

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Nathan Goldberg

Date of review: October 8, 2024

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: U-ID

Comments:

While this bird feels like and sounds to me like a Mottled Duck, I am choosing to not accept it based on lack of overall confidence.

Keith's field experience with this species is certainly well established, but given the lack of commentary about the base of the bill, photos showing the birds' face, and with no ability to see the speculum or secondary tips (though he does write about them being bluish with a white base, which is a pro-Mottled feature), I am too uneasy about this record to vote for it. I also would like to see more photos than just one of a sleeping dark duck, especially given integrades in the past have occurred. We should be cautious to rule out Mexican Duck and Mallard hybrids as well, and our inability to see if the tail feathers truly are uncurved is another point of concern for me.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Steve Huggins

Date of review: 10/28/24

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: U-ID

Comments: While suggestive of Mottled Duck - there is not enough in the photo to sway me one way or other. Definitely require additional details which the observer was unfortunately not able to obtain due to distance and that the bird flushed. The ID can be very tricky and despite great suggestive traits I do not believe that this sighting can be 100% confirmed.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Davida Kalina

Date of review: 14 October 2024

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: U-ID

Comments:

The submitter adequately rules out an ID of American Black Duck, based on body-plumage coloration and the speculum. The body plumage is described as brown, rather than black. In the poor-quality photo, the speculum is not visible to my eye. In the written eBird documentation, the borders of the speculum are not fully described, but in the submitter's email documentation, the submitter indicates there was only white "below the speculum", whereas any white above or below the speculum rules out ABDU.

However, I do not believe that an ID of a Mallard x Mottled Duck hybrid has been adequately ruled out (per the article on Mottled Duck Hybridization by Leukering and Pranty): (1) the bill is not visible in the photo, and there is no mention of a dark gape-spot (MODU characteristic) in the written documentation, nor is the coloration of the bill described; and (2) although the head and face plumages are described as warm and tawny, the rear-extension of the eyeline is not well-resolved in the photo and is not discussed in the written documentation. Therefore, due to the difficulty in ruling out a MALL x MODU hybrid in the documentation, I am voting to reject this record as Mottled Duck.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Terry Walsh

Date of review: 10-12-24

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-DE(1)

Comments:

The photo suggests a Mottled Duck but clear distinguishing marks are not visible due to the quality of the picture. However, the observer is familiar with the species and noted the characteristics (speculum pattern, head color) of a Mottled Duck. There was no consideration of the possibility of a Mallard x Mottled Duck hybrid that are frequently discussed in vagrant ducks so that may be a strike against this observation.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Kyle Wiktor

Date of review: 10/24/2024

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-PE

Comments:

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Williams

Date of review: 10-9-24

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-DE (1)

Comments:

The photo provided does not demonstrate field marks to confirm identification, but Keith M's description supports Mottled Duck.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2024-032

Name of bird form: Mottled Duck

Committee member name: Geoffrey A. Williamson

Date of review: 5 October 2024

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: U-ID

Comments:

This is possibly a Mottled Duck, but I am bothered by several things. First, I don't get any sense of warm brown edging to feathers in the dark upperparts, and the observer is silent about presence/absence of these and whether they were looked for. Second, the only portion of the documentation that goes against this being an American Black Duck is the white tip to the secondaries mentioned by the observer. I don't detect these in the photograph, but presumably they are there. Based on the photo, I think that American Black Duck fits better the overall coloration of this bird (though I am going on the photo alone while the observer saw the actual bird). As far as the date goes, American Black Duck is far more likely in August in Illinois than is Mottled Duck.

Of major concern with this record is that the possibility of a Mallard x American Black Duck hybrid has not been excluded. Such a combination seems to me a better fit to what is presented in the documentation, and thus needs to be clearly eliminated as a possibility. Mallard x Mottled Duck hybrids should also be addressed with every candidate Mottled Duck in Illinois, which is why it would be helpful and perhaps essential to have clear and convincing details about the appearance of the supercilium, eyeline, cheeks, gape spot, bill color, chest, tertials, tail coverts, tail, and speculum in all observations of possible Mottled Ducks.