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TRAVIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

BE A BETTER BIRDER (B3)

2020

BIRDS OF BLACK

CROWS & RAVENS

BLACKBIRDS

GRACKLES

COWBIRDS

STARLING

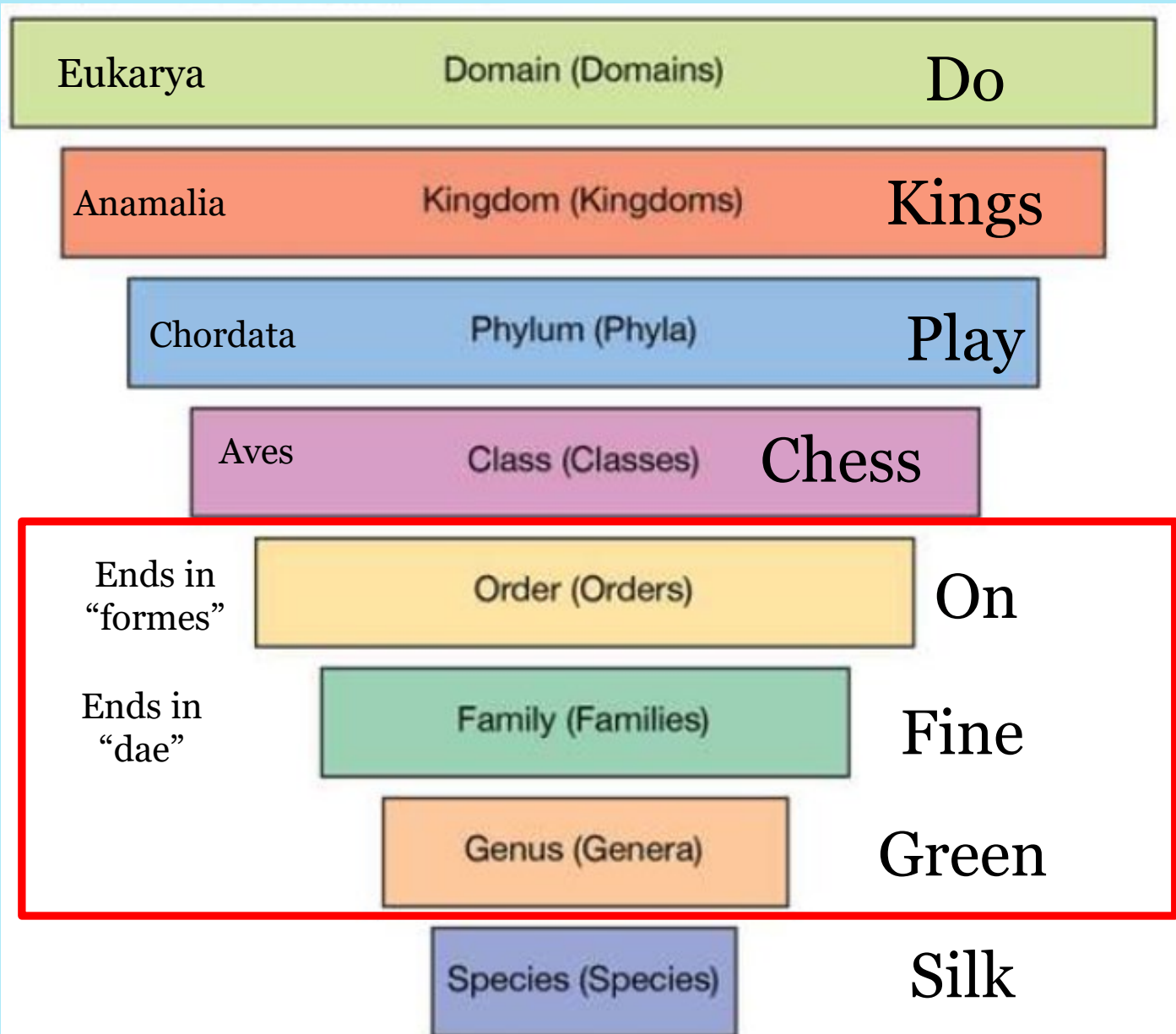
“Each species is a masterpiece, a creation assembled with extreme care and genius”. Edward O. Wilson

WHY STUDY BIRDS OF BLACK ?

- ▶ Multi-genera
- ▶ ID issues
- ▶ Need to be able to ID from afar
- ▶ On lookout for rarities
- ▶ Some species easier to ID live than in pix

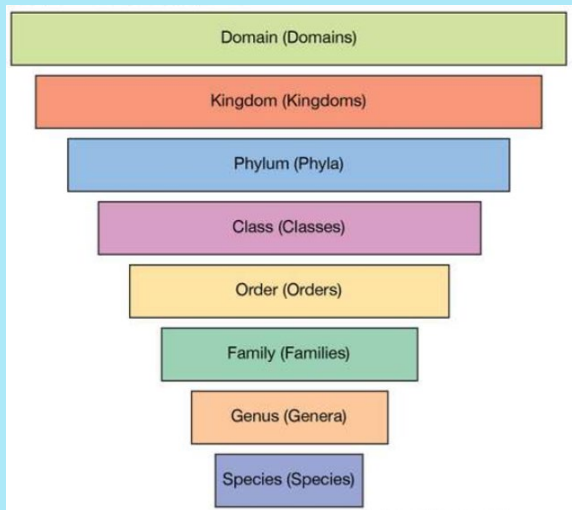
HABIT o WHO?

TAXONOMY (THE TREE OF LIFE)



Taxonomy – the branch of science concerned with classification, especially of organisms.

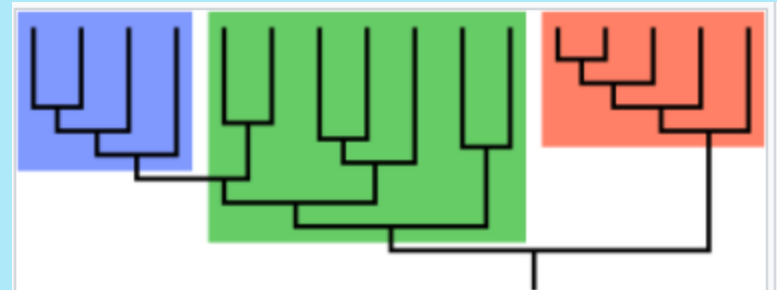
Carl Linnaeus – (1707–1778), Swedish botanist, zoologist, and physician who formalized binomial nomenclature, the modern system of naming organisms. He is known as the "father of modern taxonomy".



Cladistics – biological classification in which **organisms are categorized in groups** ("clades") based on the most recent common ancestor.

Introduced 1966.

Clade – a group of organisms that is composed of a common ancestor and all its lineal descendants.



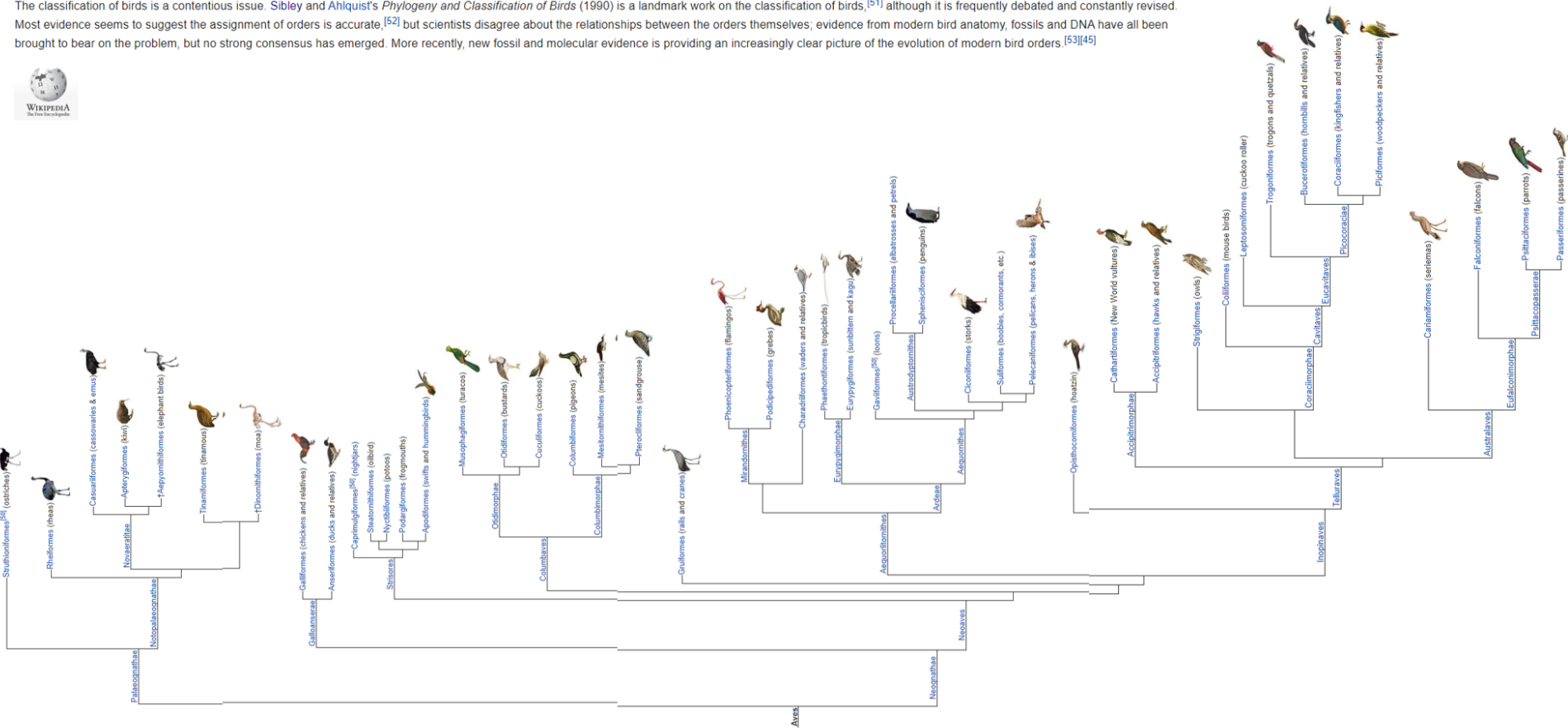
Cladogram (family tree) of a biological group. The **last common ancestor** is the vertical line *stem* at the bottom. The blue and red subgroups are clades; each shows its common ancestor stem at the bottom of the subgroup *branch*. The green subgroup is *not* a clade; it is a **paraphyletic group**, because it excludes the blue branch, even though it has also descended from a common ancestor. The green subgroup together with the blue one forms a clade again.

Classification of bird orders

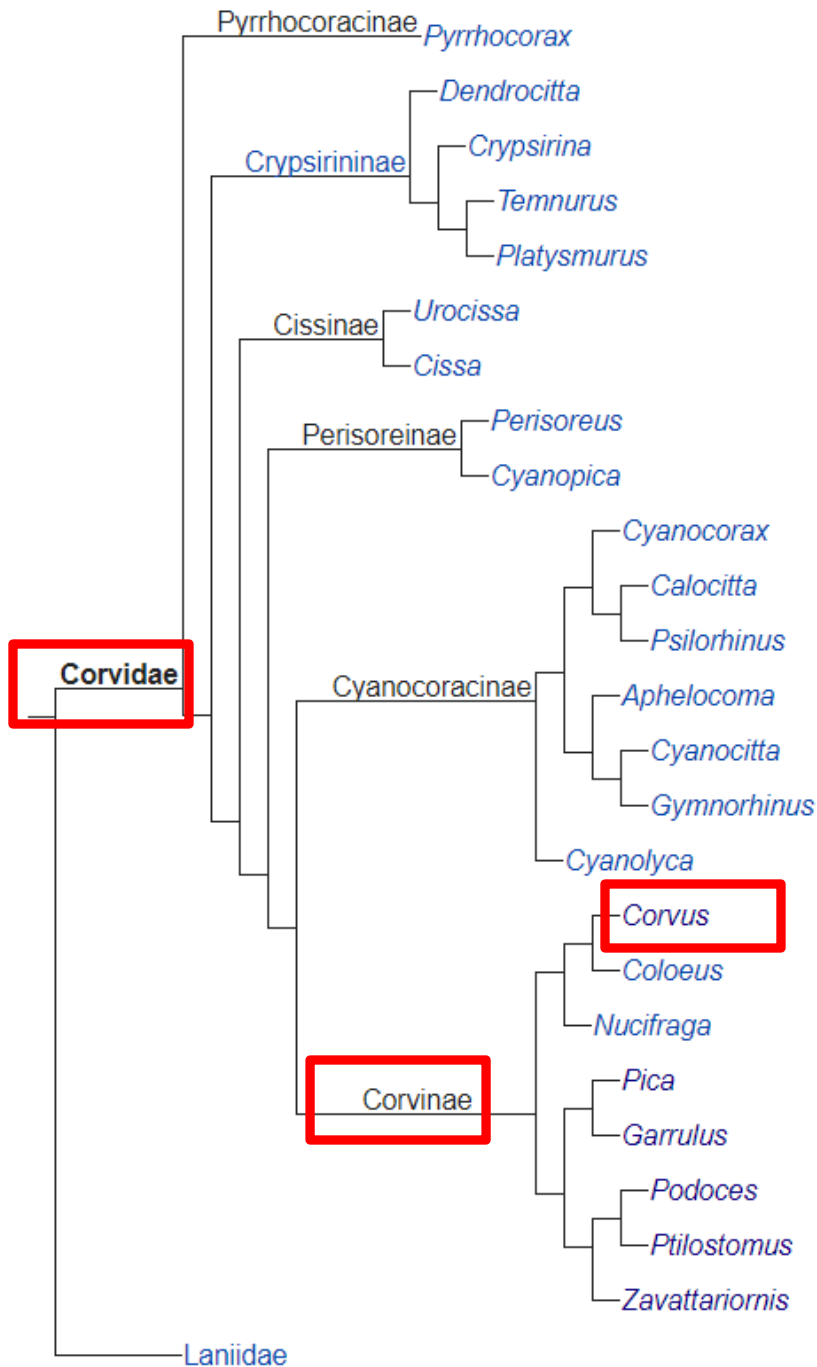
See also: [List of birds](#)

Cladogram of modern bird relationships based on Prum, R.O. *et al.* (2015)^[45] with some clade names after Yuri, T. *et al.* (2013).^[49]

The classification of birds is a contentious issue. Sibley and Ahlquist's *Phylogeny and Classification of Birds* (1990) is a landmark work on the classification of birds,^[51] although it is frequently debated and constantly revised. Most evidence seems to suggest the assignment of orders is accurate,^[52] but scientists disagree about the relationships between the orders themselves; evidence from modern bird anatomy, fossils and DNA have all been brought to bear on the problem, but no strong consensus has emerged. More recently, new fossil and molecular evidence is providing an increasingly clear picture of the evolution of modern bird orders.^{[53][45]}



SUPER FAMILY CORVIDAE



Domain: Eukarya
Kingdom: Animalia (animals)
Phylum: Chordata (vertebrates)
Class: Aves (birds)
Order: Passeriformes

CROWS & RAVENS
(Family *Corvidae* collectively called
“corvids”)

BLACKBIRDS

Family: Icteridae

Genus: 25 World Wide, 7 NA

Species: ~120 World Wide, 43 NA

COWBIRDS

Family: Icteridae

Genus: *Molothrus*

Species: 3 NA (5 world wide)

GRACKLES

Family: Icteridae

Genus: *Quiscalus*

Species: 3 NA (6 NA & SA)

CROWS & RAVENS

Superfamily: *Corvidae*

Family: *Corvidae* (includes jays, magpies)

Genus: *Corvus*

Species: 5 in NA (41 world wide)

EUROPEAN STARLING

Family: *Sturnidae* (starlings & mynas)

Genus: *Sturnus* (meadowlarks are *Sturnella*)

Species: 117 species world wide, 1 ABA

Icteridae (“the icterids”) include
blackbirds, cowbirds, grackles,
meadowlarks, orioles & Bobolink.

