

**\_LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE  
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

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**Species:** Couch's Kingbird, *Tyrannus couchii*  
**Location:** Fountainebleau State Park, St. Tammany Parish  
**Date:** 14 January 2017  
**Age and sex:** immature female  
**Molt status:** None apparent  
**Number of individuals:** One  
**Other observers:** Van Remsen, Cameron Rutt  
**Original observer:** Not sure

**Circumstances:** Van, Cameron, and I chased this bird, partly because Van wanted to figure out how many individuals were involved. We found the bird quite easily near the east end of the houses (exact coordinates: 30.344532, -90.053607) where we got recordings and photos. We found the bird, which we think was the same individual, to the east about a half hour later (exact coordinates: 30.347360, -90.056037). Both sightings were of birds of the same age/sex, so I suspect that they were the same individual. A Western Kingbird was in the area at the second location. It was a nice sunny day with light wind, so good conditions for photography. The eBird checklist is here:  
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S33678453>

**Description:** A yellow-bellied kingbird obviously of the Tropical / Couch's species pair. The yellow extended far up onto the chest, where it took on a greenish wash. Throat off-white. Wings dark brown with thin pale edging. Tail dark, lacking any white edging. Back olive. Crown and nape gray, slightly darker gray mask. Bill black, heavy and short, particularly thick at the base.

**Discussion:** The only real contender is Tropical Kingbird, which was easily eliminated by voice. (see my recording on Macaulay: <http://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/46129961>). Based on plumage the only real way that I know to separate these two species is on bill shape, which is slightly longer and thinner in Tropical, this bird was more consistent with Couch's.

Other yellow-bellied kingbirds (Cassin's and Western) have obvious white in the tail.

This bird had very wide blunt tips to the outer primaries, which is visible in the flight photos. I think that this makes it a young female. Adult female and males have much more narrow and emarginated outer primaries.





