

YOUR NAME	Diane Pettey
YOUR EMAIL	d.koastie69@gmail.com
BIRD IDENTIFICATION	One Common Grackle, molting adult male
DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION	August 10 and 20, 2004
TIME OF DAY	11:30 AM
LOCATION	Front yard bird feeding station and backyard at my home, Heceta Beach, OR
LIGHTING AND WEATHER CONDITIONS	Full sun
DETAILS	<p>Field Marks: We observed a molting adult male Common Grackle feeding on bird seed near front yard ground feeding station. The bird was large (only slightly larger than the nearby Steller's Jays) and it's long tail looked scruffy and a bit sparse (like it was missing feathers) . It had yellow eyes and a large, somewhat down-curved and thick bill. I also noted it's conspicuous blue iridescent crown, faintly barred back and scapulars and some purple iridescence in it's wings. When it flew up to pine/spruce trees, it didn't appear long-winged. I saw that it's tail was oddly shaped, long but missing feathers. I watched it walking along tree branches before it flew into the backyard where I lost sight of it.</p> <p>Vocalization: I spotted the bird again, on August 20, on top of a pine tree. When I went outside to try for another photo, it called once - low-pitched and harsh - as it flew away.</p> <p>Photo.</p>
DO YOU HAVE ANY PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES?	Yes. Texas, Louisiana and Florida. (and experience with GTGR in OR, CA, AZ, NV and TX)
SIMILAR SPECIES	Larger and longer-tailed than blackbirds and slightly larger than nearby Steller's Jays. Overall, smaller than Great-tailed Grackles I've seen. It's color appeared more variable and back/scapular scaling was conspicuous, unlike Great-tails I've seen. Bill longer and definitely thicker than blackbirds, but shorter than Great-tailed Grackle. It's wings were shorter than Great-tailed Grackle. It's call was too low-pitched for blackbirds I've heard.
DO YOU HAVE PHOTOS?	Yes
Thank you for submitting your sighting to the Oregon Bird Records Committee! Is there	No.

COGR-2004-47 (Common Grackle)
1st round voting – March 2, 2022

Accepted: 9
Not Accepted: 0

ACCEPTED, VERIFIED

This is clearly a grackle. The observer's comments that the bird was bigger than nearby Steller's Jay initially made me suspicious of a male Great-tailed Grackle molting rectrices (especially as they also noted missing tail feathers, presumably as they were being replaced). The time of year and location also make me slightly hesitant. However, the shorter, more decurved bill shape, purplish greater coverts, more compact structure, and especially the bronzy scapulars point away from Great-tailed and toward Common. Description of the vocalization does not eliminate Great-tailed. Between plumage and structure, I feel comfortable calling this a Common Grackle, despite the size description and time of year causing some hesitation.

A very scruffy looking individual, but enough in the photo and description to confirm as a Common Grackle. The bill size and shape (slightly curved, thick, with a strongly-angled culmen) is strongly suggestive of a grackle and not a Brewer's Blackbird. The described size relative to nearby Steller's Jays is consistent with Common over Great-tailed (particularly a male as this would be if Great-tailed). The bronzy-greenish iridescence on the scapulars, back, and flanks is also consistent with Common and not Great-tailed, or Brewer's Blackbird for that matter.

coloration and shape are consistent with Common Grackle

That's a scruffy looking bird, but I agree with the ID. The combination of overall size and proportions, bill shape/size, yellow iris, iridescent bronze flecks, and purplish sheen to the remiges all add up to a COGR. It appears to be the bronzed form.

Good description, and photo shows large bill, long tail, bluish sheen to head and purplish sheen to back/wings.

Decent photo showing purple head contrasting with bronzed back.

This bird has quite a bit of bronze coloration on the mantle, indicating that it is of the versicolor subspecies.

Clearly a grackle from the photo, and coloration rules out GTGR. Nice to have these older sightings entered into the record.

No comments