CROWS & RAVENS

Fine

Green

Silk

FAMILY: CORVIDAE, GENUS: CORVUS, SPECIES: ...

	Psilorhinus	morio	Brown Jay
	Cyanocorax	yncas	Green Jay
	Gymnorhinus	cya노cephalus	Pinyon Jay
	Cyanocitta	stelleri	Steller's Jay
		cristata	Blue Jay
	Aphelocoma	woodhouseii	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay
		wollweberi	Mexican Jay
<u>Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)</u>	Nucifraga	columbiana	Clark's Nutcracker
	Pica	hudsonia	Black-billed Magpie
		brachyrhynchos	American Crow
		imparatus	Tamaulipas Crow
		ossifragus	Fish Crow
	Corvus	cryptoleucus	Chihuahuan Raven
		corax	Common Raven

ID SUMMARY

- ▶ Location
- ▶ Common Raven vs American Crow
- ▶ Chihuahuan Raven vs American Crow
- ▶ Common Raven vs Chihuahuan Raven
 - ▶ Difficult
 - ▶ Size & bulkiness after calibrating the eye
- ▶ American Crow vs Fish Crow
 - ▶ Use voice & location
- ▶ American Crow vs Tamaulipas
 - ▶ Use voice & location

CROWS & RAVENS

- ▶ **Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*)
 - ▶ Northern hemisphere
- ▶ **Chihuahuan Raven** (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)
 - ▶ Formerly called “White-necked Raven”, that name now used for an eastern and southern Africa bird
- ▶ **American Crow** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)
- ▶ **Fish Crow** (*Corvus ossifragus*)
- ▶ **Tamaulipas crow** (*Corvus imparatus*)

CROWS & RAVENS

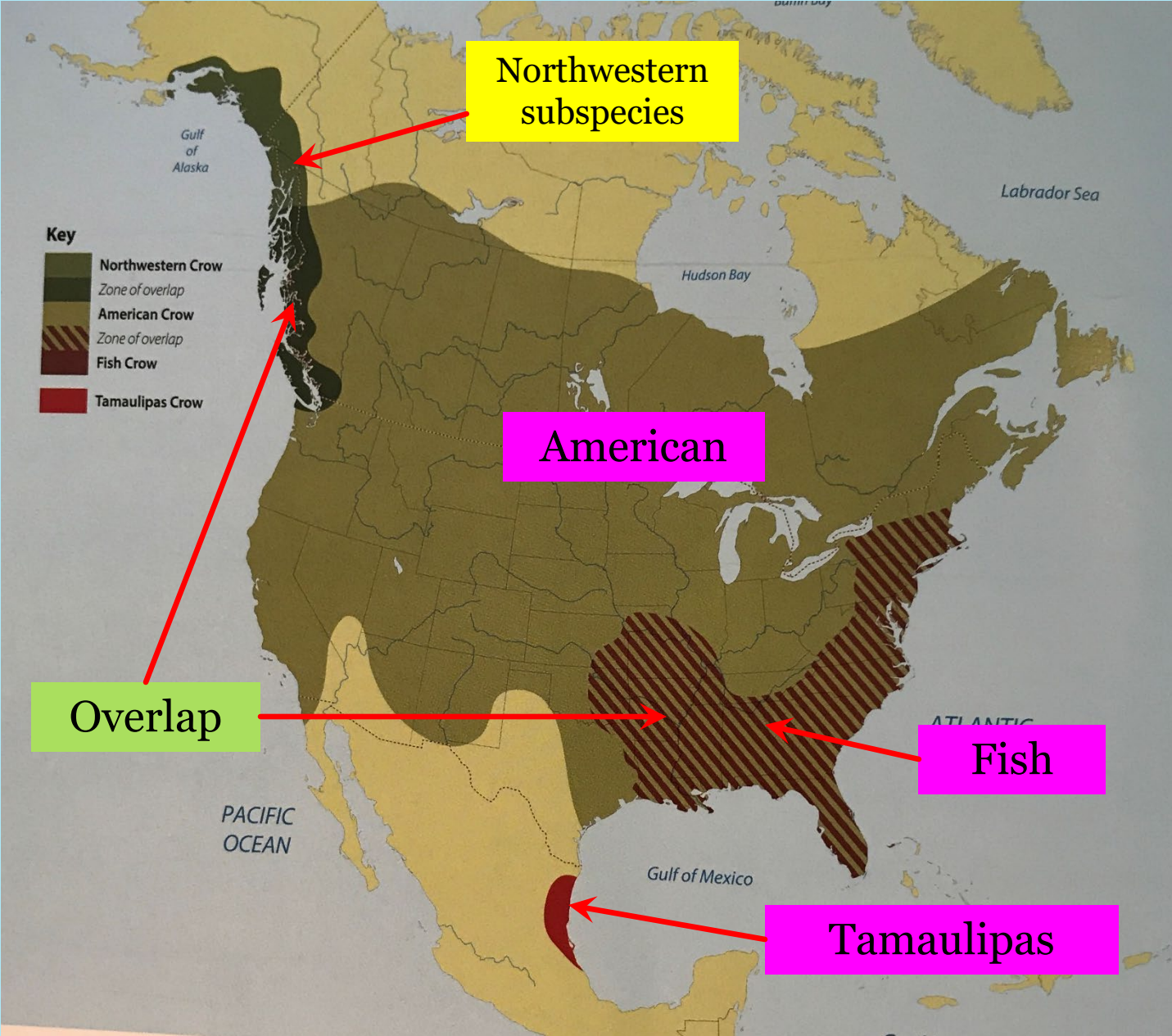
- ▶ North American ravens
 - ▶ Common
 - ▶ Chihuahaun
- ▶ **2 clades**
 - ▶ Behave similarly, but differ genetically
 - ▶ Likely resulted from isolation during an ice age with each **clade** representing a separate colonizing event from Asia
 - ▶ 1) 2 million years ago
 - ▶ 2) 15,000 years ago
- ▶ Northwestern Crow
 - ▶ Olympic Peninsula to southwestern Alaska
 - ▶ Was a full species
 - ▶ 2016 “Nobody really knows if it qualifies as a species”.
 - ▶ 2020 Demoted to subspecies (*Corvus brachyrhynchos caurinus*)

CROWS & RAVENS

- ▶ First breed: 2-5 years
- ▶ Monogamous, long-term pair-bonds
- ▶ Sometimes “cooperative” breeding in groups,
 - ▶ Youngsters from previous years stay around to help parents and learn
- ▶ Lifespan:
 - ▶ up to 29 years in the wild
 - ▶ up to 80 years !! As captives
- ▶ Structure & voice best ID clues
- ▶ Highly intelligent
- ▶ Make tools
- ▶ Omnivorous: remarkable variety of foods
- ▶ Mostly terrestrial foraging
- ▶ World’s largest passerine

Ancient Roman Saying:
“the swans will sing when
the jackdaws are silent”

CROWS



RAVENS



AMERICAN CROW

AMERICAN CROW

Photo by Peter Svenson



Photo by Ryan Shain



Photo by Lars Peterson



Photo by Mason Maron



AMERICAN CROW



Breeds:

- Openness (for ground feeding)
- Scattered trees, breaks, and forest edges
- Natural habitats
- Human altered habitats

Winter:

- Similar to breeding range
- In snowy areas, found on refuse dumps, feedlots, and cities/towns

AMERICAN CROW



Photo by Ted Keyel



Photo by Brian Sullivan



Photo by Doug Gochfield



Photo by Kathaleen Kent

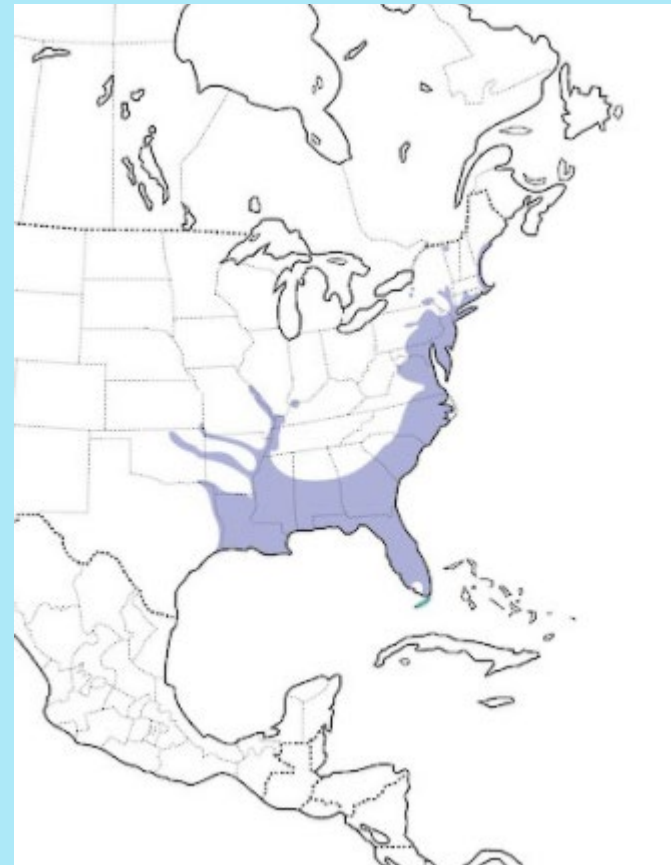
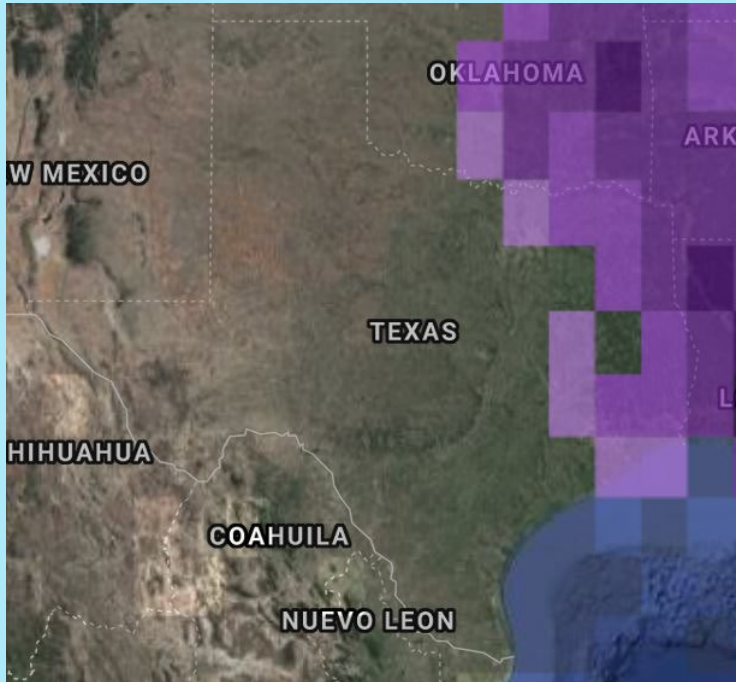
AMERICAN CROW ROWING MOTION



Photos by Steve Kolbe

FISH CROW

FISH CROW



FISH CROW



Breeding:

- Coastal, beaches, marshes, and estuaries into pine flatwoods and riverine forests.
- Usually found near water.
- Fresh or salt, rivers or lakes.

Winter:

- Similar to breeding range,
- Congregates near abundant food sources such as estuaries, rubbish dumps, and feedlots.

