

Documentation
Third State Record
Groove-billed Ani
(*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)

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On 10 August, 1980, I was walking down an abandoned road along the west side of Alum Creek Reservoir north of the Cheshire Road bridge. At 0955 EDT, an ani flew directly in front of me at a distance of 35 feet. It continued to fly across a small abandoned field and landed near the top of a small tree along a fencerow. Its flight pattern was typical of all anis, a series of erratic wing beats followed by a long glide. When it tried to land, the bird always appeared to overshoot its destination, then grab a perch anyway and use its long tail to maintain balance. This pattern was repeated as the bird flew from treetop to treetop along the fencerow.

As I followed the bird along the fencerow, I got as close as 20 to 25 feet although the sun was always behind the bird. During this 7 minute observation, I noted the following field marks. As a result of its very long and broad tail, the bird somewhat resembled a boat-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus major*). Its overall coloration was uniformly dark. A purplish sheen was present on the wings in flight but the coloration of the head and nape could not be determined in the poor light. The dark bill was blunt and quite heavy. The crest and base of the upper mandible were nearly parallel with the top of the head. It appeared to have 3 indistinct grooves on the upper mandible although these were only visible under certain lighting conditions. The lower mandible was smoothly curved, lacking a distinct gonydeal angle.

The bird called constantly in flight and when it was perched. For the most part, these calls consisted of a series of uniform high pitched piping notes. It also gave a two-note whistled call, the first note higher pitched than the second.

As a result of the bill shape and presence of indistinct grooves, I identified the bird as a groove-billed ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*). (See Balch, *Birding* 11: 295-297 for a discussion of ani identification. As noted in this article, groove-billed anis do not necessarily have grooved bills. Hence, shape of both mandibles and coloration of head and nape feathers are crucial field marks for birds with plain bills.) The call notes of this bird were similar to those of groove-billed anis on Petersons Western Bird Song record and unlike those of the smooth-billed ani (*C. ani*) on the Eastern Bird Song record.

To my knowledge, this provides the third sighting of this species in Ohio. Trautman and Trautman (*Ohio Jour. Sci.* 68(5): 315) list a specimen from Ottawa County on 30 October 1963. Another was present in Holmes County between 15 October and 17 November 1972 (*Kleen, Am. Birds* 27(1): 69). This bird was seen by many. It was eventually captured and taken to the Cleveland Zoo where it died, the specimen now is in the Ohio State University Museum of Zoology.

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