

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Great-tailed Grackle How many? 3Location? Iowa Public Service Port Neal Generator near Salix, IowaType of habitat? Fly ash ponds - barren sand flats, shallow water pools, colonizing marsh + cottonwoodsWhen? date(s): 7-10-86 + 7/17 time: 1900 to 1930Who? your name and address: BILL HUSER, 319 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St., S. Sioux City, NE 68776others with you: JERRY PROBST, SIOUX CITYothers before or after you: BOB LIVERMORE ON 6-14-86 SAW 1 MALE -

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.

Sioux City DOCUMENTED  
 First saw male bird in full view. Large size, black with iridescent sheen, long tail with large, deeply keeled end. Common grackles were nearby, affording a direct size comparison. Yellow eye, large beak.

Female bird also in plain view. Large size, light colored (beige) breast, throat, chin and face. Dark, diffuse eye stripe or cheek patch contrasted with face. Large, but smaller than male's, tail. Brown-black dorsum.

Juvenile bird - another bird with buffy breast, throat + cheek. Similar size to C. grackle ♂ but heavier bodied. Nearby juv. C. grackles more uniformly colored, lacking the contrast between breast + back. Dorsum of g. t. grackle uniform brown-black; that of juv. C. grackles brown-black with contrasting black tail. Smaller than the ♀ great-tailed grackle. (OVER)

Similar species and how eliminated:

Common grackle - direct size comparison; pale color of ♀ + juv.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
 direct sunlight from behind observers, estimated distance 100 yds

Minolta 10X, Minolta 10X binocs; Bushnell 16-42X scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Both observers had seen this species this past Spring - Springbrook & Grand Is., NE

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Nat'l Geographic

How long before field notes made? 12 hrs this form completed? 5 days

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

on 7/17: pair of great-tailed grackles present.

Identified as on 7/10/86

No juvenile bird seen.

Adults feeding on dead minnows at water's edge.

Birds would move from pool to pool on these sand flats searching for food.

Also flew to ash pond levee (bank) + perched from time to time.

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.

Great-tailed grackle. Large size, black with iridescent sheen, long tail with large deeply lobed tail fan. Bill long, straight, pointed. Irides dark. Feet long, slender. Iris dark. Tail deeply lobed.

Female bird also in plain view. Large size, light colored (gray) breast, throat, chin and face. Dark, dusky eye stripe or check patch contrasted with face. Tail fan similar to male's, tail. Darker than male.

Juvenile bird - smaller and with buff breast, throat + check. Similar size to C. grackles but more rounded. They are a grackle more uniformly colored, lacking the contrast between breast + back. Dorsum of C. grackles uniform brown-black, rest of juv. C. grackles somewhat with contrasting black tail.

Similar to the 2 great-tailed grackles. Similar species and how identified: Similar grackles - short size comparison; tail color of 2 juv.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? If yes, explain:  
Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Previous experience with species and similar ones:  
References and persons consulted before writing description:  
How long before field notes made? this form completed?  
MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52242