

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus* / Couch's Kingbird, *Tyrannus couchii*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1, sex unknown
3. Parish: Caddo
Specific Locality: C. Bickham Dickson Park in Shreveport
4. Date(s) when observed: 11/04/14
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 9:30 AM
6. Reporting observer and address: Emily Holcomb, 2430 Brookside Drive, Bossier City, LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): none
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): none
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Very bright, almost perfect viewing conditions. The sun was behind me.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 400mm telephoto lens on my camera. It's relatively new and in good shape. I didn't have binoculars with me.
11. Distance to bird(s): It was at the top of a tall tree, perhaps 50 feet high, and I was able to stand almost directly beneath it.
12. Duration of observation: 15 mins.
13. Habitat: A grassy park, bordered with trees and near a lake.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): I was taking a casual birding trip and wasn't expecting to see anything particularly rare. I noticed a good-sized gray and yellow bird high in the top of a dead tree, so I came as close as I could to investigate. I thought I was seeing a Western Kingbird, but I was immediately struck at how brilliantly yellow its breast was. It seemed a curiosity to me, so I observed it for some time. It was sitting quietly in a tree, getting a little ruffled by a strong breeze. It was moving its head as if looking around frantically, but it was otherwise still. Once or twice, it flew away but always returned to the same tree. It never made a sound. I took many pictures and walked away still believing that I had seen a Western Kingbird. Only when I reviewed the pictures did I realize I had misidentified it.

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*): In the field, its strongly yellow breast immediately stood out to me. When I reviewed the photographs, I realized that the breast had no gray smudging of any kind. The bill size also stood out to me as soon as I opened the pictures; it looked much longer than a Western Kingbird's.

16. Voice: It was completely silent.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): It isn't a Western Kingbird because of its bill size and cleanly yellow breast.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): I took many photographs and will attach some.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've never seen either the Tropical or Couch's Kingbird.

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

a. at time of observation: I had none on me.

b. after observation: I used The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America, the University of Cornell's website, and the Shreveport Bird Study Group's Chart of Seasonal Occurrences.

21. This description is written from:

notes made during the observation.
Are notes attached?

notes made after the observation.
At what date?

memory

study of images--Yes.

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

I'm positive that it wasn't a Western Kingbird. However, since I've never seen either a Couch's or Tropical Kingbird, and since the bird never made a sound, I'm unable to determine which it might be.

23. Date: 11/20/14
Time: 1:12 pm