FISH CROW

- ▶ Use location
- ▶ Use voice



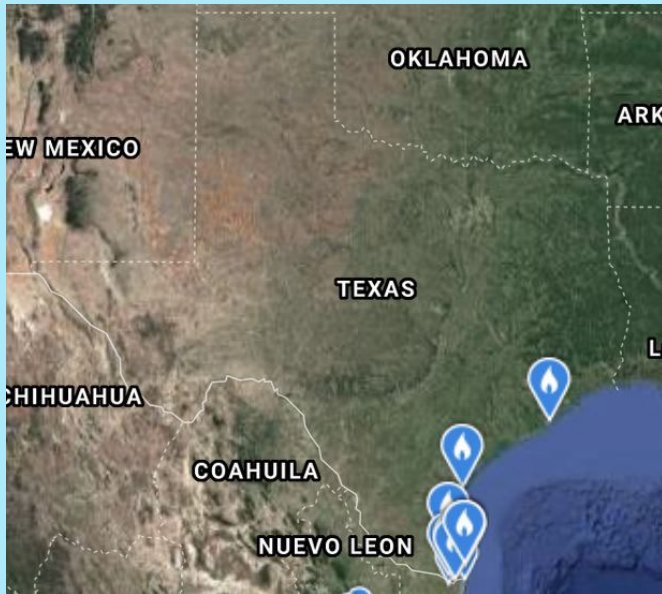
Photo by Tom Lally



Photo by Elizebeth Winter

TAMAULIPAS CROW

TAMAULIPAS CROW



Spring Migration MAR - MAY



TAMAULIPAS CROW

- ▶ Use location
- ▶ Use voice



TAMAULIPAS CROW

- ▶ Use location
- ▶ Use voice

Photo by Owen Strickland



TAMAULIPAS CROW



Photo by Janet Rathjen

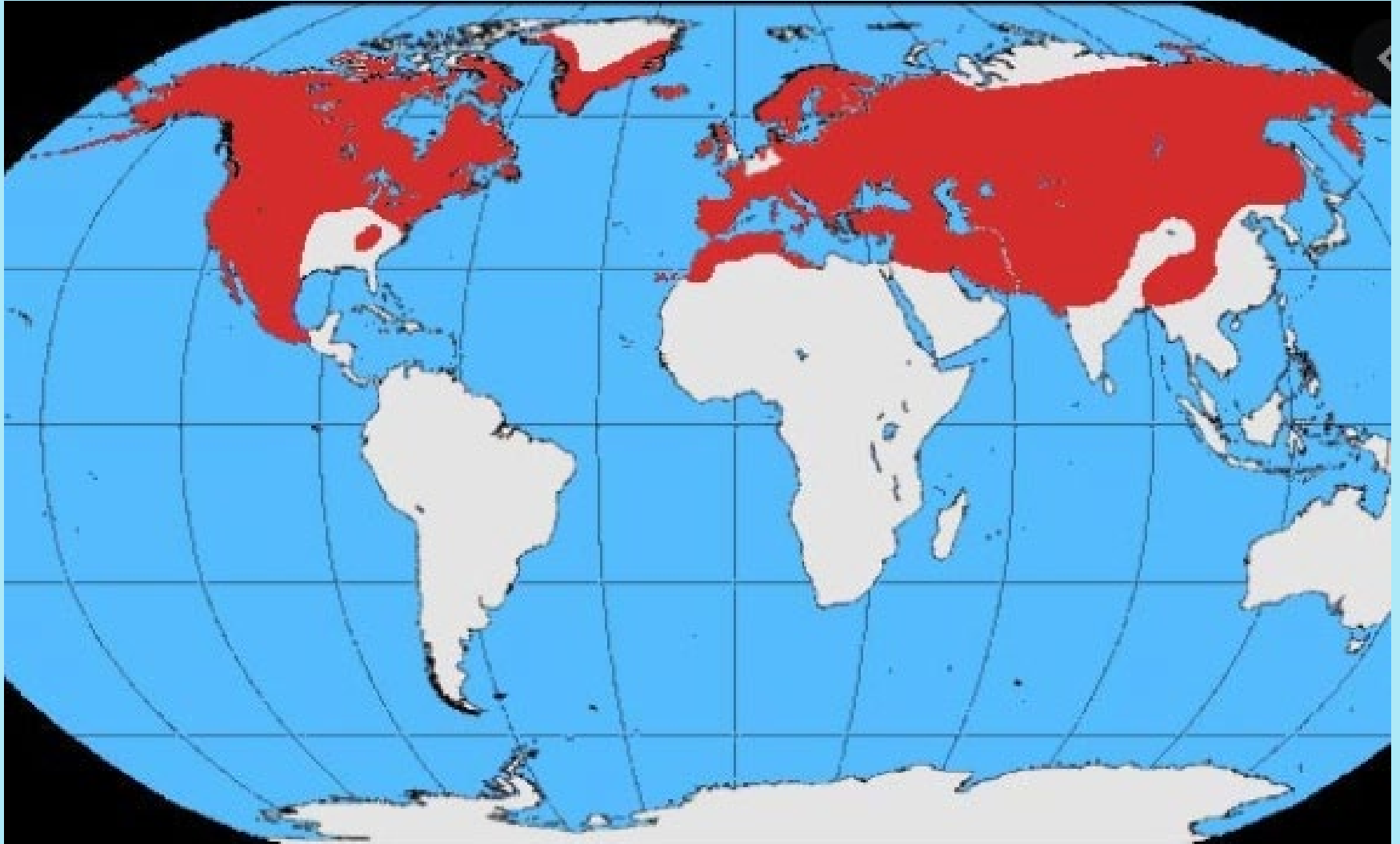
COMMON RAVEN



Common

COMMON RAVEN

RESIDENT THROUGH MOST OF
HOLARCTIC REGION

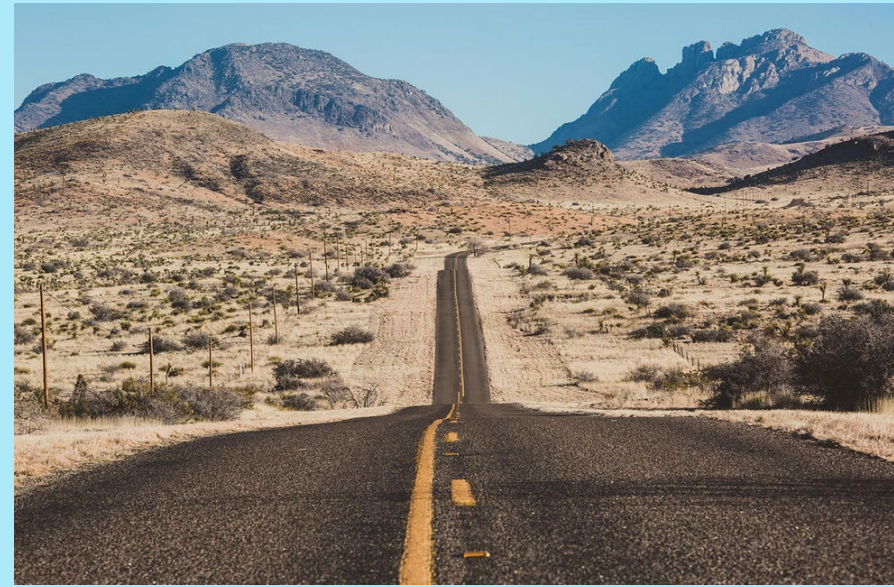


COMMON RAVEN



Open and forest habitats

- deciduous and evergreen forests
- high desert
- sea coast
- Sagebrush
- Tundra
- Grasslands
- Hill country



COMMON RAVEN



Photo by Stanislav Harvančík



Photo by Brian Rusnica



Photo by August Alex Lamoreaux



Photo by August Alex Lamoreaux



Photo by Mike "mlovest" miller

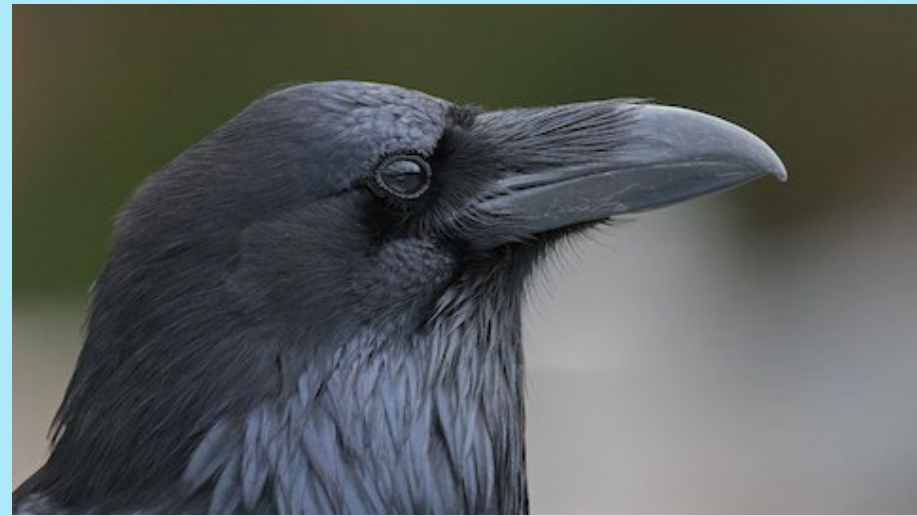


Photo by Nick Balachanoff

Common



Photo by August Davidson Onsgard

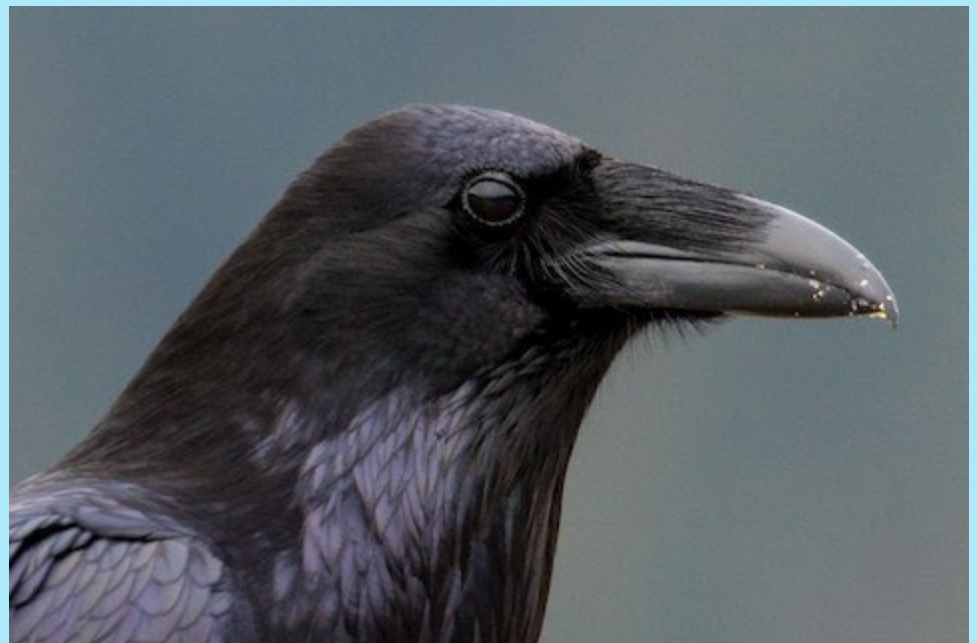
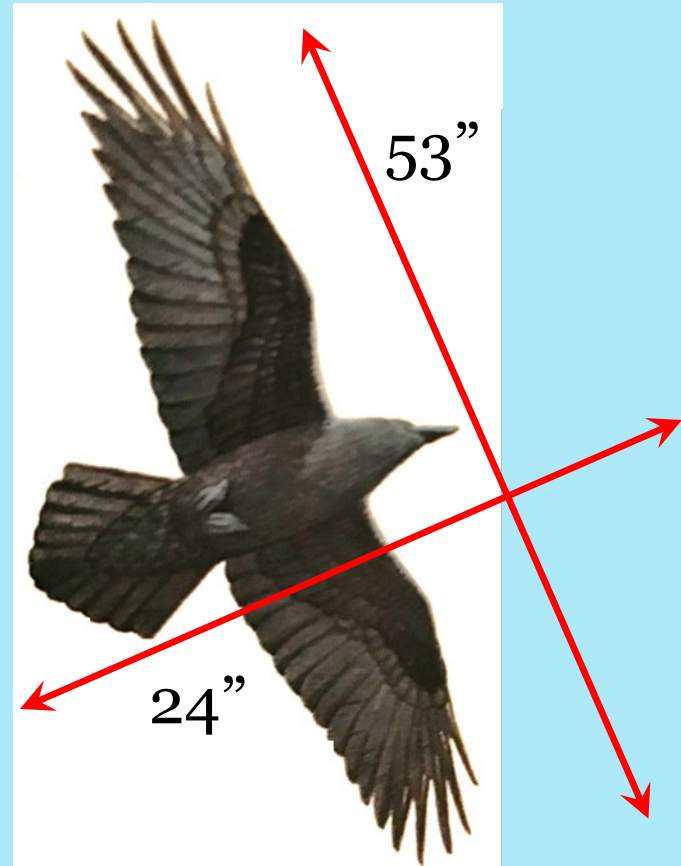
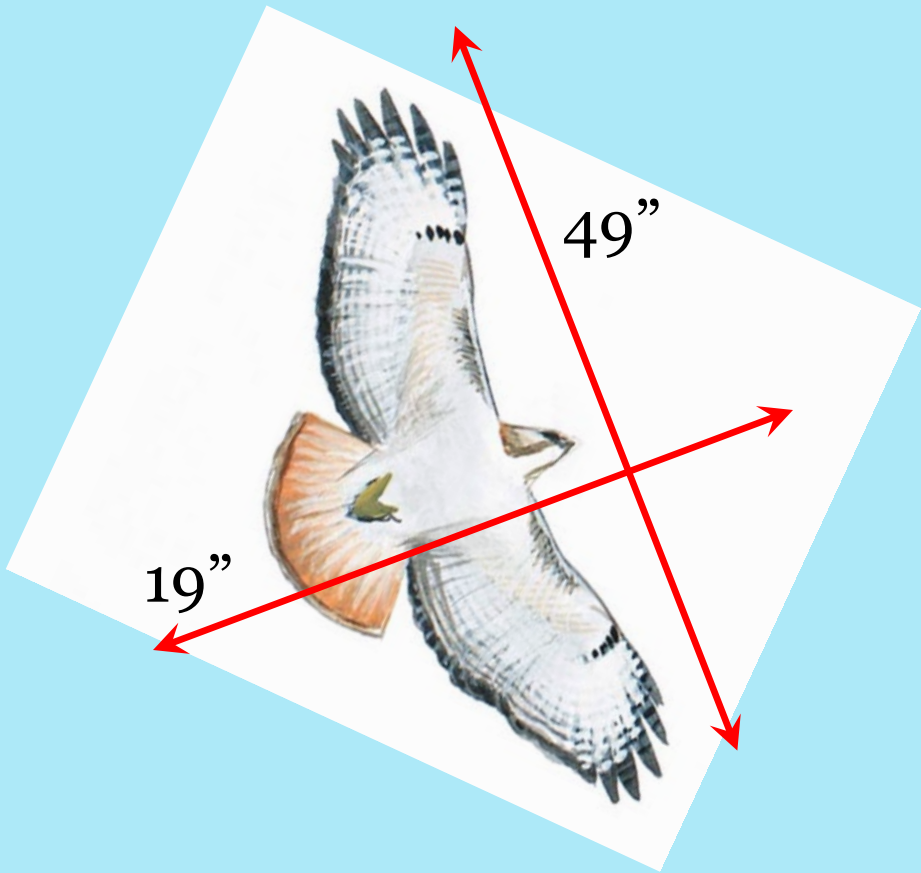


Photo by John Reynolds

SIZE: HOW DOES A RED-TAILED HAWK COMPARE TO COMMON RAVEN ?

