

Louisiana Ornithological Society's

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of fieldnotes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: Shiny Cowbird
(Molothrus bonariensis)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2 ad.in breeding or alternate plumage): 2 adult males
3. Locality: LOUISIANA; Jefferson
(parish)
Grand Isle, near water tower E of Sureway Supermarket
(specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 22 April 1995
5. Time(s) of day when observed: late afternoon
6. Reporting observer and address: Steven W. Cardiff & Donna L. Dittmann
Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Michael Seymour, Bud Snowden, 10-15 LSU birding class members.
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): Phillip Wallace, Curt Sorrells, m. ob.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good. It was getting late and it was also becoming overcast, but we had very good looks during occasional bursts of sunlight with the sun at our backs.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Leica Ultra 10 X 42 binoculars
11. Distance to bird(s): 50 ft.

12. **Duration of observation:** off and on for 30 minutes.
13. **Habitat:** bird feed scattered on dirt road adjacent to lawns, overgrown weedy fields, mulberry trees.
14. **Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):
Presumably, these were the same birds found a week or so earlier by Wallace and Sorrells, who also alerted us that they had seen them earlier in the day. These birds were mainly seen on the ground with mixed blackbird flock at bird seed, occasionally on nearby telephone wires and mulberry trees and dropping into tall weeds in adjacent field. Birds were not seen during an earlier visit during the early afternoon. There were many Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Boat-tailed Grackles commuting to and from the food, along with a few Bronzed Cowbirds. We saw all three cowbird species at once! What a thrill.....
15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possibly: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species): At least 2 adult males seen at once on several occasions- there could have been more... No females seen or suspected. The males were an immaculate iridescent purple-blue on the head, neck, and mantle. The underparts, wings, and tail were more of a purer iridescent black or bluish-black. No hint of a neck ruff. Eye dark, definitely not red or pale; bill, legs, feet black, legs and feet proportionately similar to Brown-headed and not large as in Bronzed Cowbird. They were decidedly smaller than Red-winged Blackbirds and Bronzed Cowbirds. In direct comparison with Brown-headed males, these birds were virtually the same overall size with proportionately slightly longer tails, and with distinctly thinner, slightly longer bills. The bills were not as thick at the base as in Brown-headed.
16. **Voice:** SWC heard one sing a couple of times from a distance and it was a complex series of jumbled notes and trills quite unlike Brown-headed.
17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation): See above.
18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): Photos taken by Wallace during previous week.
19. **Previous experience with this species:** Only our 2nd exposure to this species in LA. We have seen and collected them in the past in Peru.
20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):
a. at time of observation: None.
b. after observation: specimens at LSUMNS.

21. This description is written from: ___ notes made during the observation; ___ notes made after the observation (date: ___); X memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: YES.

23. Signature of reporter: Steven W. Cardiff 5 July 1995
(date)

Donna L. Dittmann