

Brown-headed Cowbirds



Adult male stands on the left. .

May 2011, Magee Marsh



...adult female stands to the right.

May 2017, Frick Park



Male and female cowbirds assembled in a flock.

April 2008, Sewickley Heights Borough Park



Another mixed gender flock feeding on the ground.

April 2017, Squirrel Hill



This female cowbird seems to be stalking the wrong species of bird for her egg to survive. Killdeer precocial young will leave the nest soon after hatching, leaving a cowbird altricial nestling alone, uncared for and unfed.

May 2017, Duck Hollow

Juvenile cowbird slept while waiting to be fed by its surrogate parent, a Song Sparrow.

July 2011, Frick Park



Ten minutes later, the same juvenile was so hungry it began to eat grass seeds on its own.

July 2011, Frick Park





This juvenile cowbird dwarfs a female House Finch at a feeder. She may have been the big guy's surrogate mother.

July 2008, Squirrel Hill

Here a juvenile cowbird is flocking with House Sparrows as it matures on its own.

August 2015, Squirrel Hill



As the juvenile grows it will move on to flock with other blackbirds and eventually its own species.

July 2017, Squirrel Hill



Another North American cowbird, a Bronzed Cowbird, has distinctive red eyes. It can be found in the Southwest from Texas to southern California.

May 2016, Madera Canyon, Arizona

A lucky find was this pair of cowbirds in Arizona – the Brown-headed and the Bronzed – together on the same feeder.

May 2016, Madera Canyon, Arizona



The parasitism of Kirtland's Warblers (left) by Brown-headed Cowbirds has resulted in traps like the one above to catch cowbirds on the warbler's breeding grounds.

May 2009, Grayling, Michigan