

Common Grackle



Common Grackles are blackbirds that look like they've been slightly stretched. They're taller and longer tailed than a typical blackbird, with a longer, more tapered bill and glossy-iridescent bodies. Grackles walk around lawns and fields on their long legs or gather in noisy groups high in trees, typically evergreens. They eat many crops (notably corn) and nearly anything else as well, including garbage. In flight their long tails trail behind them, sometimes folded down the middle into a shallow V shape.

Size & Shape

Common Grackles are large, lanky blackbirds with long legs and long tails. The head is flat and the bill is longer than in most blackbirds, with the hint of a downward curve. In flight, the wings appear short in comparison to the tail. Males are slightly larger than females.

Color Pattern

Common Grackles appear black from a distance, but up close their glossy purple heads contrast with bronzy-iridescent bodies. A bright golden eye gives grackles an intent expression. Females are slightly less glossy than males. Young birds are dark brown with a dark eye.

Behavior

You'll often find Common Grackles in large flocks, flying or foraging on lawns and in agricultural fields. They strut on their long legs, pecking for food rather than scratching. At feeders Common Grackles dominate smaller birds. When resting they sit atop trees or on telephone lines, keeping up a raucous chattering. Flight is direct, with stiff wing beats.

Habitat

Common Grackles thrive around agricultural fields, feedlots, city parks, and suburban lawns. They're also common in open habitats including woodland, forest edges, meadows, and marshes.

