

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555

July 1, 1996

Nancy Magnusson
8589-F Falls Run Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043

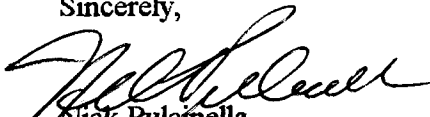
Dear Nancy,

Thank you for submitting details on the Western Kingbird you saw at Muddy Run Reservoir, Lancaster County on 18 December 1994 to P.O.R.C. The record circulated the committee for two rounds. After careful review, much discussion and further research on Tyrannus species, we regret that we are unable to accept this record. A few committee members felt very strongly in favor of Western Kingbird based on the descriptions of the bill and the shape and amount of white in the tail. Other committee members felt that the description submitted did not completely rule out the possibility of a Couch's/Tropical type kingbird. They argued that the description that the outer web of the outertail feather being white is more consistent with an immature Couch's/Tropical Kingbird. Unfortunately, the slides submitted were not clear enough to allow for adequate determination. As a result of the discussion the record did not receive the needed six votes for acceptance.

This of course, does not mean the bird was not a Western Kingbird, merely, that the record is not beyond reasonable doubt for acceptance.

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible.

Sincerely,


Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record # 557-01-1994

P.S. If is any consolation, I personally voted for acceptance.



557-01-1994 (see slides)

PORC

Western Kingbird Drumore, Lancaster County, PA 18 Dec 94
Southern Lancaster County, PA, Christmas Bird Count

Location: The bird was found along River Road in the small square of land on the right immediately after crossing the Muddy Run Pumped Storage Reservoir canal while heading towards Rt. 372. When last seen, it had dropped into the trees at the far end and other side of the canal.

Time: 15:35 - 15:55

Optics: Kowa TSN-2 20-60X, Bausch and Lomb 9x35 Discoverer binocs
Other observers: Mike Gockley, Jane Grissinger

The bird was initially seen with its back to us near the top of the lone tree (about 15 feet up) in the middle of the plot of land. Before we had ventured out of the car, it made a brief trip to a large puddle and returned to the same perch, but was now facing the road. We watched it (and it watched us) for 20 minutes - during that time we had the scopes set up and Mike snapped a few pictures of it. It was about 40 yards away; the sun was off to the side, so lighting was pretty good for that time of the afternoon. After 20 minutes it took off and flew diagonally across the canal and landed briefly at the top of one of the tall trees. When last seen, it dropped out of sight somewhere - I'd guess - along the road which circles the canal.

- * Medium-sized bird - about the size of a cardinal
- * Gray head and nape - similar to a mockingbird gray on the lighter end of the scale
- * A line of darker gray extended from the bill through and slightly past the eye - this color kind of faded into the color of the head - not really what you'd call a distinct, abrupt difference of color
- * Gray of the crown and nape blended into the slightly greener-gray of the back and scapulars
- * What could be seen of the primaries when the wings were folded was dark
- * Folded wing was pointed and drooped below the level of the tail
- * Tail was black, worn and slightly notched. At first, from beneath you could see a narrow white strip running the length of the tail, but the tail feathers were all messed up, and it was impossible to tell which feather the white belonged to. I walked further up the road to get a better side angle. I could still see this white line - eventually, the bird moved its tail so I could see the upper tail at a good angle - the white was on the outer web of the outer tail feather - it didn't appear to be the entire web, but I wouldn't stake my life on that one way or the other.
- * White chin and throat - not bright clean white, but white
- * Remainder of underparts through, and including, undertail coverts was a bright yellow
- * Black, straight, sturdy bill - sturdy as in typical vireo (or kingbird!) as opposed to basic warbler-type bill; no noticeable hook, droop or lift; length was approximately the same as the distance from the base of the bill to the back of the eye
- * Inside of mouth was a bright orange-yellow - this was seen at 20X

through my scope when the bird 'gagged up' a berry

* Dark eye

* Posture was more horizontal than vertical when perched

* Flew in a straight line - no undulation

* Seemed very curious about us - kept cocking its head while it watched the shenanigans of the birders across the road

I do not have extensive experience with any of the western kingbirds, but have seen Western, Cassin's, Couch's and Tropical on various and sundry trips. I do have fairly extensive experience (almost 20 years) with the birds of central Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Nancy C. Magnusson

410-992-8753

8589-F Falls Run Rd.

Ellicott City, MD 21043

Frank & Barb - I have not yet seen
the photos. Only question I have from
the description is the full yellow underparts.
Most books show some gray on throat.

Bob

PORC

Western Kingbird 1535-1555 PM 18 Dec 1994
on the little square of land to the right after
you cross the canal coming from the fish study.
Sitting at the top of the small tree in the middle
of the land about 15' up

Bright yellow underparts from upper breast to
& including undertail coverts.

White throat & chin but turning to yellow quick.
Sturdy black bill - darker gray line extended from
bill thro the eye - bill straight - no hook - pointed

Bill length approx equal to distance from base of bill
to back eye

Inside mouth - bright yellow orange

Gray crown, face & nape

Head peaked looking mid crown

Dark eye

Gray of crown/nape faded into slightly greener
gray of back/scaps.

Primaries dark (on folded wing)

Tail black & ratty, slightly notched

White outer part of outer web of outer tail feather
(outer 3')

Pointed wings drooped while sitting

Barfed out a berry

Seemed curious about us - kept cocking head while
watching us

Sat more horizontally than erect

Flew across canal, perched briefly in top of tall
tree then dropped - flew straight, not undulating

40 yards - good light - Mike took some slides
Kowa FN2 20-60X

Nancy Magnusson
Mike Cockley
Jane Grissinger

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 2 of 2

Species: Western Kingbird (Tyrannus verticalis)

Date of Sighting: 18 December 1994 to 18 December 1994

Location: MUDDY RUN RESERVOIR

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Nancy Magnusson (W)

Mike Gockley (Photo)

Date of Submission: 1995

Submitted by: Nancy Magnusson

Written Description: YES Photo: YES Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe						X		
S. Feldstein				X				
TOTALS	2		3	1		1		
DECISION								

Comments: This needs to be discussed at the next PORC Meeting

Signature (Secretary): *J. C Haas*

Date: 5-1-96