

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES IN HEWLETT BAY, LONG ISLAND

MICHAEL GOCHFELD and JOANNA BURGER

On 23 June 1981, on Black Banks Hassock, Hewlett Bay, Town of Hempstead, Nassau County, D. Gochfeld, C. Safina, R. Wagner, J. Zarudsky and the authors observed four Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*) perched in phragmites. Wagner first called attention to the birds, which proved to be an adult female and three large, nearly full-grown young. The female, with a large insect in its beak, approached one of the young, which begged tentatively and took the food. The young had tails nearly as long as the female's and proved capable flyers. They did not necessarily hatch on Black Banks, but since they had not yet achieved adult size, it is unlikely that they had hatched very far away.

P. A. Buckley and A. Lauro observed a full-grown immature Boat-tailed Grackle on 29 June 1979 on Pearsall's Hassock, about 1 km to the north, but we did not find grackles on Pearsall's Hassock. We thank John Zarudsky of the Town of Hempstead for allowing us to accompany him on one of his field expeditions.

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BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES BREEDING AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

THOMAS H. DAVIS

At 7 AM on 18 July 1981 I was studying shorebirds at the south end of the East Pond at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (JBWR), Queens County. My attention was suddenly distracted by a series of calls from behind including loud "cack" notes. I turned and saw three birds in flight silhouetted against the rising sun. I recognized these as Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*), both by call and by their shape, like an oversized Common Grackle. The lead bird alighted atop a bush and the other two landed and began begging. The first bird turned and fed one of the birds, and then they all dropped from sight. A few minutes later two of the grackles flew to the shore of the pond, landed about one hundred feet distant and drank. Examined with a 20x telescope, in good light, one proved to be a female with a buff eyeline and underparts, and the other a juvenal male in heavy molt with patches of dark new feathers coming in on the body. The three Boat-tails were observed by other birders the following day, flying over the south end of the East Pond but not thereafter. On this evidence, the Boat-tailed Grackle was noted as a confirmed breeder (FY) in the JBWR 5949A Breeding Bird Atlas block.

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