2.4 lbs

2.6 lbs



SIZE: COMMON RAVEN VS RED-TAILED HAWK



Photo by Byron Stone

SIZE: COMMON RAVEN VS RED-TAILED HAWK



Photo by Byron Stone



Photo by Alex Lamaroux

Adult

long bill
with short nasal
bristles

very
shaggy
throat



long wings

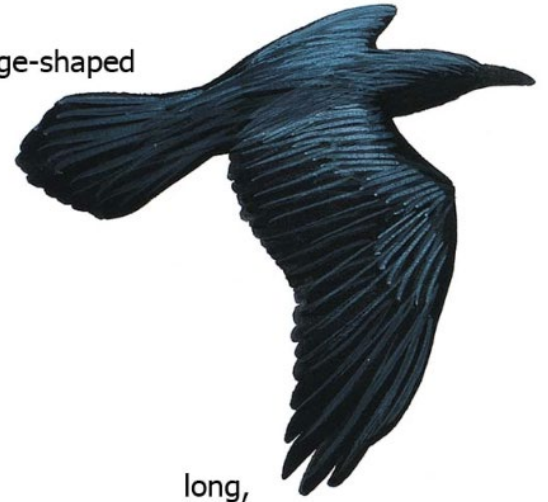
COMMON

Adult

long head
and bill



wedge-shaped
tail



long,
narrow wings



ravens often
soar, crows
never do

Illustrations by David A. Sibley

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN

CHIHUAHUAN



Photo by Ed Dunn

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN



- Nests & winters in:
 - Deserts & grasslands with scattered trees & shrubs
 - Shortgrass prairie
 - Pinyon-juniper hills (occasionally)
 - Streamside w/ cottonwood/sycamore (occasionally)
- Also winters in:
 - Agriculture areas, landfills, and cattle operations.



CHIHUAHUAN



Photo by Cheryl Kelly



Photo by Jason Reiger



Photo by Steve Calver

Photo by Susan Patla



Photo by Andrew Simon



CHIHUAHUAN

Common

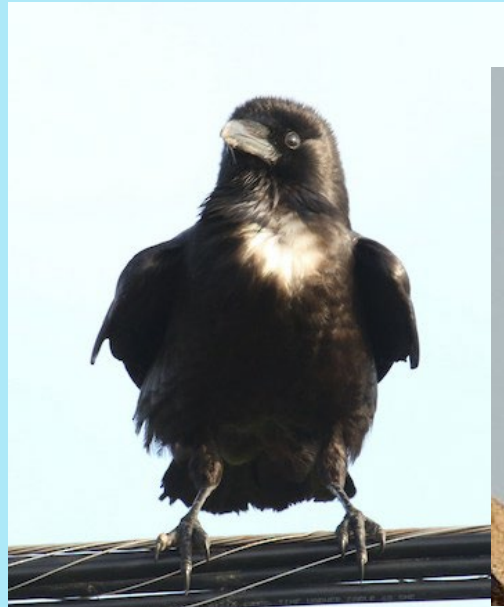


Photo by Lyle Hamilton



Photo by Robert Bowker



Photo by Mariah Letowt



Photo by David Beadette



Photo by Ed Dunn

CHIHUAHUAN

Photo by Tira Overstreet



CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN



sometimes
found in very
large flocks in
winter



slightly wedge-
shaped tail



long nasal
bristles

slightly
shaggy
throat



wingbeats shallower
than crows

Illustrations by David A. Sibley

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN



Photo by Susan Elliot

COMPARISONS

OVERHEAD



Fish Crow



American Crow



Chihuahuan Raven



Common Raven

TAILS



Fish Crow



American Crow



Chihuahuan Raven

Common Raven



CROW VS RAVEN IN FLIGHT THE TAIL

Fan shaped



Wedge shaped



Illustrations by David A. Sibley

Longer



COMMON RAVEN VS AMERICAN CROW

- ▶ Easier live than in pix
- ▶ Size difference is noticeable
- ▶ Use voice
- ▶ Bill

CROW VS RAVEN IN FLIGHT



Rowing
motion

Proportionately
wider wings



Frequently
soars

Illustrations by David A. Sibley



Seldom soars

Proportionately longer
wings





Photo by Timothy Piranian

**Common
Raven**



Photo by Alex Lamaroux



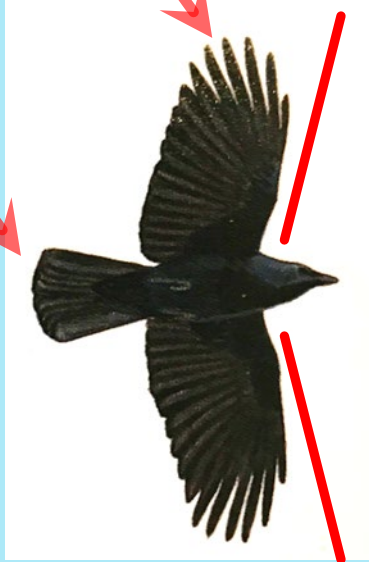
Photo by Christian Johnson

**American
Crow**



Photo by Alex Lamaroux

COMMON RAVEN VS AMERICAN CROW



American
Crow



Common
Raven

OVERHEAD



Fish Crow



American
Crow



Chihuahuan
Raven



Common
Raven

AMERICAN CROW VS COMMON RAVEN

Photos by August Davidson Onsgard



Photos by David Jauvin



Photos by Garrett Hughs



Photos by Kyle Lima

COMMON RAVEN VS CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN

- ▶ Location
- ▶ Size difference if calibrated or direct
- ▶ Bill ??
- ▶ Tail ??
- ▶ Voice – you must study



Photo by Cheryl Kelly



Photo by Nick Balachanoff

Chihuahuan

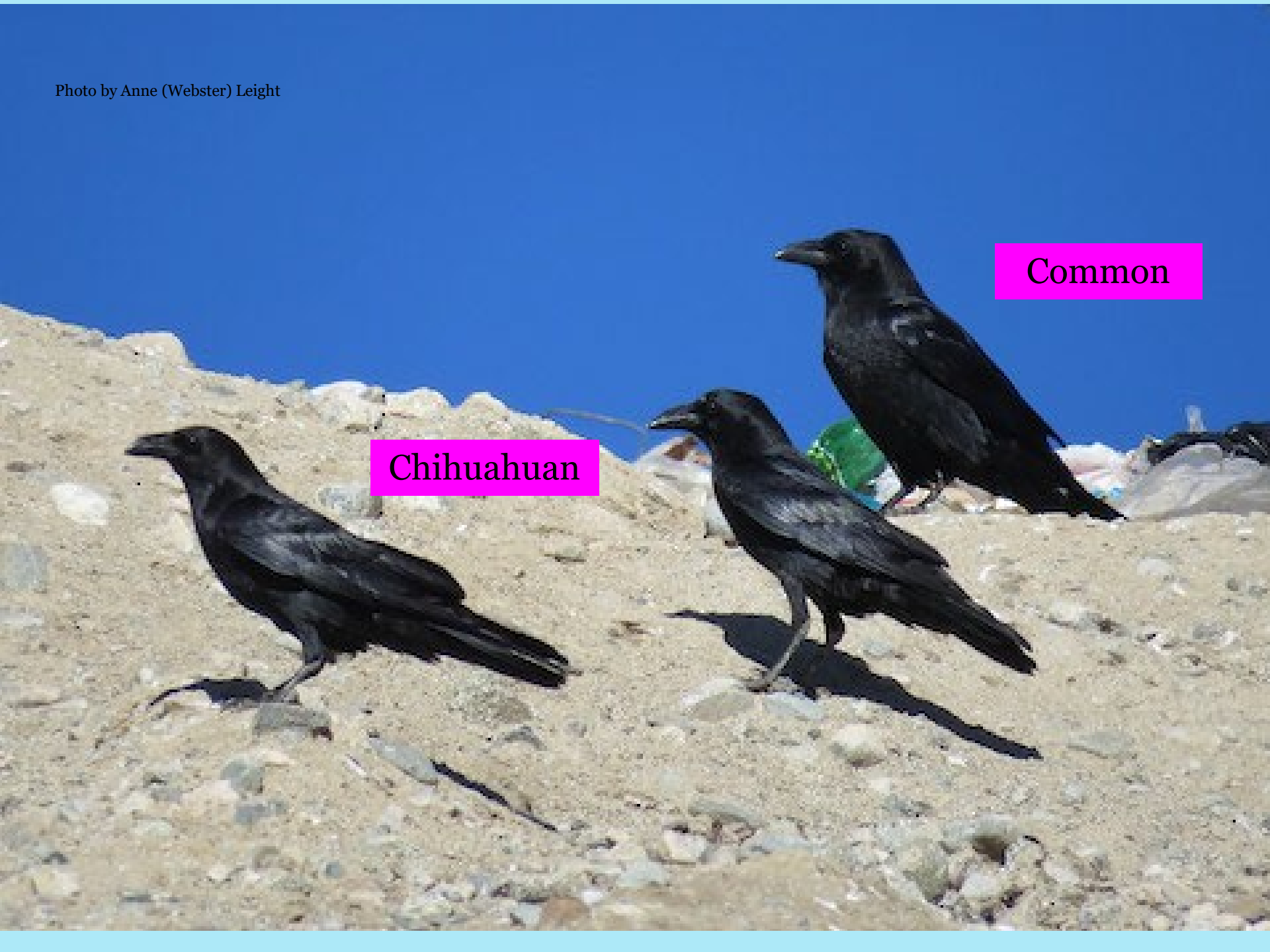
Bill ?

Common



Photo by John Reynolds

Photo by Anne (Webster) Leight



Chihuahuan

Common

AMERICAN CROW VS CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN

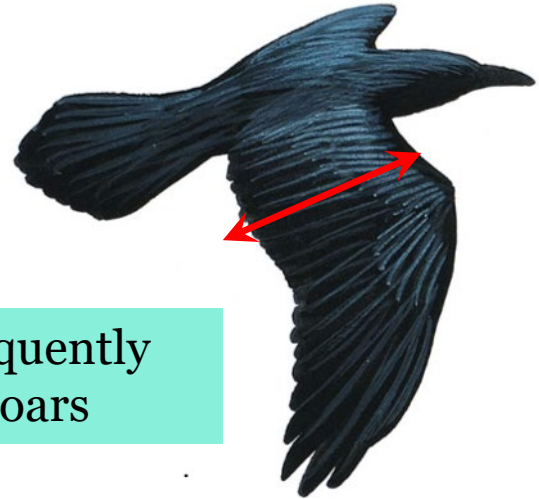
- ▶ Surprisingly difficult
- ▶ Location
- ▶ Same size (sometimes)
- ▶ Shaggy Raven vs sleek crow
- ▶ Bill
- ▶ Thicker legs on Raven
- ▶ Voice

CROW VS RAVEN IN FLIGHT



Rowing
motion

Proportionately
wider wings



Frequently
soars

Illustrations by David A. Sibley



Seldom soars



Proportionately longer
wings

AMERICAN CROW VS CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN



Photo by Jeff Patterson

AMERICAN CROW VS CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN



Photo by Jeff Patterson



Photo by Anne (Webster) Leigh

GRACKLES

- ▶ Great-tailed
- ▶ Boat-tailed
- ▶ Common

Domain: Eukarya

Kingdom: Animalia (animals)

Phylum: Chordata (vertebrates)

Class: Aves (birds)

Order: Passeriformes

GRACKLES

Family: Icteridae

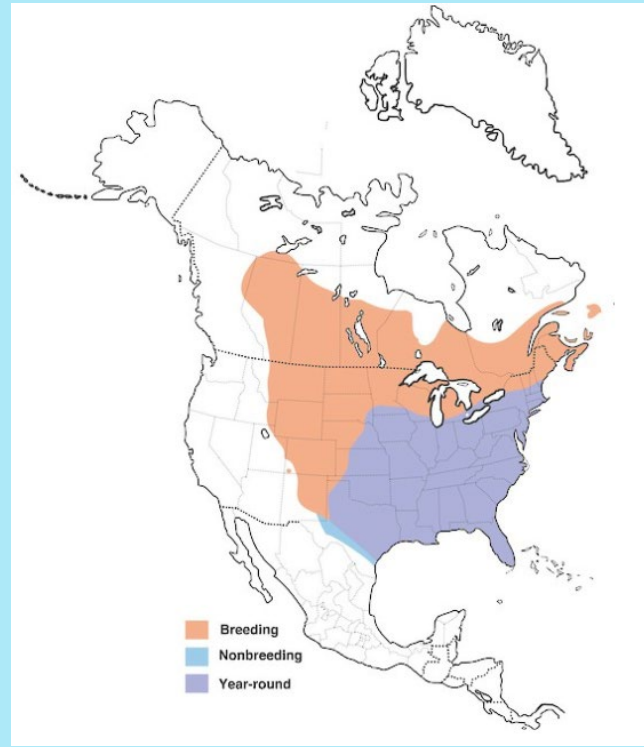
Genus: Quiscalus

Species: 3 NA (6 NA & SA)

GENUS: QUISCALUS

Scientific name	Common name	Distribution
<i>Quiscalus major</i>	Boat-tailed grackle	Florida and the coastal Southeastern United States
<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	Common grackle	North America
<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	Great-tailed grackle	northwestern Venezuela and western Colombia and Ecuador in the south to Minnesota in the north, to Oregon, Idaho, and California in the west, to Florida in the east, with vagrants occurring as far north as southern Canada
<i>Quiscalus nicaraguensis</i>	Nicaraguan grackle	Nicaragua and northernmost Costa Rica
<i>Quiscalus niger</i>	Greater Antillean grackle	the Greater Antilles
<i>Quiscalus lugubris</i>	Carib grackle	Colombia east to Venezuela and northeastern Brazil

HABIT 1,2 WHERE/WHEN? RANGE



**COMMON
GRACKLE**



**BOAT-TAILED
GRACKLE**



**GREAT-TAILED
GRACKLE**

MOLT (JULY-SEPTEMBER)



1/2 Grackle



3/4 Grackle

Adults grackles (and all blackbirds) molt, sometimes losing all tail feathers, other times retaining 1 or 2.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE

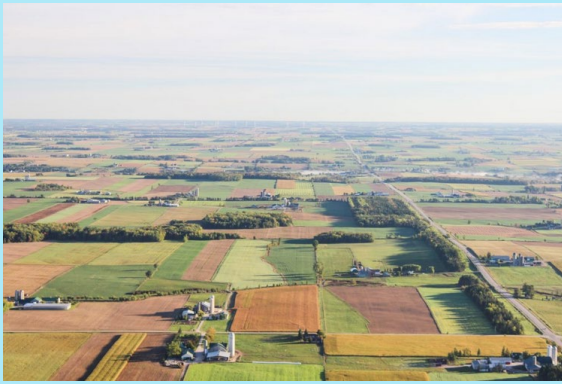
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE

Photo by Andrew Simon



GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE

- ▶ Originated in tropical lowlands of Central and S. America
- ▶ Aztecs introduced from Mexican gulf coast to Tenochtitlan
 - ▶ For iridescent feathers
- ▶ Moved north between 1880 and 2000
- ▶ Urban & agricultural corridors
- ▶ Vagrants as far north as S. Canada
- ▶ Breeding range expanded by 5,500%
- ▶ Large and varied vocal repertoire
- ▶ Elaborate courtship and territorial displays.



GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE



Habitat:

- Open areas with scattered trees and water nearby
- Pastures
- Agricultural lands
- Livestock feed lots
- Mangroves
- Secondary forests
- Human developments
 - parks
 - garbage dumps
 - lawns
 - golf courses



GREAT-TAILED



Photo by Ian Davies



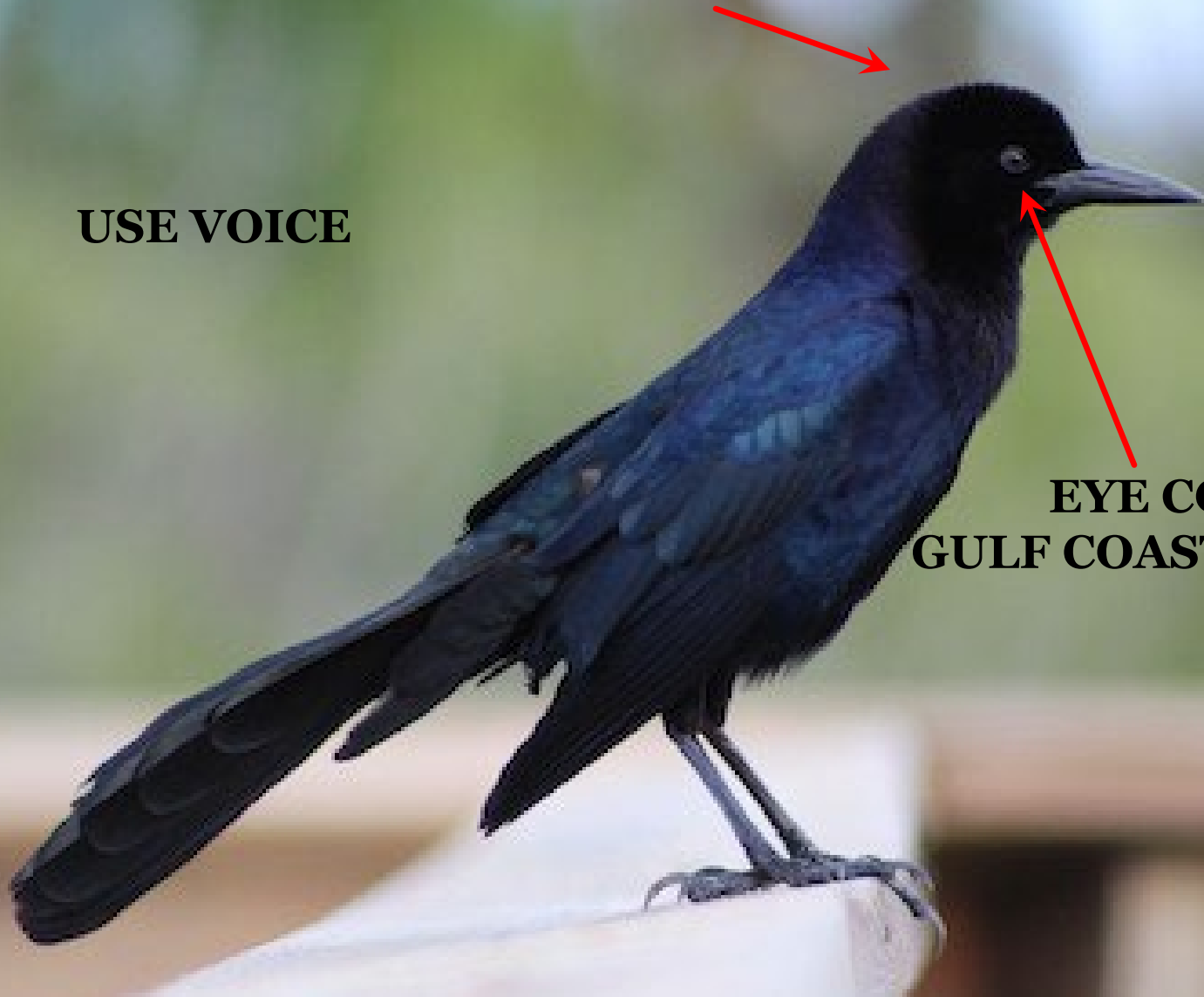
Photo by Neil Rucker

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE

BOAT-TAILED

Photo by Marie Chappell

USE VOICE



**EYE COLOR
GULF COAST = BROWN**

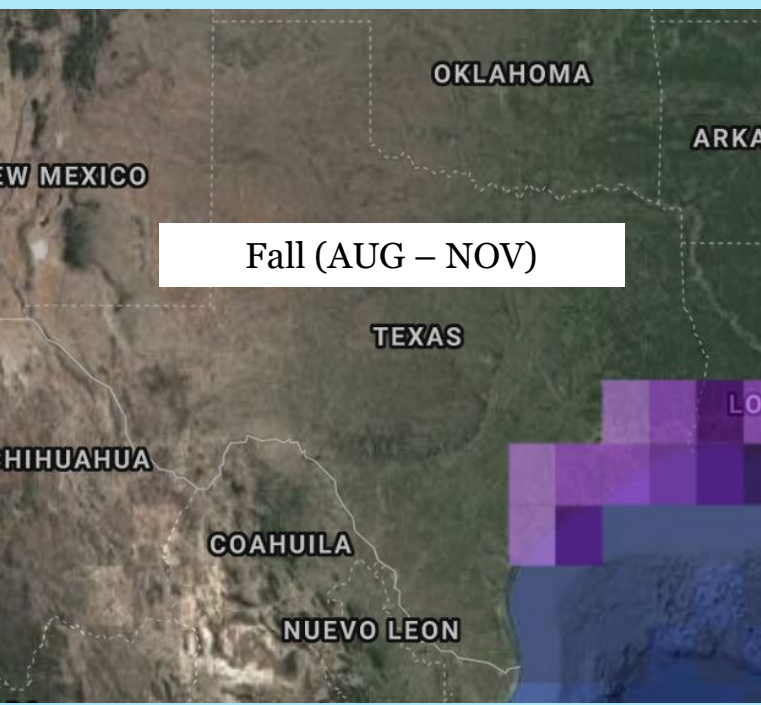
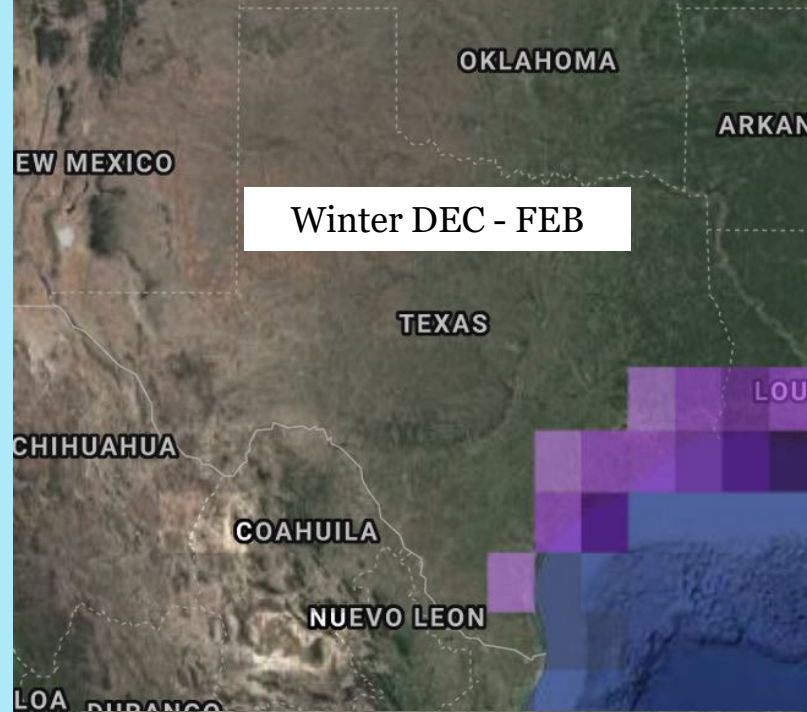


BOAT-TAILED



Breeding/Winter:

- Fresh & salt marshes
- Contiguous open upland habitats
- Marshes on rivers, lakes, impoundments, or ponds
- Nests in many species of trees over land, usually in small, isolated groves near water



BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE



BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE

#\$&@%_^(&_



Photo by Newton Wallen

COMMON GRACKLE

COMMON GRACKLE



Photo by Jack & Shirley Foreman

COMMON GRACKLE

- ▶ Semi-colonial nester, preferring coniferous trees
- ▶ One of first species to begin nesting in spring
 - ▶ late March/early April
- ▶ 1700-1800s – clearing of forests & increased agricultural
 - ▶ = increased habitat & additional food sources
 - ▶ = increased and spreading population
- ▶ Within past 50 years, spread west
 - ▶ Aided by increased planting of agricultural shelterbelts



COMMON GRACKLE



Habitat

- Wide variety of open habitat with scattered trees
- Gather for roosting with other “Birds of Black”
- Roosts near agricultural fields & orchards
- Trees in urban areas, hardwood thickets, conifer groves



Photo by Thomas Doeble



Boat-tailed

3 GRACKLES

Photo by Harlan Stewart



Great-tailed

Photo by John Cefus



Common

Photo by Alex Lemaurex



Boat-tailed

3 GRACKLES



Photo by Nick Pulcinella

Great-tailed



Common

Photo by Steve Kolbe

BLACKBIRDS

Domain: Eukarya

Kingdom: Animalia (animals)

Phylum: Chordata (vertebrates)

Class: Aves (birds)

Order: Passeriformes

BLACKBIRDS

Family: Icteridae

Genus: 25 World Wide, 8 Texas

Species: ~120 World Wide, 43 NA

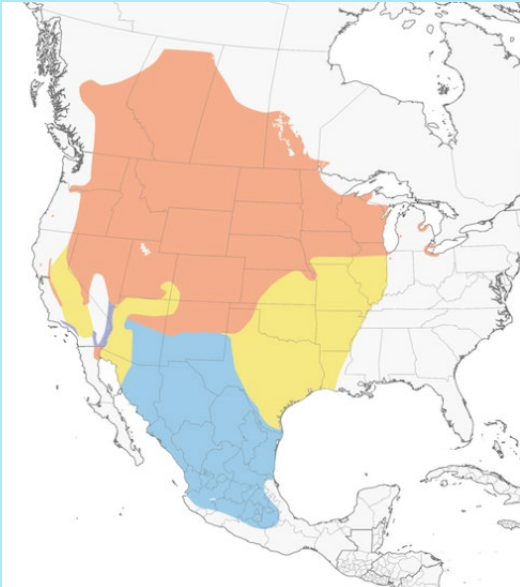
Family: Icteridae
(in Texas)

GENUS	SPECIES	COMMON NAME
Xanthocephalus	xanthocephalus	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Sturnella	magna	Eastern Meadowlark
	neglecta	Western Meadowlark
	wagleri	Black-vented Oriole
Icterus	spurius	Orchard Oriole
	cucullatus	Hooded Oriole
	pustulatus	Streak-backed Oriole
	bullockii	Bullock's Oriole
	gularis	Altamira Oriole
	graduacauda	Audubon's Oriole
	galbula	Baltimore Oriole
	parisorum	Scott's Oriole
	Agelaius	phoeniceus
	bonariensis	Shiny Cowbird
Molothrus	aeneus	Bronzed Cowbird
	ater	Brown-headed Cowbird
Euphagus	carolinus	Rusty Blackbird
	cynocephalus	Brewer's Blackbird
Quiscalus	quiscula	Common Grackle
	major	Boat-tailed Grackle
	mexicanus	Great-tailed Grackle

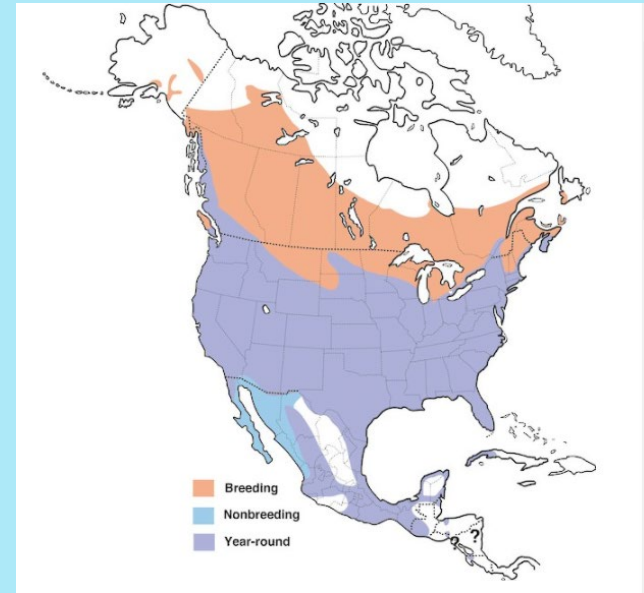
BLACKBIRDS
FAMILY: ICTERIDAE
GENUS:

