

## LBRC 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):  
2 individuals, age/sex unknown
3. Parish:  
St. Bernard
4. Specific Locality:  
Florissant Hwy (LA 46) along Bayou la Loutre (approx. 29.853286, -89.712549)
5. Date(s) when observed: Friday, December 15, 2023
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 02:23–03:10 PM
7. Reporting observer: Warren P. James Jr.
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Cloudy, but bright. Visibility good and birds within close range and often perching in the open. Mid-afternoon sun silhouetted one bird while on the south side of LA-46, but, otherwise, visibility of birds while on the bayou side was fine.
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):  
Zeiss Terra ED 10x42
12. Distance to bird(s): One bird remained near the entire time, within 25–35 feet, while the other at first was about 50 feet away, before flying across the highway, increasing distance to about 75 feet, and hiding, though it would later return and perch on the power lines directly above.
13. Duration of observation: Initial sighting was a fraction of a second while driving west-bound on LA 46 from the end of the world. Assuming a spot of yellow on the power lines was some myiarchus flycatcher, I pulled over and walked back to where I saw the

first bird, quickly realized it was a tyrant flycatcher, that there were actually two, and spent about 45 minutes observing them and trying to get decent photos for documentation.

14. Habitat: Highway in the boonies that runs east to west alongside Bayou la Loutre, flanked by some scrub and a few taller trees, which are mostly dead on the south side; power lines run on the north side. Beyond the trees adjacent to the highway's ridge, it almost immediately opens to marsh in both directions. Intermittent vehicle traffic on the highway, moving at high speeds.

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Both birds initially perched in the open, one on power lines and the other in exposed oak tree branches overhanging the bayou on the north side of LA 46. Alerting to my approach they both began calling, which is what keyed me in to the second bird. The second bird in the trees soon flew out, crossing to the south side of LA 46, landing in a skeletal tree before slinking deeper down, out of sight, but still calling. The other bird made occasional flights to change perches in typical flycatcher fashion. Both birds eventually settled down and called less, and the second quietly returned to the north side power lines over a half an hour later.

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):

All bright yellow belly and chest. Head light gray with smudge of dark running through eye. Whitish throat. Beak dark and stout. Back green. Could not see any white framing on rectrices.

17. Voice: Both birds calling often. Always the same terse kip note with an about one second pause in between each note.

18. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Western/Cassin's kingbird would have a grayer/much grayer chest. Both of the observed bird's chests were yellow up to the throat, which indicates Tropical/Couch's, which are very tricky IDs outside of vocalizations, which they were kind enough to do for me. A tropical's calls would be much more rapid twittering versus the more deliberately paced notes of both of these birds.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

Yes, to both. All were taken myself with my Galaxy S7 cellphone. Thirteen photographs were taken in total; eleven were of the first bird, while only two were of other bird. One 20 second sound recording was also made, which was cut down later to just 4 seconds, to remove passing vehicle noises, and normalized, but manages to capture both the distant and near bird calling within the same timeframe.

20. Previous experience with this species: None that I can recall.

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

Assets from Cornell Lab's All About Birds and highlighted recording excerpts from the Macaulay Library

22. Identification aids used when?

At time of sighting, After observation

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

Yes.

24. Date report completed:

April 23, 2024

25. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

26. If yes, may we include your name with the report?

Yes









