



**male White-winged Scoter**

### **White-winged Scoter**

*Melanitta fucus*

#### Taxonomy

Kingdom:	Animalia	Anima = soul, spirit
Phylum:	Chordata	Chord = a string, musical instrument. Chordata = having a notocord or “back-string”.
Class:	Aves	Aves = a bird
Sub-class:	Neornithes	Neo = new, recent, young.
Order:	Anseriformes	Anseri – of or pertaining to geese. Form – shape, figure, appearance, nature.
Family:	Anatidae	Anati = pertaining to a duck. Idae = added to stems of generic names to form family names.
Genus:	Melanitta	Mela = black, blackness, clothed in black.
Species:	fucus	Fucus = a kind of rock-lichen from which was extracted a red dye.

<b>Range</b>	Spend most of the year in coastal marine waters. Migrate inland to nest and raise young. Nest on freshwater lakes and boreal forests of interior Alaska and western Canada. Winter in bays and estuaries along the Pacific and Atlantic coast. Alaska to southern California and Labrador to Texas. They occur in Alaska year round.
<b>Predators</b>	Predators may include Eagles, Perigrine Falcons, fox, and rats. Predators target injured adults, unattended eggs and chicks.
<b>Prey</b>	Feeding along the coast consists in winter of feeding on the bottom in intertidal and sub-tidal zones. Reported at depths up to 60ft (20m), but generally dive to depths less than 15ft (5m) Feed on blue mussels, clams, snails and crusteceans. At fresh water breeding sites primarily feed on insect larvae and amphipods. In Alaska during the spring they feed on roe deposited by spawning Pacific herring.
<b>Size</b>	Largest of the three species of Scoters. Males on average weigh 1.6kg (3.5pd) females are slightly smaller, average 1.4kg (3pds).
<b>Life Span</b>	Very little is known about the life span.
<b>Reproduction</b>	Sea ducks such as White-winged Scoters do not breed until they are at least two years old. Some may even forgo nesting. Females incubate and rear young; males do not assist with rearing the young. White-winged Scoters are considered late nesters. Begin nesting in mid-June. Females are filopatric – return to nest near the area where they were hatched.
<b>Seasonal Change</b>	
<b>Morphology And Function</b>	Males have an elongated white crescent extending behind and below the pale blue eye. They also have white speculum or wing patches on both wings. Females are predominantly brown, with one or two facial patches and white speculum / patches on their wings.
<b>Unique Facts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much still needs to be learned about the life history and ecology of this species in order to improve our efforts to conserve this wildlife resource.</li> <li>• Surf Scoters are virtually unstudied. Molting areas, migration routes and wintering locations are poorly known.</li> <li>• Name comes from their swimming habits. Always found just beyond or in breaking waves.</li> </ul>

**References:**

Rosenberg, D.H. and M.P. Petrula. 1998. Scoter Satellite Telemetry. Internet WWW page, at URL: <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/wildlife/duck/scoter/surf.htm>.