- ▶ Red-winged
- ▶ Yellow-headed
- ▶ Brewer's
- ▶ Rusty

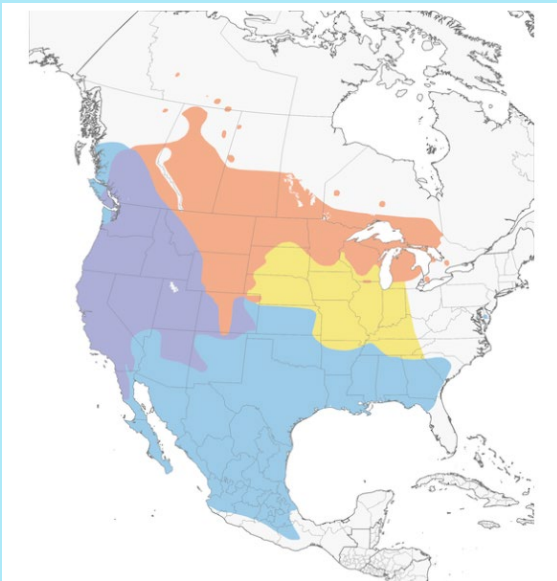
BLACKBIRDS DISTRIBUTIONS



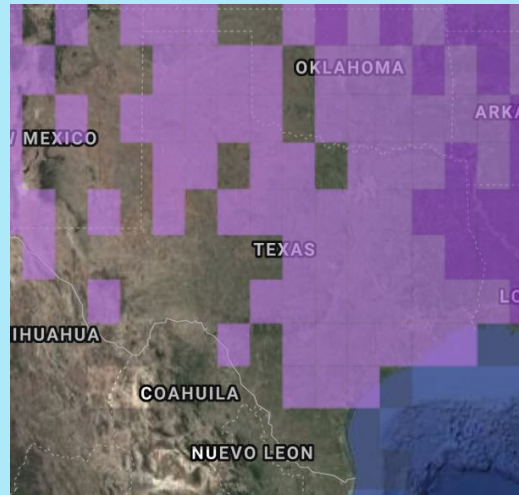
YELLOW-HEADED



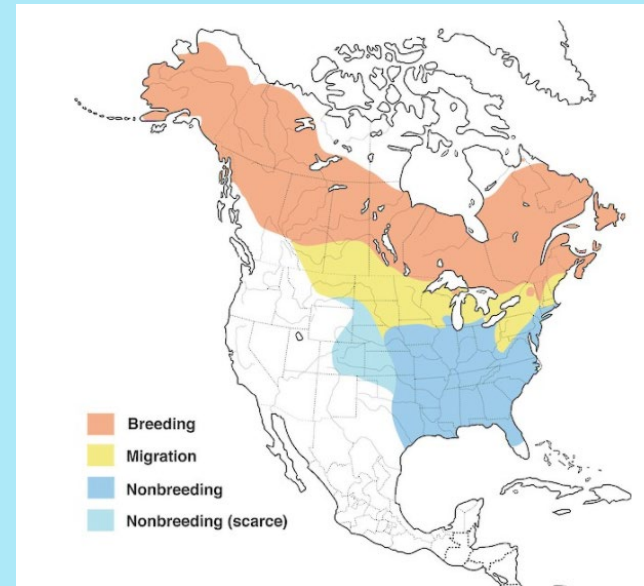
RED-WINGED



BREWER'S



RUSTY (WINTER)



RUSTY

BREWER'S

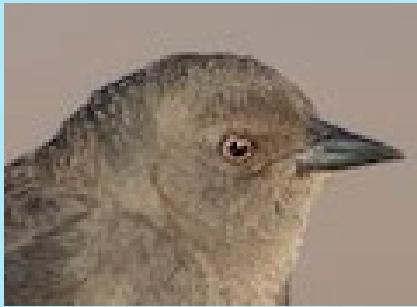


Photo by Brian Sullivan

RUSTY

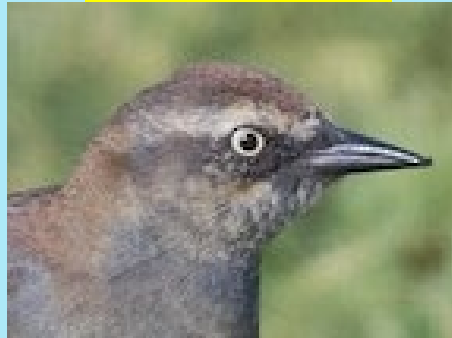


Photo by Caroline Lambert

RED-WINGED



Photo by Kevin Krebs

BROWN-HEADED



Photo by Gerald Friesen

BRONZED



Photo by Manuel Grosslet

YELLOW-HEADED



Photo by David Sidle

COMMON

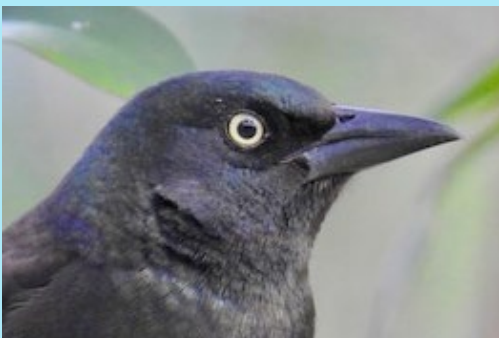


Photo by Van Remson

GREAT-TAILED



Photo by Neil Rucker

BOAT-TAILED



Photo by Takayuki Uchida

BREWER'S



Photo by Jeff Patterson

RUSTY



Photo by Chris Charlesworth

RED-WINGED



Photo by Mike Austin

BROWN-HEADED



Photo by Van Remson

BRONZED

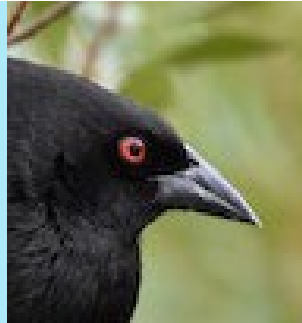


Photo by Alyssa Nowicki

YELLOW-HEADED



Photo by Doug Hitchcox

COMMON



Photo by Edwin Larson

GREAT-TAILED



Photo by Allison Davis

BOAT-TAILED

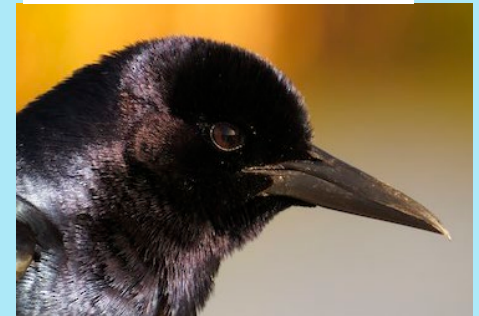
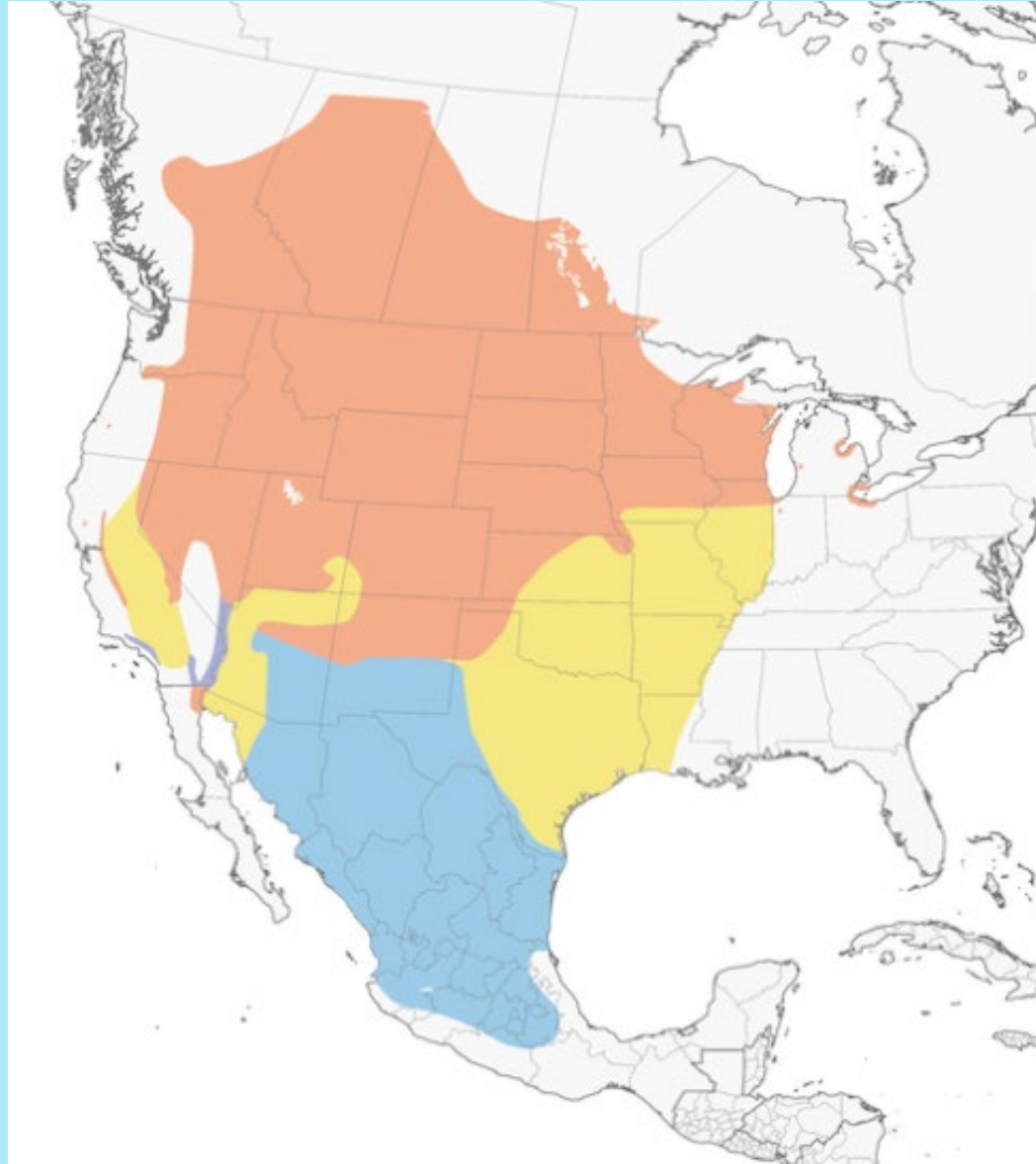


Photo by Gabriel Gonzolas

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD



YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD



Habitat:

- Open agricultural areas:
 - harvested grain fields, plowed fields, meadows, and pastures.
- Roosts in wetlands at night, loafs during day in wetland vegetation, shrubby vegetation, and small woodlots.



Breeding Habitat:

- Primarily prairie wetlands, but also common in wetlands associated with quaking aspen parklands, mountain meadows, and arid regions.
- Nests in emergent vegetation of deep-water palustrine wetlands. Nests constructed over deeper water, primarily in cattails



YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

Photo by Dan Hackley

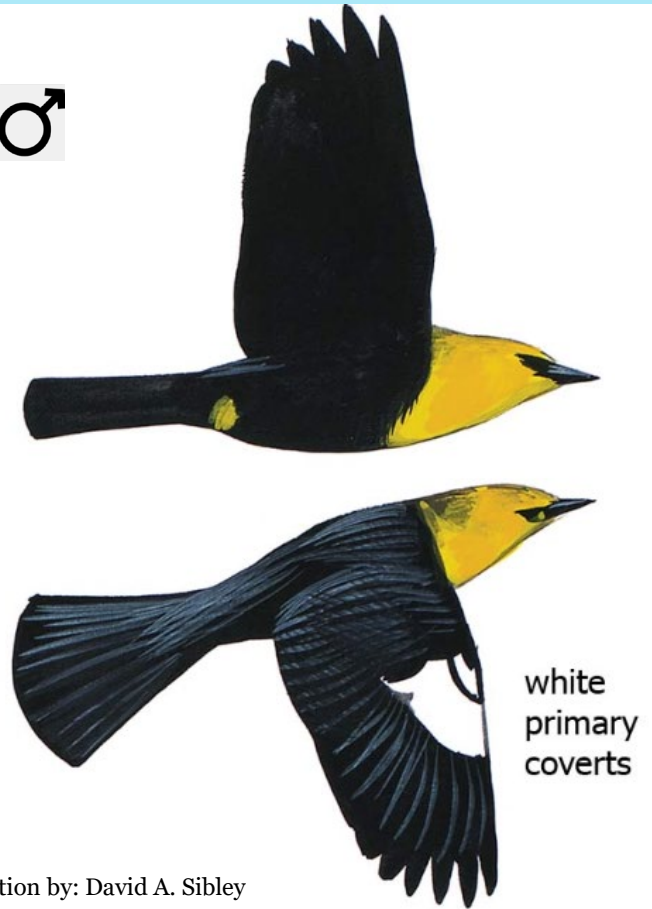


Photo by Matt Davis

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD



Photo by Karl Bardon



white
primary
coverts

Illustration by: David A. Sibley

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

♀



Photo by Howard Shapiro

♀



Photo by Dan Hackley

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD



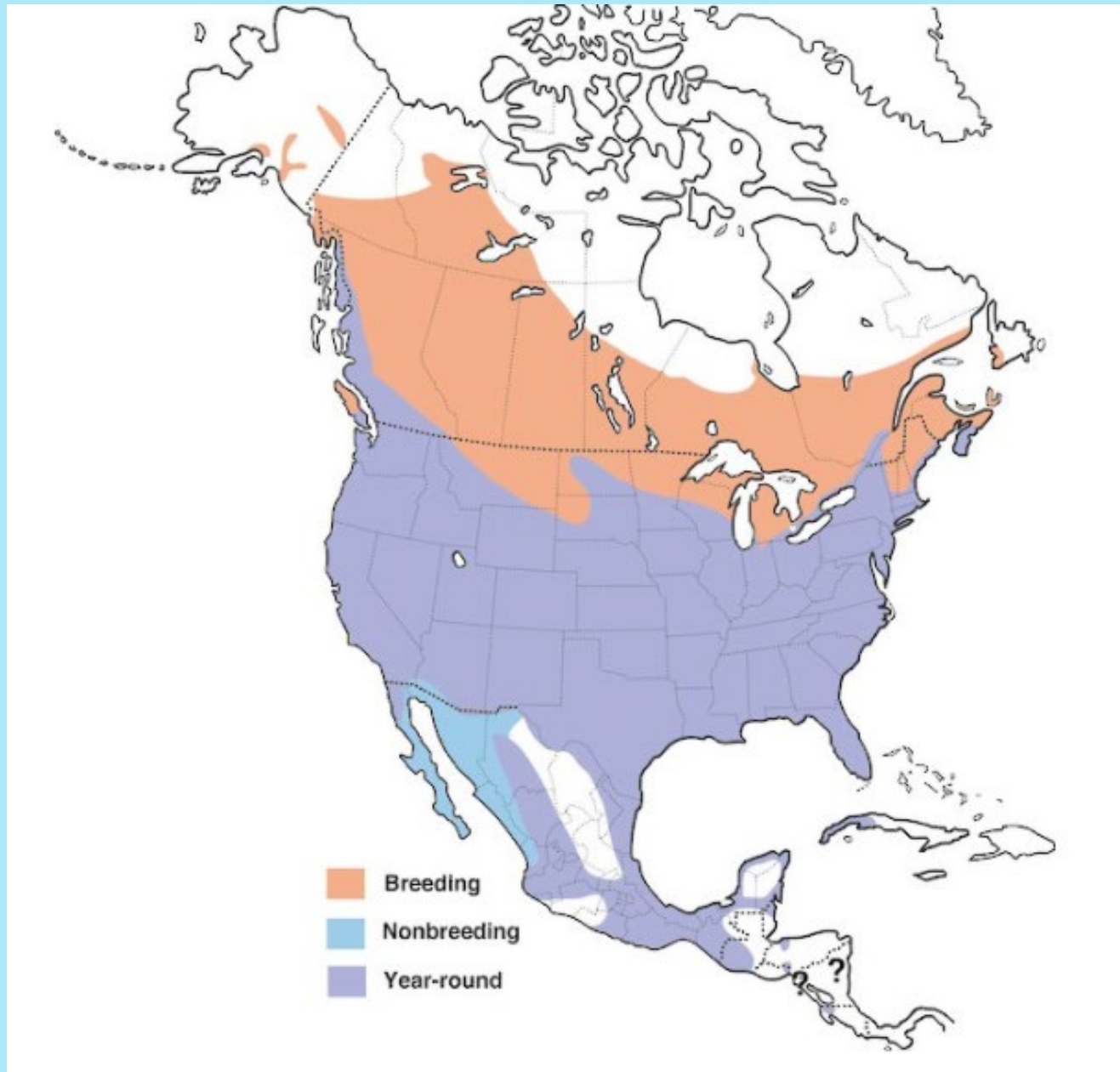
Photo by Ivan Dubinsky



Photo by Joel Trick

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Habitat:

