# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

#### REPORT FORM

- 1. English and Scientific names: Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Tyrannus savana
- 2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): **1 adult, sex unknown**
- 3. Parish: Plaquemines

Specific Locality: 29.838056, -89.982840; Stella Plantation

- 4. Date(s) when observed: 21 December 2017
- 5. Time(s) of day when observed: **1:45 p.m.**
- 6. Reporting observer and address:

Christina Riehl, Princeton NJ

- 7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): **Jennifer Coulson, Tom Coulson**
- 8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):

Many others later viewed this bird on subsequent days and posted records and photos to eBird, including Matt Brady, Van Remsen, Glenn Ousset, Rosemary Seidler, Joan Garvey, James Beck, Joelle Finley, and many others. This was a very visible and easily located bird.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

Bird perched in open (on power line) in partly cloudy conditions and good light

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):

10x Golden Eagle binoculars in good condition

11. Distance to bird(s):

Less than 20 feet at closest.

12. Duration of observation:

About one hour

13. Habitat:

Open pasture with scattered shrubs, adjacent to young forest edge; roadside across from Mississippi River batture

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

The bird was first seen perching on a telephone wire in proximity to several other flycatchers, including 3 Western Kingbirds and at least 3 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. Tom Coulson first saw it without binoculars and said "check that flycatcher, it could be a fork-tailed," and indeed it was. It spent most of the hour perched on the power line and occasionally flying down into tall grass in the field or sallying out for an insect. It did not vocalize, but startled and flew down into the field when Jennifer

## Coulson played a tape of fork-tailed flycatcher calls.

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*):

Unmistakable bird seen at close range and documented with photographs. Kingbird-sized flycatcher with extremely long, undamaged black tail streamers that fluttered in flight; black cap, gray above, white below. In very nice plumage and with very long tail streamers, not damaged. Possibly an adult male?

16. Voice:

### Did not vocalize.

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

All other species were immediately eliminated by the very long, forked tail that was at least twice as long as the bird's body.

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

Attached photographs obtained by Christie Riehl. Subsequent photos were obtained by all of the observers listed in #8 above, and were posted to eBird.

19. Previous experience with this species:

All three observers had seen this species previously in Panama; CR has also seen vagrants in Massachusetts and New Jersey.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification): **None were used.** 

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	
	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
X	memory		
X	study of images		

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

# Yes, I am positive

23. Date: <b>27 December 2017</b>	
Time: <b>12:12 p.m.</b>	
24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or	
accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBI	RC Facebook page?
yes	
If ves, may we include your name with the report?	res

