

## AUGUST 1-14, 2022 - NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

### COMMON GRACKLE



**Common Grackle**, *Quiscalus quiscula*,

© Richard Harlow

The Common Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula*, is larger than Red-winged Blackbirds with whom it associates during Spring migration. As a matter of fact, in past years we usually see a 1-5 or 1-8 ratio in the Spring. However, this year we had many more Grackles than in past years. The behavior I have seen does not show an intolerance to Red-winged Blackbirds, either Red-wings in their nesting habitat or the Grackles entering into various male Red-wings' territory. However, if male Red-wings' have active nests in their territory then they will chase any species out of their females territory.

Obviously, the breeding habitat for Grackles is open to semi-open areas. Here at EastView the Common Grackle seems to be hunting in both North and South Pond; and the Red-winged Blackbirds are not fazed by their presence. Interesting that Grackles are feeding here but nest in denser habitats where there are trees and high shrubs.

The forage behavior of the Common Grackle is to feed either from the ground or feed in even very shallow water. It will eat whatever it can catch or find as it is omnivorous. That diet consists of either bird seed, frogs, insects, eggs, grain, such as corn, or berries.

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**Common Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula*, © Richard Harlow**

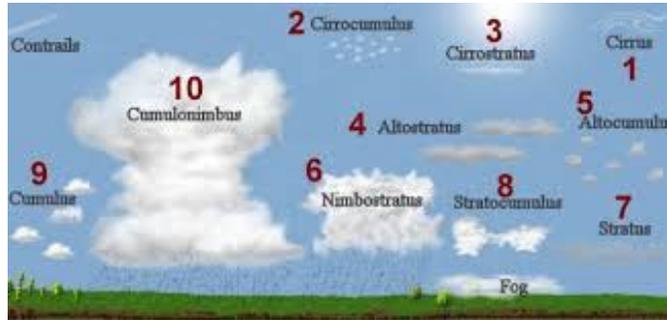
Both pictures were taken here at EastView.

## **CLOUD TYPES**

As a kid or even as an adult I am sure you know what some clouds mean when it comes to determining the weather. Since we are more on alert about bad weather with the changing climate, I felt a refresher would be in order.

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[http //www.ducksters.com](http://www.ducksters.com) - Weather – Clouds

### Types of Clouds

- High clouds - cirrus, cirrocumulus, cirrostratus. (1, 2, 3)
- Middle clouds - altostratus, altocumulus, nimbostratus. (4, 5, 6)
- Low clouds - stratus, stratocumulus. (7, 8)
- Vertical - cumulus, cumulonimbus. (9, 10)

**High Clouds:** 'Cirro' is Latin for curl of hair.

**Middle to Low Clouds:** Strato is from the Latin word for 'layer' or layering like a blanket.

**Separated Clouds:** Cumulo separated puffy white balls or a vertical extension in the sky

There are clouds that look like puff balls or wisps of hair that are sometimes called "mare's tails", or clouds that look like a low mass, or a blanket of clouds. Then there are the clouds that look more vertical than horizontal. Sometimes those vertical clouds will give the appearance of dark foreboding stormy conditions.

**Nimbus** means rain thus **Nimbostratus** are Low-level Rain Clouds (rain blanket); vertical rain clouds are Cumulon**imbus** (thunderstorm). Cumulus also means giant heaping clouds thus Cumulon**imbus** are giant heaping rain clouds. Notice in each case the word **nimbus** is attached.

If stratocumulus clouds are in the sky and seem dark it does not necessarily mean rain, but those clouds could change to **Nimbostratus** and then you would have rain. Thus, it is important to know or be able to recognize a cloud that has the word **nimbus** in its name. So therefore, stratocumulus simply means that the cumulus clouds are layered at a low level in the atmosphere.

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Enjoy the clouds, enjoy the weather, or be forewarned!!

## OBSERVATIONS

### MAMMALS

### AMPHIBIANS

Bullfrog  
Green Frog  
American Toad

### REPTILES

Garter Snake

### BUTTERFLIES

Black Swallowtail  
Cabbage White  
Common Wood Nymph  
Common Ringlet  
Monarch  
Viceroy  
Silver-spotted Skipper

*[All Measurements taken at solar noon \(1230 EST\).](#)*

### PRECIPITATION

**Average August Precipitation for Vermont = 3.9 inches.**

**Total precipitation for first two weeks of August was 32.8 mm or 1.29 inches. We need an additional 2.6 inches to be even with the average for the month.**

**Overcast Days 1-14: We had 8-days of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 4 days produced rain. This month so far has definitely added to the draught we are in even though it may not feel like it did.**