

Groove-billed Ani

5 Oct 1991

n. of Burlington, Des Moines Co., IA

*Chuck Fuller

IBL 62:16, 71

Record Number: 91-37
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION: Chuck Fuller

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:16

Records Committee: IBL 62:71

VOTE for Ani species: 5 A-D, 2 NA

A-D, Bird was probably a grooved bill but lacking more details I will have to accept ani species.

A-D, The date, behavior, and habitat are typical of anis. I would have liked details as to how the profile and bill differed from that of a grackle.

A-D, Behavior very similar to the last Iowa Ani. All black coloration and description of hinged tail eliminate similar Icterids.

A-D, Ani bill profile is distinctive enough to accept Ani species without a detailed description of the bill which was omitted from the documentation. Vagrancy pattern very strongly supports Grooved-billed Ani, an infact almost eliminates Smooth-billed Ani.

NA, The description indicates an all black bird, hinged tail appearance, head that differed from a blackbird, and startled cry. If I have to rely on the facts presented, I have to vote for non-acceptance. My intuition and judgement of the observation would be to call it a Groove-billed Ani. Thus it is a probable Groove-billed Ani, but the facts don't even prove that it is an ani.

NA, Granted the documentor notes that the profile of the head was that of an Ani and not a grackle and the tail was described as appearing to be on a hinge with a lot of movement in flight, and that it was difficult to flush from the grass and cover it was in, there is not enough of a description to say that this was either species of Ani. There is no actual description of the bird or of the size or size comparison of the bird. Just that it was an all black bird. This is not enough to make a judgement as to the species identification of this bird.

A-D, Adequate details provided to denote an Ani species.

REVOTE for Ani species: 3 A-D, 4 NA

NA, I believe this probably was an Ani but have to agree with NA's that actual description of the bird itself is lacking.

NA, I decided to consider this from another viewpoint. Would this record stand up 50 years from now, considering only the documentation, but not considering the skill or credibility of the observer? While the documentation certainly is suggestive of Ani species, I am no sure it would be considered beyond reasonable doubt.

A-D, Vagrancy patterns support Groove-billed Ani, but the bill was not seen good enough to support this ID, so I am voting AD Ani species NA Groove-billed Ani.

NA, With such a weak description, we should leave this one as "probable."

NA, Ani head and bill profile would be enough to accept this as Ani sp. except that the head, bill or any part of the bird was not described in the documentation. The reviewer is left to too much inference on this record for a species so seldom seen in Iowa. This could possibly be an Ani sp. and possibly even a Groove-billed Ani but the description given does not conclusively make this an Ani.

A-D, Sufficient description provided to denote Ani species. Size comparison with Great-tailed Grackle gives relative apparent size of this black bird. The statement of "on profile the head and particularly the bill were that of an Ani and not of a grackle" certainly gives us a general description if this distinctive species type. I feel the two NA reviewers are overly critical on this bird, and I feel the details provided point to an Ani species and eliminate other large black bird contenders.

What species? ANI (SP.) PROBABLY GROOVE BILLED How many? 1 91-37

Location? N. of Burlington, Ia OFF STATE Hiway 99 .2 mile ON

Type of habitat? Grassy Field Adjacent to Narrow Drainage ditch (mostly dry) with brush piled Along the side. Some small trees (mostly willows) Bordered ditch TAMAK

When? date(s): SAT OCT 5 time: 2:45PM - 3:30
3:45PM to 4:15

Who? your name and address: Chuck Fuller 420 S GARFIELD BURLINGTON

others with you: None 52601

others before or after you: John Rutenbeck

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.

I was searching for migrating sparrows in the aforementioned field, when I flushed a bird that was buried in the grass. For an instant my impression was that it was a great-tailed grackle. The bird flew 20-30 ft. low and at an angle ~~across~~ ^{across} the ditch and buried itself in the deep brush cover on the bank of the ditch. Two things were apparent: On profile the head and particularly the bill were that of an ani and not of a grackle. Also, when the bird flew the tail of the all black bird appeared to be on a hinge with much tail movement in flight. I flushed (with difficulty) the bird two more times and each time it flew 20-30 ft and disappeared into the brush.

I was certain that this bird was an ani (sp), so I returned home and contacted a fellow birder (John Rutenbeck) and returned 15 minutes later. We were able to flush the bird 2 more times with extreme difficulty and then we could not find it again.

One other note - when I first flushed the bird it made a startled cry. This cry was very similar, if not identical to the last part of the Groove-billed ani call on Peterson's Field Similar species and how eliminated: Guide to Western Birds record.

Great-tailed grackle - as described Conclusion ~~Groove~~ ani (sp.) probably Groove Billed

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Sunny day; light behind - using 8.5 x 44 Audubon Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Grinnell experience with the groove-billed ani and its behavior. Florida and smooth billed ani

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? Immediately this form completed? 2 wks

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