

A COMMON GRACKLE RECORD FOR OREGON

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On 28 May 1977 Priscilla Summers and I observed a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) at the headquarters of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County, Oregon. We watched it through binoculars within 9 m for about 5 minutes as it fed on the lawn of one of the refuge residences. We also observed it in flight on two occasions. The following description was noted.

A large blackbird with a noticeably long wedge-shaped tail. Although we did not have direct comparisons with other species of blackbirds, it seemed noticeably larger than a Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). Upperparts: entire head iridescent blue-green, back deep shiny bronze, sharply marked from the iridescence of head. Underparts: darkish, no iridescence or color noted, wings dark. Eye: light yellow, noticeably standing out from head. Bill: silvery black, similar to that of a Brewer's Blackbird but noticeably longer in proportion to head and more massive appearing. Tail: long and wedge-shaped; the folding upward from the center was easily seen in flight and was one of the most notable aspects of the bird. No sounds were heard from the bird.

I have seen Common Grackles in Colorado, Texas and one in California. Priscilla has seen only one previous to this one. We both have had much contact with Great-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus mexicanus*). At no time did we doubt our initial identification of the Common Grackle. It was obviously too large to be any of the regular blackbird species and too iridescent, bronzy and small to be a Great-tailed Grackle.

According to field guides and other sources, the female Common Grackle is a little smaller and duller than the male. This bird was not dull at all so presumably it was a male.

The Common Grackle breeds from northern British Columbia down the east side of the Rocky Mountains to northeastern New Mexico. There are casual or accidental records now for Washington, Idaho, Utah, Nevada and California. In Utah it is considered a "rare transient in northern Utah" (Behle and Perry, Utah birds, 1975). Therefore I was not too surprised to see this species show up in Oregon. As far as I can determine this is the first record for the state of Oregon.

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