?" he asked, since I had reported false rarities to him before (i.e. Western Tanager,

Purple Sandpiper) just for the sheer fun of it.

I told him it's not a Black Scoter, but either a Surf or White-winged, neither of which I had seen before. "I'll be there in about 20 minutes!" replied Matt.

While, waiting, I went to look for a better spot to get the scope on the duck. Hiking down the Mallard Access Trail, I found an opening in the trees with good light. After a better look at the duck, I thought it was a White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), but the white markings on the face weren't clear enough to rule out a Surf (*M. perspicillata*). Finally the bird opened its wings, exposing the large white patches and revealing its identity. It was McLean County's first record of White-winged Scoter.

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## Winter 2007/2008 ... an excellent winter season for Common Redpolls in Illinois



*Common Redpolls at feeder, Chicago Botanic Garden, Cook County. 27 January 2008. Photo by Cindy Lubecke.*



*Common Redpoll at Chicago Botanic Garden, Cook County. 13 February 2008. Photo by Emil Martinec.*



*Common Redpoll with House Finch at a backyard bird feeder. December 2007, DeKalb County. Photo by Karen Lund.*



*Common Redpoll at Northerly Island, Chicago, Cook County. This was the beginning of an excellent winter season for Common Redpolls in Illinois. 17 November 2007. Photo by Steve Huggins.*