

LBRC Report Form

1. English and Scientific names: Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) or Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1
3. Parish:
Plaquemines
4. Specific Locality:
Diamond, Louisiana at the old unused baseball field
5. Date(s) when observed: November 12, 2023
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 10am-10:30am approximately
7. Reporting observer: John A. Keegan
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
None.
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
David Muth, Taylor Naquin, John Nelson had listed it the previous day.
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Very minimal light, strong cloud cover and extremely overcast.
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10x40 binos, photographed using a 600mm lense.
12. Distance to bird(s): Approximately the distance between home plate and first base (90ft) but on several occasions it flew in closer to 1/2 that distance (45ft).
13. Duration of observation: 15-35 minutes - multiple observations while watching other birds nearby. Observed it eating bugs and at one point, a monarch butterfly.
14. Habitat: Wooded area due south with heavy thick understory and some nearby water sources. Ball field and abandoned trailer park includes a grove of oak trees and some wide open grassy areas.

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Primarily feeding. Did not seem interested in conflicting with nearby STFL (which were my primary reason for visiting the area - I had never seen big groups of those before) and was not put off or bothered by VEFL or the bluebirds and sparrows nearby. Observed on multiple occasions sallying out to catch bugs and on several occasions returning to the same spot. One prey item was clearly a monarch butterfly. At one point it perched right near (next branch over) from a STFL and did not behave territorially, later doing the same with an EABL on the ballfield fence.

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):

Kingbird with rounded head and a very bright yellow belly with the yellow reaching all the way up to the neck. Neck was bright white even in poor lighting. Upperparts were greenish yellow and there appears to be a noticeable dark/black smudge behind the eye. Unable to observe or pick out a clear 'hook' on the bill and the culmen appears to be fairly straight. Upon photo review the outer primaries do not seem to show any pale or white edges and the outer primaries look black or very dark. Lighting was poor throughout the period of observation. Bird made no response whatsoever to playback of TRKI or COKI calls. Initially on that basis I thought it might be a WEKI but did not respond to that either. Photo review seems to rule out WEKI. In my (*highly inexperienced*) opinion this bird seems to have characteristics of both (dark black outer primaries pointing to COKI - straight/longer bill pointing to TRKI) and the opinion of other birders I consulted was it can often be near-impossible to make a clear differentiation without getting an audio recording. Everyone I spoke to noted the darker area behind the eye and the brightness of the yellow abdomen. One reviewer said it was more 'rounded' and used the descriptor "tubby" (felt it leaned COKI) Certainly grateful for any feedback from the LBRC.

17. Voice: No vocalizations.

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

Western Kingbird. Bright white throat, yellow very bright and went all the way up to the neck instead of mid-way up the abdomen. When reviewing photos could not see any hint of white lines on the edges of the tail feathers and the yellow seems to go way to far up by the neck for WEKI.

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

Attached.

20. Previous experience with this species: Absolutely none. Have observed Western Kingbird before.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oes1wglPZoU>

comments noted on list in same location on November 11, 2023 by Muth, Nelson, Naquin; https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tropical_Kingbird/overview

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Couchs_Kingbird/overview

22. Identification aids used when?

After observation

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

I am reasonably sure it is one or the other but not all sure which it could be.

24. Date report completed:

11/26/23

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













