



Black Scoter *Melanitta nigra* **BLSC** L 19in



Common sea duck often in large flocks with other scoter and ducks. Some migrate inland from tundra breeding grounds and are seen on lakes. On migration or moving between feeding areas form large, variably patterned line, often with SUSC. In winter/spring ♂ gives incessant wailing whistle, often in small groups wooing a single ♀ (lucky thing!). **ID:**The smallest and chunkiest of the scoters. Focus on bulky round head, bill shape and color. The undercarriage is evenly rounded, lowest in the center: Imm birds have pale bellies that are easy to see in flight. Ad ♂ glossy black with yellow-orange knob on

bill. ♀ and juv have conspicuous pale throat and face. This becomes darker through winter in imm ♂ and also develops adult-like yellow-orange knob on bill. 2nd-w ♂ may show browner throat and slightly reduced knobs but most are as adults. In flight, relative to SUSC, an evenly domed undercarriage, broader; less swept-back wings, shorter thicker neck with big head and less pointed 'face' that's discernible at long range with practice. Flight feathers paler than coverts, but shape and bill pattern easier to see.