

NOTES

A GROOVE-BILLED ANI IN NORTHEASTERN COLORADO

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In flight, the Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) does not present an image of long-distance vagrancy capabilities. Yet, from the northern extent of its present breeding range, i.e., the southern Rio Grande Valley of Texas, it has been recorded as "accidental" north to Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma (AOU Check-list, 1957). Farther west, it has wandered to Nevada (Kingery, *Am. Birds* 29:95, 1975) and recently to California (McCaskie, *Am. Birds* 29:122, 1975).

On 3 October 1976, Peter Gent, Mike Moulton and I observed a Groove-billed Ani perched in a small second-growth willow (*Salix* sp.) thicket within the floodplain of the South Fork of the Republican River. We tracked the bird for approximately 45 minutes within a small area along U.S. Highway 385, near the northwest entrance to Bonny Dam State Recreation Area, Yuma County, Colorado.

We noted the presence of curved grooves along the sides of its swollen bill, as well as its dark eye within a dull blackish-gray unfeathered circumocular area. Once, while perched, it partially raised its V-edged greenish iridescent crown and neck feathers, giving it a peculiar shaggy, loose-feathered appearance. When we repeatedly flushed the bird, it typically flapped two or three times and then went into an extended glide using its flattened tail to maneuver. While in flight it gave its characteristic two-part call. Upon landing in a hedgerow, it briefly elevated its tail and then disappeared into the dense vegetation.

The photograph I obtained (Figure 1) lacks plumage details, but shows a distinctive *Crotophaga* perching profile. Duplicate slides and full descriptions from each observer are on file at the Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado. This represents the second photo-documented record of this species in Colorado.



Figure 1. Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) at the junction of U.S. Highway 385 and the northwest entrance to Bonny Dam State Recreation Area, Yuma County, Colorado on 3 October 1976.

Photo by Bruce E. Webb

NOTES



Figure 2. Groove-billed Ani west of Pueblo Reservoir along the north bank of the Arkansas River, Pueblo County, Colorado on 6 July 1975.

Photo by Jim Dennis

Prior to this sighting, the Groove-billed Ani has been reported twice in Colorado.

The first report, on 23 April 1975, was of one perched on a roadside fence in company with Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), one mile north of Golden, Jefferson County, but seen only briefly from a moving automobile. The sole observer was thoroughly familiar with the species and aware of the significance of his observation. However, his attempt to relocate the ani and grackles was not successful. Due to the brevity of the observation, the Colorado Field Ornithologists Official Records Committee did not accept the report (Reddall, *Western Birds* 7:84, 1976).

Better substantiated was a report of a single ani photographed by Jim Dennis on 6 July 1975 west of Pueblo Reservoir along the north bank of the Arkansas River, Pueblo County. Dennis observed the bird with binoculars and a 20x spotting scope for twenty minutes. Among other features, he noted the grooved culmen (Dennis pers. comm.). Photos have been deposited at the Denver Museum of Natural History. His report represents the first photo-documented record of a Groove-billed Ani in Colorado.