

cerned the biological status of certain forms, not their "lability." Moreover, it is important to note that taxonomic decisions are not all one way, (e.g., Thayer's Gull, Great-tailed Grackle). It is also quite possible that some of today's changes may even be reversed in the future as more information is accumulated. I, for one, would not be surprised to find the Great White Heron eventually again treated as a species.

Although the actual means of designating the "former species" in print is an editorial decision, the main purpose of this is to encourage birders to continue reporting the status of these forms. They have not ceased to exist nor have they lost their biological interest. They have not lost their voices,

nor their beauty, nor their unique field marks. They have not ceased to worry conservationists.

The editors of American Birds find Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco and Northern (Bullock's) Oriole and other such designations as awkward as everyone else. Recently we have begun to simplify our usage, reverting to former species names, in quotes, the quotation marks signifying that the authors and editors are knowingly referring to a race and not a species, and trusting that the reader will make this assumption. Regional Editors and all authors are asked to follow this practice in the future. Henceforth it will be "Great White" Heron and "Ipswich" Sparrow in these pages, except for Christmas Bird Count reports.

A Great-tailed Grackle from Illinois

H. David Bohlen*

On October 5, 1974, William O'Brien, Robert Adams, and Robert Randall found a Great-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*) at a sewage disposal plant on the north side of Jacksonville, Morgan County, Illinois. There are no other records for this species in Illinois (see Randall, *Illinois Audubon Bulletin* 172:3, Spring 1975). On October 7 the bird was still present, and was collected (Illinois State Museum #605929). The bird proved to be a female with ovary measuring 9 mm x 5.5 mm and the skull was fully ossified. There was little fat and the gizzard contained mostly short-horned grasshoppers (Acrididae, *Melanoplus* spp.) and two giant ragweed seeds (*Ambrosia trifida*). The eye was light yellow (nearest to Baryta Yellow of Ridgway's colors), and the bill and tarsi were black. The measurements were: wing 143 mm, tail 136 mm, exposed culmen 28.8 mm, tarsi 39.8 mm, weight 111.1 g.

The species was undoubtedly *Cassidix mexicanus*, but the subspecific determination was difficult. Therefore, three experts examined the specimen: Robert W. Dickerman, Cornell University Medical College; George H. Lowery, Jr., Louisiana State University; and John S. Weske, National Museum.

The nominate race *C.m. mexicanus* is larger and darker than *C.m. prosopidicola*, therefore, dif-

ferences arose because the bird had the coloration of *C.m. mexicanus* but was more the size and proportions of *C.m. prosopidicola*. The grackle was in fresh fall plumage with the outermost primaries still in molt. Since nearly full growth of the primaries was accomplished, the wing length would be at least 10 mm below the smallest *C.m. mexicanus*. The dorsal colorations in the adult (this bird was fully adult) *C.m. prosopidicola* is darker and more glossy than in immatures; this in combination with the fresh plumage would account for the coloration approaching *C.m. mexicanus*. Therefore, the bird was identified as *C.m. prosopidicola*.

The race *C.m. prosopidicola* is normally found in southern New Mexico, western, south-central and east-central Texas, south to southern Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and southern Tamaulipas and in winter to Louisiana (A.O.U. Checklist, 1957)

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