- large mixed-species roosts, primarily in wetland habitats
- Large winter roosts form in major grain-producing areas, primarily in the southeastern U.S.
- Roost habitats are characterized by dense cover and include wetland habitats
- rice paddies
- deciduous thicket
- coniferous stands,
- canebrakes



Breeding Habitat:

- A variety of wetland and upland habitats.
 - freshwater marsh
 - saltwater marsh
 - rice paddies
 - sedge meadows
 - Alfalfa fields

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD



Photo by Andrew Simon



Photo by Kevin Krebs

TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD

TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD





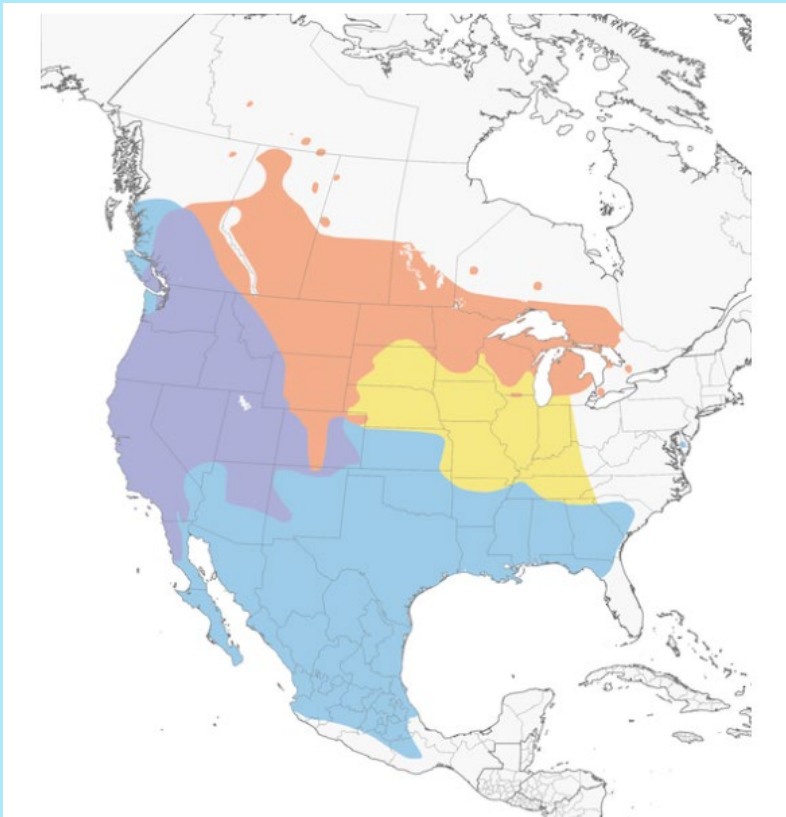
 Breeding
 Year-round



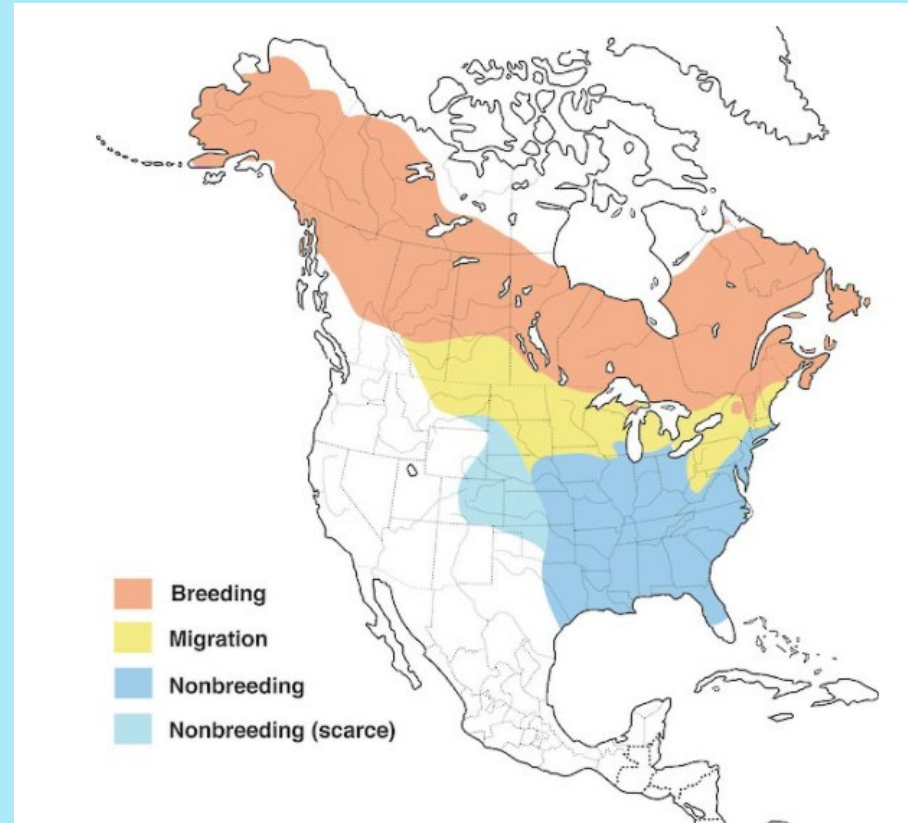
Photo by Ted Beedy

BREWERS & RUSTY BLACKBIRDS

BREWERS & RUSTY BLACKBIRDS



BREWER'S



RUSTY

HABITAT
IS
IMPORTANT

BREWERS BLACKBIRD



Habitat:

- Human-modified habitats:
 - lawns
 - golf courses
 - cemeteries
 - mowed urban parks
 - campuses
 - vacant lots with nearby trees & brush

Breeding:

- Areas along banks and utility lines that also offered nearby short-grass foraging sites.



BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (MAY)



Photo by Matthew Pendleton

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (WINTER)



Photo by Paul Lewis

Photo by Kent Forward



BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (WINTER)



Photo by Gil Ewing

RUSTY BLACKBIRD



Habitat:

- Forages in stubble, pasture, plowed fields, and edges of swamps
- Fall migrants also frequent wooded areas, particularly for roosting
- Occasionally roosts on the ground in open fields,
- Sometimes roosts with Red-winged Blackbirds

Breeding:

- Wet coniferous & mixed forests
- Fens, alder/willow bogs, muskegs, beaver ponds, & other openings in the forest



RUSTY BLACKBIRD

Photo by Cameron Eckert

**ALTERNATE
(BREEDING)**



Photo by Gord Gadsden



RUSTY BLACKBIRD

**BASIC
(NON-BREEDING)**

Photo by Mark Peck



Photo by Gerald McGee





Photo by Matt Davis

Brewer's

BREWER'S VS RUSTY



Photo by Jeff Stacey

Rusty



Photo by Gil Ewing



Photo by Jaime Chavez

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD



Photo by Ann Baldwin

COWBIRDS

Domain: Eukarya

Kingdom: Animalia (animals)

Phylum: Chordata (vertebrates)

Class: Aves (birds)

Order: Passeriformes

BLACKBIRDS

Family: Icteridae

Genus: 25 World Wide, 7 NA

Species: ~120 World Wide, 43 NA

COWBIRDS

Family: Icteridae

Genus: Molothrus

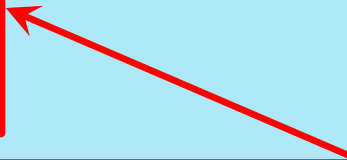
Species: 3 NA (5 world wide)

GRACKLES

Family: Icteridae

Genus: Quiscalus

Species: 3 NA (6 NA & SA)



Icteridae (“the icterids”) include blackbirds, cowbirds, grackles, meadowlarks, orioles & Bobolink.

COWBIRDS

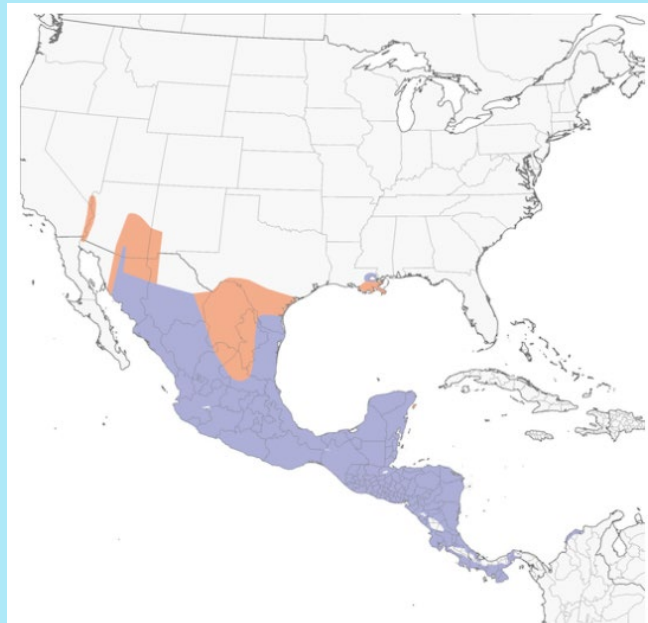
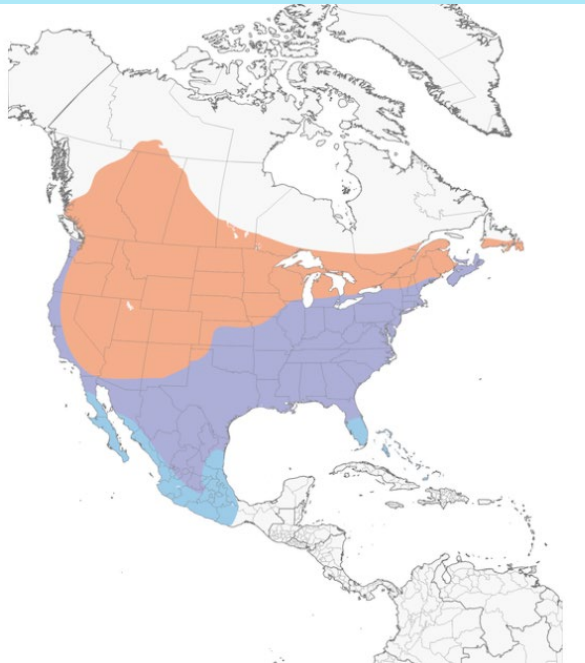
Scientific name	Common Name	Distribution
<i>Molothrus rufoaxillaris</i>	Screaming cowbird	north east and central Argentina, south east Bolivia, central Brazil and throughout Paraguay and Uruguay
<i>Molothrus oryzivorus</i> (formerly in <i>Scaphidura</i>)	Giant cowbird	southern Mexico south to northern Argentina, and on Trinidad and Tobago
<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	Bronzed cowbird	southern U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana south through Central America to Panama
<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	Shiny cowbird	South America, the Caribbean, and Florida
<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Brown-headed cowbird	Southwestern Canada, United States and Mexico

DISTRIBUTION

Brown-headed

Bronzed

Shiny



BROWN-HEADED



Photo by Teresa Mawhinney



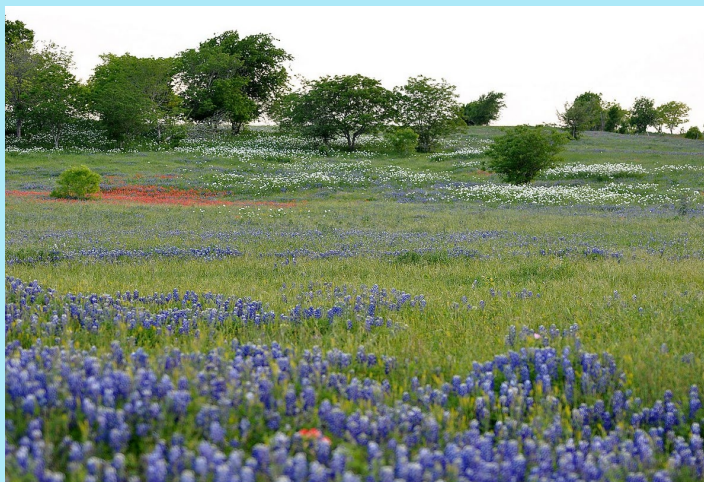
Photo by Van REMson



BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

Habitats:

- low or scattered trees among grassland vegetation- woodland edges
- brushy thickets
- Prairies
- Fields
- pastures,
- Orchards
- residential areas.



Breeding Habitat:

- wood-field ecotones
- agricultural areas

BRONZED

Photo by Brian Sullivan



Photo by Jeff Patterson



BRONZED COWBIRD



Open Habitats:

- Pastures
- farm fields
- golf courses
- scrubby grasslands

Breeding Habitat:

- open fields
- Pastures
- scrubby areas
- Lawns
- golf courses
- agricultural areas



BRONZED

Photo by Jeff Patterson



Photo by Manuel Grosselet

©Tierra de Arroyo A.C.



