

Species: GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE

Record No. 512-05-20

Location: LAKESIDE  
County: COOS  
Date(s): MAY 22 TO JUNE 17, 2005

Reporters	details	slides	DIGITAL prints	tapes
JAY ?	A		B-C-D	

Specimen no. & location \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accepted 9-0 Not accepted \_\_\_\_\_  
 verified ✓ origin questionable \_\_\_\_\_  
 Single rept. sighting \_\_\_\_\_ exotic not estab. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Multiple rept. sighting \_\_\_\_\_

Records split \_\_\_\_\_ Records combined \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition**

Secretary's File \_\_\_\_\_ Duplicate File \_\_\_\_\_  
 Main File A details A  
 Slide File \_\_\_\_\_ slides \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print File B-C-D prints B-C-D  
 Tape File \_\_\_\_\_ tapes \_\_\_\_\_

Date reporter(s) notified: 4-24-05

Hi Harry,

Here's the GT Grackle information from Coos. The birds were seen from 22 May through 17 June, 2005 in Lakeside. No one I know but Jay and his wife Heather saw them (I still don't know their last name, I'll send it to you when I get it). I met them after the birds had left (dang!). I've enclosed a posting he put on some web-site plus something he e-mail me and 3 far-off photos he sent. Let me know what you think about the photos? He's not a really experienced birder but mentioned that he'd seen lots of GT Grackles in Phoenix (where he must go on occasion) and that he wouldn't confuse them with Brewer's Blackbirds.

Tim

His posting:

As I enjoyed my dinner lastnight, I looked out under the bird feeder and what did I find but two male Great Tailed Grackles eating seed amongst the Mourning Doves. We can now theorize that this is possibly more than a simple casual or accidental situation. Perhaps they are extending their range?

Keep an eye open for them. They look similar to Brewers Blackbird but twice their size (the tail is almost the length of the rest of the body).

One of his e-mail's to me:

Hello Tim!

I was glad to hear from you and yes I do have a few pictures (though they were taken with my HP PhotoSmart 315 which had no optical zoom (a crime to say the least) so the pictures are far from excellent). However, I will address that request in a moment (I beg your patience).

First, your questions (hopefully answered in the order you asked them)...

QUE: What was the first date you saw them?

ANS: May 22nd at approx. 8:45am-9:00am (we left the

house a little later than our originally intended 8:30 schedule) in the roadside ditch (which had a very small amount of water in it and green grass growing generally no more than 4 inches tall) in between 14th street and 13th street on the west side of North Lake Road here in Lakeside (the only side with a significant ditch).

QUE: How many total were there?

ANS: 2 males, 1 female all told. The original sighting originated as I provided the details of above. For several days we heard him calling from the peak of our shed roof (usually in the early mornings, 5:00am to 6:00am) and I in turn awoke, came in to my computer and played the recording of the song call I have for him. On the first instance of this he was intrigued and came within 7 feet of the open window where the computer resides, walking along the edge of the shed roof. He stayed there approx. 3-5 minutes before dropping to the lawn below and continuing his morning hunt. After several days I was shocked to find not only our regular male but another male in his company. That was Sunday, May 29th in the evening (unsure of the exact time but between 6:00pm and 8:00pm I believe). This was the first time we saw more than one here. They were co-operating well and did not show any aggression to one another or the other birds at all. They did stick close under the main food tray and sunflower feeder and upon closer inspection (15x spotting scope at 15 feet or so) did appear to be eating sunflower seeds (I would have to consult A.C. Bent on Grackles to determine their exact diet but have thought it to be generally insects). The two were close enough in plumage, size and build as to not be able to truly differentiate between them. My wife and I did spot one of the males on several occasions using some good intuition and successfully hunting earwigs from under the tree wrap I used to protect the Aspen and Cottonwood trees I planted in the side yard. He would climb up the support stick, hang on it and gently pick on the wrap, irritating the earwigs and causing them to scurry about. He would then proceed to devour them as quickly as possible. We watched this several times from no more than 40 feet away but once while I was but 12 feet away. The two males seemed to roost in a neighbors Douglas Fir tree (we heard them calling from

the tree when there was just a slight bit of light left (just after 10:00pm then) for several weeks but stopped hearing them at about the same time we spotted the female. She was seen only once, the evening of June 17th. She was on the peak of our shed roof, looking away from me when I spotted her. I played the grackle call from the computer and watched her visibly start. she turned around quickly, then flew off in a southerly direction and out of sight). My total viewing time of the female was no more than several minutes.

Hope this was not too much information, let me know how else I can help. My wife saw the grackles on several occasions and can verify my sightings.

We do live in Lakeside (just past 15th street and North Lake Road, on a private lane) and I would be happy to call you anytime. I am thrilled to be in the company of fellow birders and find few truly dedicated individuals here. Perhaps I have been looking in the wrong places?

Have a wonderful evening!

Jay