

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names:

Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):

1, probably adult (ASY) male based on this being a likely returnee to location from last year

3. Parish: Vermilion

Specific Locality: Lomire Rd., 7.1 mi SSW Kaplan

4. Date(s) when observed: 4 January 2015

5. Time(s) of day when observed: 2:30pm

6. Reporting observer and address: Erik I. Johnson, 102 Goodwood Cir., Lafayette, LA 70508

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Marty Guidry

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Apparently Michael Musumeche, Jeanie Pousson, and Deanna Griggs, and probably others subsequently relocated the bird.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):  
Overcast, even light. No harsh shadows and colors vibrant.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10 x 42 Swarovski EL binoculars; Nikon D7000 with 80-400 mm f/4.5-5.6 VR lens.

11. Distance to bird(s): 50 feet, then flew overhead about 25 feet up and landed in tree about 50 feet away where we left it.

12. Duration of observation: about 5 minutes

13. Habitat: rural residential adjacent to mixed fallow field, tallow woodlots, and other shrubby vegetation.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

We had found a Couch's Kingbird at this spot doing the White Lake CBC last year, so thought we'd check again this year just in case. To our amazement, the bird was quickly found perched on a power/communication line about 25 feet off the ground within a small stand of deciduous trees (I

can't remember if they were tallow or mixed with something else). I took some photos, then played a Couch's Kingbird call from the Audubon Birding App. The bird took about 10 seconds to respond, and did so by flying immediately overhead to a live oak tree across the street and then started to call profusely even after we stopped the playback as soon as the bird flew overhead.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: 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, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

Large "yellow-bellied" kingbird with reasonably long olive-brown tail (not black) and large bill. Bright yellow on belly extended to throat, which was whitish. Slightly duskier yellow on the chest, but clearly still very yellow there. Greenish-olive back, gray head with slightly darker mask through lores and eyes, and black bill with noticeable hook at tip of mandible. No real evidence of wingbars although brownish wing coverts were edged slightly lighter.

16. Voice: Song Sparrow like "chimp" calls followed by "wheer" calls somewhat Myiarchus-like in quality. Certainly not the thin twittery calls given by Tropical Kingbird.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Most similar to Tropical Kingbird distinguished by a variety of calls (see #16). From Western and Cassin's Kingbird by brownish (not black) tail, mostly yellow chest, and larger bill. Other tropical "yellow-bellied" kingbirds not really considered, but quickly checked xeno-canto for calls of *T. albogularis*, which are much more similar to *T. melanogaster* in call quality compared to *T. couchii*.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photo and video by me.

19. Previous experience with this species: Saw and heard Couch's Kingbird at this exact location last winter. Otherwise, limited with a few observations in south Texas. Much more familiar with Tropical Kingbird having spent about 1.5 years over the last 10 years in Brazil and Costa Rica, and a shorter trip to Panama.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: none

b. after observation: Xeno-canto.

21. This description is written from:

	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	
X	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	The evening after the observation

		(submitted to eBird)
X	memory	
X	study of images	

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes.

23. Date: 17 January 2015

Time: 9:30 pm.



