

Great-tailed Grackle
21 Jun 1984
IPL Ponds, Pottawattamie Co., IA
*F. Moore
IBL 54:86; 55:58

Record Number: 84-20
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Francis L. Moore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:86

Records Committee: IBL 55:58

VOTE: 7-III

III, Assume in comparison with Rock Dove he means body size minus tail, were about same.

III, Even though the size should be larger than Rock Dove, appearance of female and voice appear diagnostic.

III, Well seen by Moore and Silcock.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE
DATE SEEN: June 21, 1984
SITE OF OBSERVATION: IPL Ponds, Pottawattamie County
OBSERVERS: Francis Moore, et al
DATE OF REVIEW: 1984
METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation by mail to Records Committee
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS:

Some minor questions were raised about using Rock Dove as a size comparison (presumably not including tail?), but the presence of a female and the voice were considered clinching features.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

What species? Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) How many? 2-1 ♂, 1 ♀

Location? Iowa Power + Light Cooling Ponds, just South of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie Co., Ia.

Type of habitat? Open water ponds, small areas of cattails near edge.

When? date(s): June 21, 1984 time: 3:35 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

others with you: Ross Silcock

others before or after you: None that I know of

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We were at the IPL Cooling Ponds looking for Least Terns and Piping Plovers and noticed two grackles at the edge of the water. I saw the female was had a very light brown color to it and immediately thought it was a female Great-tailed Grackle. I then took a closer look at the male and saw that it had a very long looking tail which appeared to be longer than the birds body with a very deep 'V' shape to it. The female was much too brown to be a female Common Grackle. After about 10 minutes the pair flew to the South side of the pond. As it flew the male made 2 or three whistling notes. They then flew to the East side of the pond where we could not find them again. In flight the male was very long looking. As they were sitting by the water a Rock Dove landed close to them and the male Great-tailed was the same length as the Rock Dove, maybe longer. The males head looked flat-topped with a heavier looking bill than a Common Grackle. The female was a darker brown above than below.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Female Common Grackle is not as brown as the female Great-tailed that was seen. Flat-headed male separates it from Boat-tailed. No other female blackbird has this brown a coloration.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Sunny, no wind, excellent lighting from approx. 200 yards using 10x50 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen 2 male and 1 female Great-tailed Grackle at Riverton WA. on 7/2/83.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 3 1/2 hours this form completed? 3 1/2 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240