

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555

June, 10, 1996

Phillips Street
1102 Signal Hill Lane
Berwyn, PA 19312

Dear Phil,

Thank you for submitting details on the Boat-tailed Grackle you saw at Crosslands near Longwood, Chester County on 18 March 1995 to P.O.R.C. After careful review, we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The committee felt that the details submitted were not adequate enough to support the identification. Most members felt that a more detailed description of the bird or the call would have been helpful. This does not mean of course, that the bird was not a Boat-tailed Grackle, merely, that the details did not allow for a concrete determination.

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record # 863-01-1995

24 April, 1999

Phillips B. Street
1102 Signal Hill Ln.
Berwyn, PA 19312-2025

Dear Phil,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Boat-tailed Grackle you saw near Longwood on 18 March, 1995. After careful review we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The committee felt that the description was too brief in detail and did not rule out the possibility of Great-tailed Grackle. This does not mean of course that the bird was not a Boat-tailed Grackle, merely that the details did not allow for a definite determination.

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

For the Committee,
Roy A. Ickes, Chairperson

Record # 863-01-1995

201 Elm Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

March 8, 1997

Phillips B. Street
1102 Signal Hill Lane
Berwyn, PA 19312

Dear Phil,

Thanks for resubmitting, with further details, your sighting of a Boat-tailed Grackle from southern Chester County on March 18, 1995. As you mention in your letter, the sighting has significance not only in being a first Chester County record, but in being one of the very few for Pennsylvania, in fact the first in almost twenty years. I personally feel that sightings of Boat-tailed Grackle in southeastern PA are overdue, especially with the species expanding range northward as evidenced with sightings in nearby Cumberland and Salem Counties New Jersey. I have always speculated to myself that the next record would be either once again from the Tinicum area or the lower Delaware River area. Southern Chester County is just a short distance as the crow flies, or in this case, as the grackle flies, from its northern Delaware Bay range.

I will gladly pass along your updated report to PORC for its consideration. I haven't been to a recent DVOC meeting because of a change in my work schedule, but I will look for you the next time I attend a meeting.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman PORC

cc: D. Brauning

863-01-1995

PHILLIPS B. STREET
1102 SIGNAL HILL LANE
BERWYN, PENNSYLVANIA 19312

Resubmission

March 5, 1997

Mr. Nicholas J. Pulcinella
Chairman, P.O.R.C.
201 Elm Avenue Apt. 6
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Dear Nick:

When I sent Frank Haas a note for Cassinia on having seen a Boat-tailed Grackle in southern Chester County on March 18, 1995, my intent was that the observation would make a good local note for the next issue. It was not written with the thought that it be submitted to P.O.R.C. Has I so intended, more details would have been furnished, for, as you stated in your letter of June 1996 rejecting the record, "the details submitted were not adequate enough to support the identification."

Now, because (1) the note was not published in Cassinia, (2) there are just two Pennsylvania sight records mentioned in the Santner, Brauning and Schwalbes 1992 Annotated List, one by George Lamb and Johnny Miller at Tinicum on December 13, 1957 and a "probable" seen on a Lower Bucks CBC on December 17, 1977, and (3) I have been urged by Dan Brauning to reopen the matter, I am herewith submitting the following additional remarks.

The fact that I observed Boat-tailed Grackles in New Jersey or Delaware on 17 different occasions in 1995 and on 15 in 1996 does certainly suggest that I should be credited with a familiarity with the species.

There is only one species in the eastern United States with which a male Boat-tail could possibly be confused, the Common Grackle, but the major differences in size and voice make the separation easy. My male bird, perched atop a thirty foot tree, looked the size of a Fish Crow. A Common Grackle also present at the pond made the size comparison simple. As for voice, my bird was "singing" two or three times a minute a varied repertoire of wheezes, whistles, rattles and a gulping sound accompanied by raised neck feathers, totally unlike the Common Grackle's much briefer and more miserable effort, which the National Geographic book describes well as a short "koguba leek."

A copy of my original note to Frank is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Phi

cc: D. Brauning

Phillips B. Street

Boat-tailed Grackle in Chester County

On the afternoon of March 18, 1995 while driving through Crosslands, the retirement community south of Route 926 and about two miles north of Longwood, I observed a male Boat-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus major). It was a warm day, I had the car windows down, and I was first attracted by its very loud and distinctive calls or "song," if these notes can be called that. I walked back to find it perched atop a tree overlooking a small pond. It "sang" two or three times a minute with its feathers puffed out in typical Boat-tailed fashion.

While a new Pennsylvania species for me, it did not occur to me just how few state records there are until, two days later, I reported the event at a West Chester Bird Club meeting, and Bob Cook commented that this was probably a Chester County first. Three days previous to the observation, Polly Crawford, Joan Warren and I had seen another male at Monmouth Beach in northern New Jersey. Perhaps these two sightings are a further indication of the continuing northward spread of this species.

Phillips B. Street

863-01-1995

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On the afternoon of March 18, 1995, while driving through Crosslands, the retirement community south of Route 926 and about two miles north of Longwood, I observed a male Boat-tailed Grackle (^{Quiscalus major}~~Cassidix mexicanus~~). It was a warm day, I had the car windows down, and I was first attracted by its very loud and distinctive calls or "song," if these notes can be called that. I walked back to find it perched atop a tree overlooking a pond. It "sang" two or three times a minute with its feathers puffed out in typical Boat-tailed fashion.

While a new Pennsylvania species for me, it did not occur to me just how few state records there are until two days later when I reported the event at a meeting of the West Chester Bird Club, and Bob Cook commented that this was probably a Chester County first. Three days previous to this observation, Polly Crawford, Joan Warren and I had seen another male at Monmouth Beach in northern New Jersey. Perhaps these two sightings are a further indication of the continuing northward spread of this species.

Phillips B. Street

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*)

Date of Sighting: 18 March 1995 to 18 March 1995

Location: CROSSLANDS - NEAR LONGWOOD

County: CHESTER

Observer(s): Phillips Street

Date of Submission: 1995

Submitted by: Phillips Street

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas				X				
P. Schwalbe			X					
K. Parkes			X					
R. Ickes			X					
P. Hess				X				
J. McWilliams						X		
T. Floyd				X				
TOTALS			3	3		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Re: ~~Floyd~~ Floyd's comment - Any description received by Pennsylvania Birds is assumed to be a submission to PORC. If you wish to make it otherwise, then that would mean contacting every observer and asking their permission!

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

4-19-95

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Boat-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus major)**

Date of Sighting: **18 March 1995 to 18 March 1995**

Location: **CROSSLANDS - NEAR LONGWOOD**

County: **CHESTER**

Observer(s): **Phillips Street**

Date of Submission: **1995**

Submitted by: **Phillips Street**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas				X				
N. Pulcinella						X		
E. Kwater				X				
R. Ickes						X		
G. McWilliams							X	
P. Schwalbe						X		
S. Feldstein						X		
TOTALS				2		4	2	
DECISION						X		

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

9-19-95