

Species: GROOVE-BILLED ANI

Crotophaga sulcirostris

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): Oct. 3, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 12:15

to 12:45

Locality: ponny Res. S.R.A.

Nearest Town: Idalia

County: Yuma

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Bruce Webb

#3 Chautauqua, Boulder Colo. 80302

447-2614

Peter Gent

Boulder, Colo.

Optical Equipment: 7X35 Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: (see Webb)

Light Conditions: Excellent, Sunny Day

Distance from bird (how measured): 50m, approximated

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: unk. Plumage: unknown (presumably adult)

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Bird was first seen perched at the top of a willow, in a thick stand of willows. It stayed in the open for about 15-20 min. B. Webb was able to take some pictures at this time. It flushed and flew into the base of the dense thicket. P. Gent & I were able to flush it twice more, but both times it headed for thick cover and held closely.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

The bird was all black, with a long, rounded tail. Wings were black and pointed. Bill was enormous and grooved.

 Size was a bit smaller, in over-all length, than a Black-billed Magpie.

There was a slight (faint) golden trim on some of the feathers on the back & the back of the neck.

The first time we flushed the bird out of the dense cover it appeared to have a bluish iridescent tinge. (like a new rifle barrel)

Flight - the bird would flap 3 times, shallowly and glide, with each wing beat it looked like it would "fall apart." (it looked very loosely jointed)

(Bruce Webb made the initial ^(OVER) identification)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

(I heard the call but neglected to write it down at the time of observation)

As I recall it made a buleēp, buleēp type call.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

The bird was seen in a dense stand of willows with mixed tall grasses. The willows were over my head probably near 3m. in height. It was a marshy area, like a swale.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Only the smooth-billed ani, in my opinion nears the groove-billed in general appearance. The bill on this bird was, however, definitely grooved.

Possibly the Great-tailed (Boat-tailed) Grackle bears a superficial resemblance, except for the bill, & the eye. (The Grackle's eye is light, the eye of this bird was dark.)

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: I have seen more than 100 groove-billed Anis in Nayarit, Mexico 1/76. Also I have seen many Great-tailed Grackles 1/76 & 6/76 in Mexico & Southern Arizona respectively. (I have never seen a Smooth-billed Ani.)

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

No books were consulted at the time of observation.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Michael Moulton SIGNATURE: Michael Moulton DATE: 10/18/76
Street Address: 1328 S. Coffman #3 Town and State: Longmont, Colo ZIP: 80501

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species: GROOVE BILLED ANI 2. Number: 1
3. Location: W side of Highway 385 just south of N entrance to BONNY RESERVOIR
4. Date(s): Sunday Oct 3rd 5. Time bird seen: 12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. and briefly later
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (Describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): When sitting the bird appeared about a foot long, nearly half of which was the tail. This widened towards the end which was round. The bill, eye, legs and plumage of the bird were all black. The bill was huge with grooves on the upper mandible. The flight was distinctive and weak. The bird only flew short distances by a series of three wing beats followed by a short glide - the flight was not noticeably undulating like a jays however.
7. Description of voice, if heard: Not heard - can't remember.
8. Description of behavior: P.T.O.
9. Habitat--general: Dead willow about 8' high with thick undergrowth about 3' high.
specific:
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated 6, 7 and 8, explain: P.T.O.
11. Distance (how measured?): 20 yds - later when flushed about 3 yds 12. Optical equipment: Binoculars
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer): Light good, mainly clear sky and around noon.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: NONE. P.T.O.
15. Other observers: BRUCE WEBB AND MIKE MOUTON
16. ~~Did the others~~ agreed with their identification?
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: NONE (that I know of).
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: ROBBINS, BRUNN & ZIM FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA. GOLDEN PRESS
may have influenced this description slightly.

Signature Peter R. Gent Address: 933 2F East Moorhead Circle,
Date: 10/31/76 City, State: Boulder CO 80303, Colorado

8. It was sitting about 6' high when first observed - then flew into thick undergrowth when approached closely. Later flushed at a distance of about three yards when again it flew a short distance and disappeared in the undergrowth.

10. It was larger than any blackbird or cowbird. About the same size as or a little larger than a common Grackle, but bill much different, eye was bluish and no iridescence at all. The tail seemed wider and the sitting posture was noticeably more upright than a Grackle. The flight was weak as opposed to the strong flight of a Grackle.

14. I have no previous experience with groove-billed Anis. Previous to American experience in 1 month March 1976 when observed several thousand Grackles near Niagara, and also many Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

1 month September 1976 when ~~again~~ observed the three species of Blackbird.

I did not identify this bird first. However it was obviously not like anything I had seen before and, I hope, I would have identified it fairly quickly with the aid of the field guide.