

Great-tailed Grackle

19 May 1983

3 mi north of Glenwood, Mills Co., IA

\*T. Bray, \*B. Padelford

IBL 53:55; 54:39

Record Number: 83-19  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Tanya Bray

Babs Padelford

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 53:55

Records Committee: IBL 54:39

VOTE: 7-III

III, Good description of species certain to appear with more regularity--most likely in SW Iowa.

III, One thing that impressed me was the fact blackbirds mobbed it, treating it as a crow or hawk.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

83-19

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE

DATE SEEN: 19 May 1983

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Mills County

OBSERVERS: T. Bray and B. Padelford

DATE OF REVIEW: 1983

METHOD OF REVIEW: Mailing to Committee

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: ) The Committee felt unanimously that this record was a III. The documentation substantiated the occurrence of a species expected in southwest Iowa for some time, and which should prove regular as time passes.

This appears to be the first record for Iowa.

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.

DOCUMENTATION

83-19

III

GREAT TAILED GRACKLE

May 19, 1983

Location: Flooded field at approx. Mile marker 37 on the northbound Interstate 29; three miles north of the Glenwood (highway 34) exit.

Number: One male; one female

Description:

Female: Entire upperparts and tail sooty-brown. Underparts were yellowish-brown. Dark cheek with line (light brown) through eye. White eye. Very long wedge-shaped tail

Male: Entire body slaty-black except for bluish sheen on head and neck. Very long keel-shaped tail was as long as body of bird. Bill was gray, long, and slightly decurved. White eye. The grackle was almost double the size of Red-winged Blackbird in direct comparison.

Voice: A squeaky, slurred ascending whistle

Behavior: The female was first observed sitting on a fence at the edge of a grassy, flooded field. After a few minutes, a male landed approx. one foot from her. He pointed his bill upward, raised his wings and spread his tail; giving the call noted above. Red-winged Blackbirds dived at him, clearly upset by the grackle's presence. The female flew off into the tall grass, followed by the male. There he was also harrassed by Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

Distance: At first sighting--75 feet

Sky: Overcast

Time: 3:15 p.m.

Equipment: 7 x 26 binoculars

Other Observers: Babs Padelford, Sandy Kovanda

Books: Birds of North America Robbins, et al

Written from notes taken at time of sighting

Tanya Bray  
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83-19

Great-tailed Grackles - Mills County

83-19

On May 19, 1983, Tanya Bray, Sandy Kovanda and I saw a male and female great-tailed grackle in a flooded field one mile south of the I-29 Rest Area between Glenwood and Bellevue.

We first spotted the female sitting on the fence approximately 100 feet from the shoulder of the highway. We noted her light eye, large size, light brown front, and blackish-brown back.

The male flew in to her, but was attacked by red-winged black birds and yellow-headed black birds. He was very large, about double the size of the red-wings. He had a light eye, was black except for a blue sheen on the head, and had a long wedge-shaped tail which was about as long as his body. The male called once - a loud ascending call.

The blackbirds continued to harrass the male & both birds flew a short distance & landed on dried weed stalks.

Babs Padeljord  
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