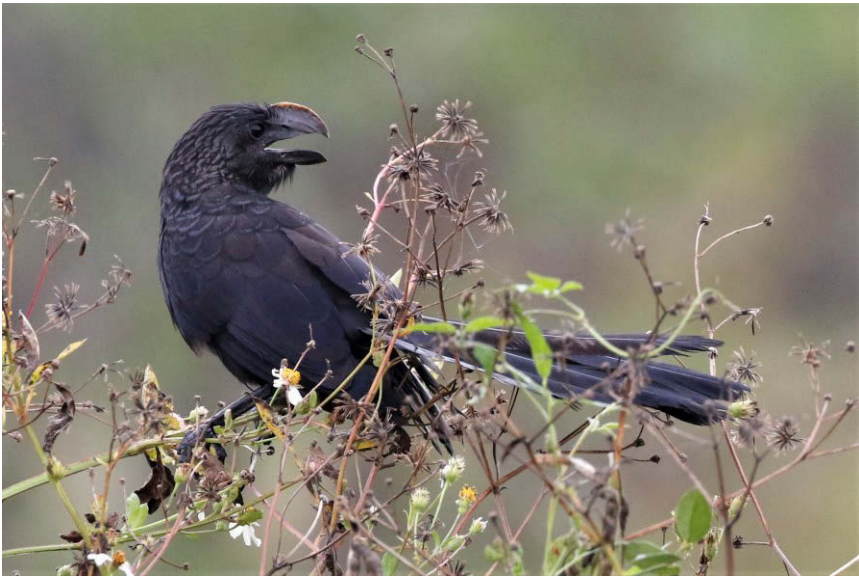


**FIRST ACCEPTED MISSISSIPPI RECORD OF SMOOTH-BILLED ANI**

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During a birding trip on 4 November 2017, I noticed an ani around 0850 perched on a bush overhanging the canal at Hiller Park in Biloxi. The bird had a noticeable notch on the right side of its lower mandible (Figure 1). After viewing the ani for several minutes, and taking photos and video, I saw the bird fly from bushes and trees along the canal and heard it give a distinctive flight call. I immediately compared what I heard with both Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) and Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) recordings on my phone, and it best matched a Smooth-billed Ani flight call. I was not able to get an audio recording that day. Despite the vocalizations I heard and the differences between the bill of the bird and the bill of a Groove-billed Ani I observed a few weeks earlier (smoother, size, shape), I dismissed the Smooth-billed Ani identification due to the far-reaching possibility of one being in Mississippi. I knew there had never been a confirmed sighting of a Smooth-billed Ani in Mississippi. Therefore, I assumed it was likely another Groove-billed Ani since they were being reported along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Upon posting photos with my eBird checklist, the identification was immediately called into question. The photos and video were reviewed by an eBird Project Leader and members of the Mississippi Bird Records Committee (MBRC) who agreed that, based on the arched culmen and smooth bill, it was likely a Smooth-billed Ani. Questions arose regarding the bird's vocalizations. On 7 November, I returned to the park, and waited near the boat launch at a spot where the ani had been seen the



**Figure 1.** Smooth-billed Ani on 12 November 2017 at Hiller Park, Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi.

previous morning by another birder. Shortly after arriving, the ani flew into the overgrown marsh next to the boat launch and began making perch calls. It made three flights in and out of this area during the visit. I was able to obtain both perch call (<https://www.xeno-canto.org/429066>) and flight call (<https://www.xeno-canto.org/429065>) audio recordings of the Smooth-billed Ani during this visit using the RØDE Rec app on my phone. Photographs, video and audio recordings, and a sighting report were submitted to the MBRC. The record (MBRC record number 017-29) was accepted by the MBRC in March 2018. Many birders from throughout Mississippi, as well as at least Louisiana, Texas, and Florida, were able to see the Smooth-billed Ani through 15 November 2017.