

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: Couch's Kingbird, *Tyrannus couchii*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
One
3. Parish: Lafayette
4. Specific Locality: USGS-NOAA complex, 700 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette
5. Date(s) when observed: Discovered 2 November 2016, better documented on 4 November 2016
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 2 Nov 2016: 0920-1010 & 1045-1055 CDT; 4 Nov 2016: 1620-1715 CDT
7. Reporting observer and address: Robert C. Dobbs, Lafayette, LA
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s): Jessica Schulz, Mike Baldwin, Heather Baldwin, Andy From, Danny Dobbs, Meribeth Huizinga, John Tirpak
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Dave Patton (5 Nov 2016) & Erik Enbody (6 Nov 2016)
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Bird was observed under a range of sky (partly cloudy, to clear, to mostly clear with high thin clouds) and time of day (mid-morning and late afternoon) conditions, but

all observations generally involved bright, but not harsh, lighting, as the bird perched on exposed perches (i.e., not in the shade), and could generally be approached, viewed, and photographed with the sun to the observer's back

11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Swarovski 8x30 binos (good condition), Nikon AF-S 300 mm 1: 4 D camera lens (good condition)

12. Distance to bird(s): As close as 8-10 m, and generally 10-40 m

13. Duration of observation: Approx. 2 hours, combined on 2 different days

14. Habitat: Open lawn and parking lot with scattered trees (e.g., live oak, hackberry), vehicles, and fence; no understory or low veg except for mowed grass.

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): First observed sallying for aerial insects from crown of large live oak—this is what initially caught my attention and suggested that the bird was noteworthy (large tyrannid in November). The bird was then seen regularly on exposed perches in tree-tops, and occasionally on chain link fence, sallying for aerial insects throughout observations on both days.

The bird interacted agonistically with other birds two times during the approx. 2 h of observation. It was displaced by a Northern Mockingbird while perched in/foraging from crown of elm tree on 2 Nov. Then, on 4 Nov, a previously undetected Western Kingbird dove on and displaced it, and then landed approx. 3 m away. The Couch's soon displaced and chased the Western, which remained in area, calling (“kip kip kip...,” similar to Couch's “kip” calls) occasionally, for the following 15 min, and then appeared to fly away from area.

Initially, the bird did not seem to vocalize, except in response to COKI playback, which was used sparingly for documentation purposes on 2 Nov and 4 Nov. At that time, the bird responded strongly to COKI playback, by flying in from distance, approaching and perching above the speaker, and vocalizing regularly for up to 30 min following initial playback. It would generally slow its rate of vocalizing, eventually becoming quiet again, and slowly move away from the area, while foraging, if additional playback was not used to keep its attention.

16. 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): Yellow-bellied kingbird with notably large/heavy bill, notched tail lacking white in outer rectrices, and yellowish breast (i.e., Tropical/Couch's complex). Pale gray head bleeding to whitish throat, with little contrast between (slightly) darker auricular area. Greenish-gray back, brownish-black upper tail with olive tones,

gray wings with pale edging on upper wing coverts, secondaries, and tertials.

17. Voice: Burry, drawn-out, and somewhat descending “preeerz,” often preceded by several “kip” calls.

18. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Tropical Kingbird eliminated by vocalization – TRKI does not give any call resembling the burry descending “preeerz” (as described above) of COKI.

Western Kingbird, which was seen in direct comparison with the Couch's, is less bulky overall, with a smaller bill, and a jet black tail with white outer veins of outer rectrices. Western also differed by having a pale gray (not yellowish) breast, and more contrast between dark auriculars and pale-gray head/whitish throat.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos and audio recording by Robert C. Dobbs

20. Previous experience with this species: Limited... I've seen/heard Couch's ca. 10 times, once in LA and several in TX. (But extensive experience with Tropical, Western, and Cassin's kingbirds).

21. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification): Nat Geo Complete Birds of N Am

22. Identification aids used when? After observation

23. Date report completed: 12/3/16