Photo by Jeff Patterson

BRONZED

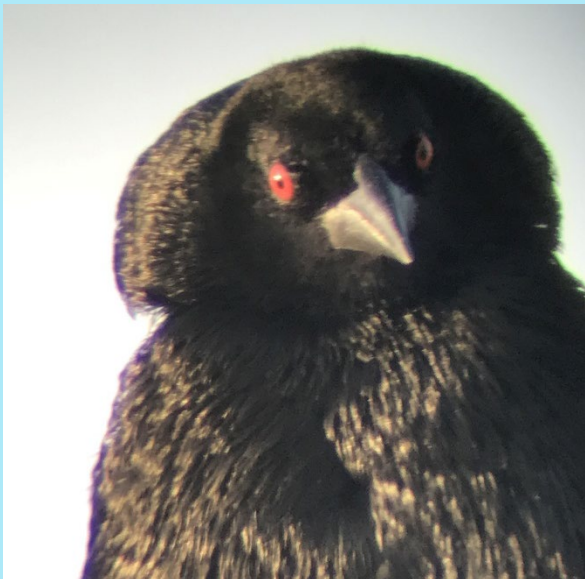


Photo by Jeff Patterson

SHINY COWBIRD

SHINY COWBIRD



Photo by Brian Sullivan

BREWER'S



Photo by Jeff Patterson

BROWN-HEADED



Photo by Van Remson

BRONZED

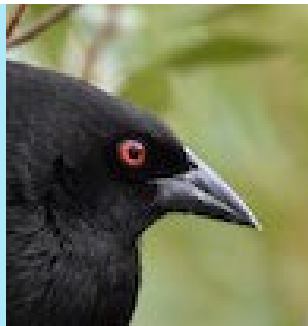


Photo by Alyssa Nowicki



Photo by Alex Olivier



SHINY COWBIRD

Habitat: (Florida, S. Carolina)

- Most often in suburban areas along roads, on lawns, and at bird feeders



NOTE: eBird reports no sightings in last 10 years.

Most Recent:

2000-02-03 – Harris County, TX Bird Rec.
Committee Approved Records

2001-04-15 – Port O'Connor, Brush Freeman

2003-04-26 – Jefferson Co along FM 1406,
Phyllus and Tony Frank

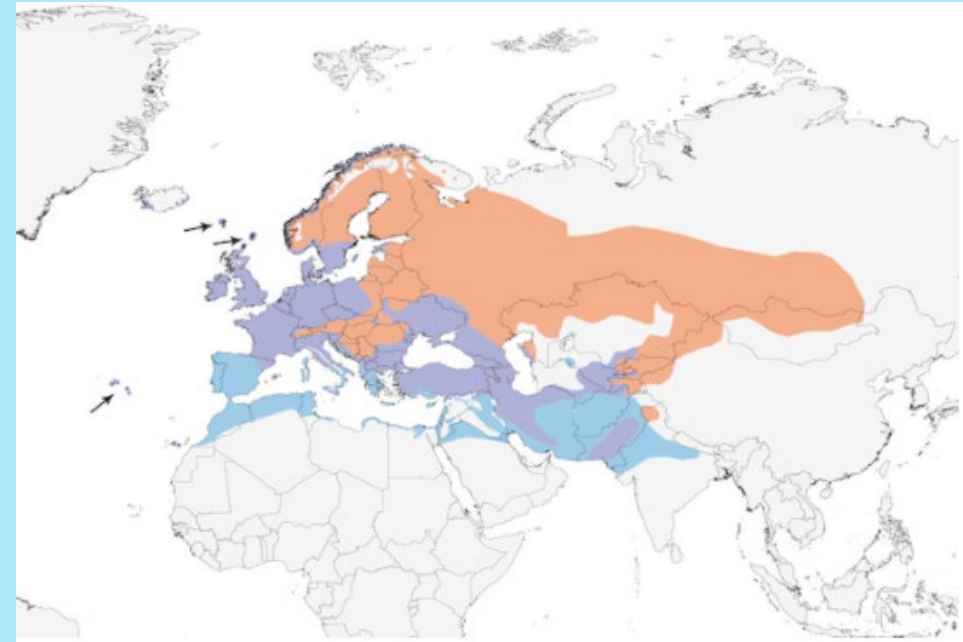


THE BELOVED
EUROPEAN STARLING

EUROPEAN STARLING
FAMILY: **STURNIDAE**
GENUS: **STURNUS**

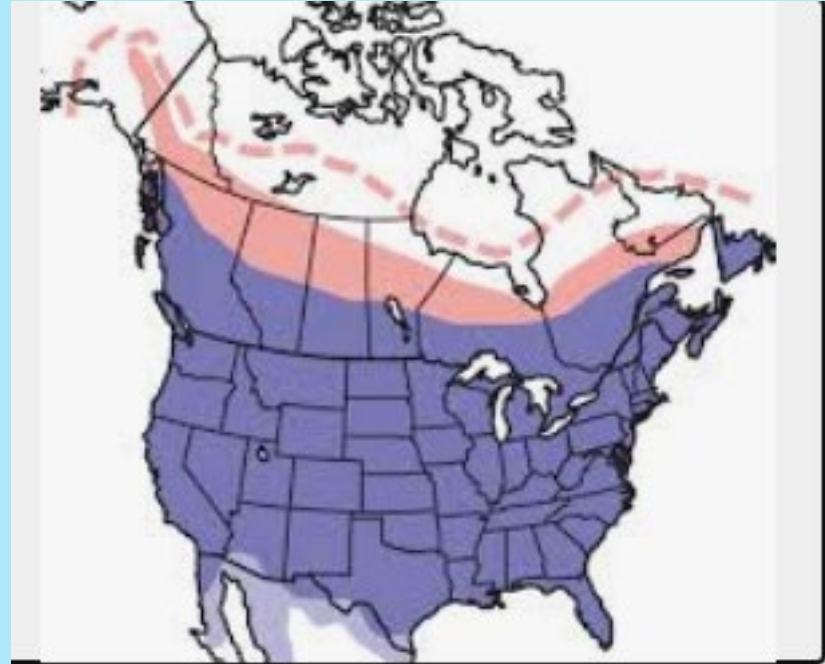
- ▶ 117 species world wide
- ▶ 1 species in NA (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
 - ▶ (meadowlarks are *Sturnella*)
- ▶ *Vulgaris* – common, or something that is derived from the masses of common people

EUROPEAN STARLING



Common Starling

=



European Starling

ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETIES

- ▶ Founded in New York City in 1871
- ▶ **Charter:** to introduce "*such foreign varieties of the animal and vegetable kingdom as may be useful or interesting.*"
- ▶ **Chairman:** Eugene Schieffelin – avid admirer of Shakespeare
- ▶ **Anecdote:** goal to introduce every bird species mentioned in the Bard's works
- ▶ Henry IV, Part 1.
- ▶ Powerful impact on natural history of NA

AMERICAN ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETY.
The regular meeting of the American Acclimatization Society was held last evening in the reading-room of the Aquarium, the use of which had been given for the purpose. Mr. Eugene Schieffelin occupied the chair, and Dr. J. W. Greene acted as Secretary. Among the gentlemen present were Messrs. Robert B. Roosevelt, of the Fish Commission; John C. Pennington, of New-Jersey; Eugene Ketoltas, John C. Mills, Edward Schell, S. R. Bunce, Edgar De Puyster, Wilson De Puyster, Mr. Conklin, of the Central Park Museum, and others. Mr. Conklin read a paper on acclimatization, with special reference to birds. He detailed the efforts made in this country to introduce foreign birds. In 1864, he said, the Commissioners of Central Park set free 50 pairs of English sparrows, and they had multiplied amazingly; Mr. Joshua Jones had freed English chaffinches, blackbirds, and Java sparrows in the Park, but unfortunately their numbers were so small the birds were lost sight of; in 1874, Mr. Henry Reiche set loose 50 pairs of English skylarks, but they all crossed the East River, and settled near Newtown and Canarsie. The Cincinnati Acclimatization Society had successfully introduced the skylark there, and it was now becoming abundant in the neighborhood of the city. Last July the Acclimatization Society freed in the Park some starlings and Japanese finches; Mr. John Sutherland had done the same with some English pheasants. It was expected that they would all prosper. Mr. Conklin suggested that renewed and organized efforts should be made to acclimatize the English titmouse, chaffinch, blackbird, robin, redbreast, and the skylark—birds which were useful to the farmer and contributed to the beauty of the groves and fields. Mr. Robert Roosevelt read an interesting paper on the acclimatization of fish, in which he pointed out that we had little to do in the way of importing fishes from foreign countries, because there were scarcely any kinds useful as food or otherwise which we had not here in equal if not greater perfection. He showed that our efforts should be mainly directed to distributing the best of our own fishes through all the waters of the continent, and spoke of wint had been done in this way with shad and salmon. The Oswego bass, he thought, was deserving of extensive propagation; but particularly spoke of the landlocked salmon of Maine and Canada, and the Californian brook trout. The latter fish he considered one of the best which swam in American waters, and was convinced that it would well repay the trouble of propagation here.

The New York Times

Published: November 15, 1877
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<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-invasive-species-we-can-blame-on-shakespeare-95506437/>

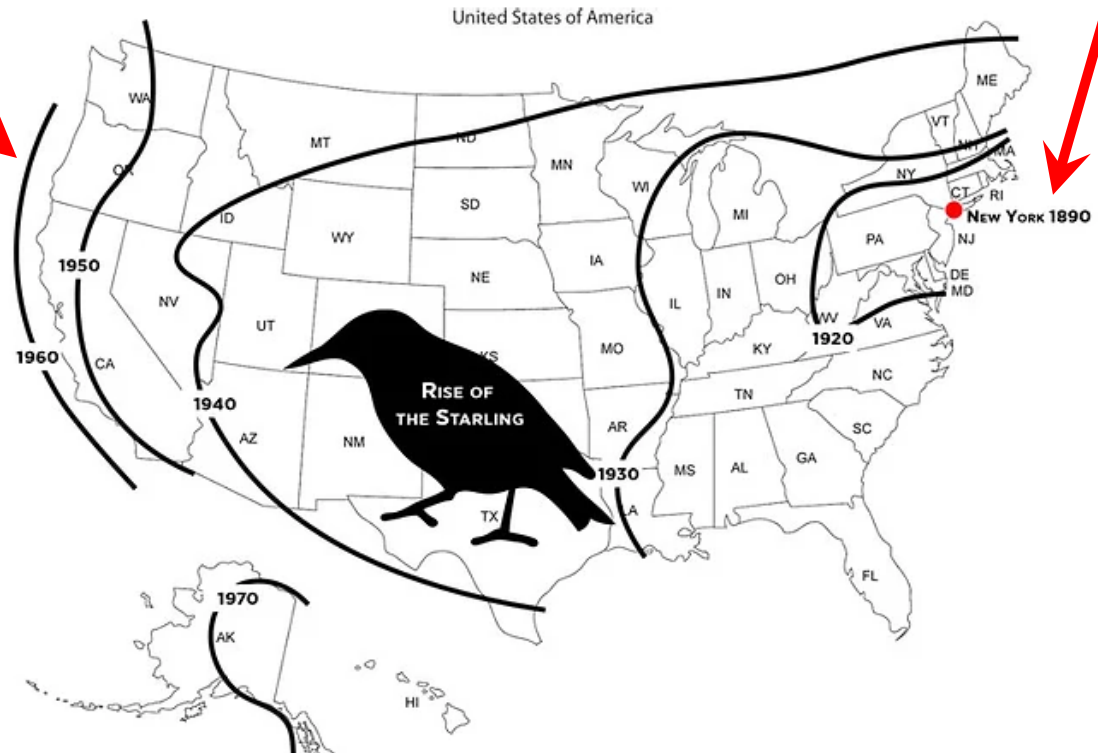
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Acclimatization_Society

COLONIZATION

1890-1891 ~100 released
Central Park

Now: 200
million

Expansion of the European Starling



“...success nothing less than phenomenal.”

(BOW)

EUROPEAN STARLING

- ▶ Significant impact on native avifauna.
- ▶ Intense competition for nesting cavities
- ▶ Detrimental effect on many native cavity-nesting species.

EUROPEAN STARLING



Habitat:

- Highest densities in agricultural & disturbed
- Forage in open country on short, mown, or grazed fields



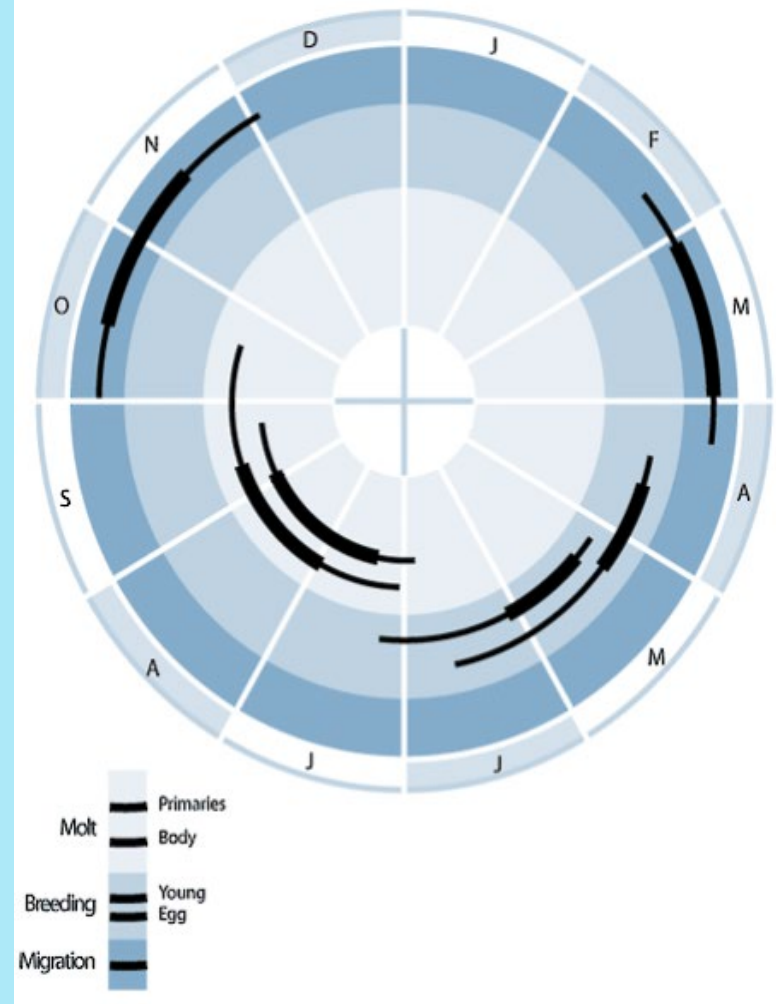
Photo by Adam ahm



Andrew Simon

MOLT

- ▶ Molts but once/year
- ▶ But achieves 2 plumages
- ▶ How does it do this?



WEAR



Photo by Paul Chapman



Photo by Amed Hernandez

STARLING IN FLIGHT

Play Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRNqhi2ka9k>



Photo by Jay McGowan

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?