









PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpulcinella@comcast.net

557-01-2006

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Western Kingbird (Tyrannus verticalis)
Subspecies, if known _____

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) unknown

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): Adult in breeding plumage.

DATE OF OBSERVATION First 12/25/2006 TIME 1:15 pm

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Morgantown, Caernarvon Twp, Berks Co., PA

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) along Shiloh Rd. (area of #1101 + 1191)
HOUSE NUMBERS

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Holly Hartshorne
Address 71 Trappers Run
City Morgantown State PA ZIP 19543
e-mail (optional) hollhart1@juno.com phone (optional) 610.286.5032

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you): Steven Hartshorne;
Many other people since 12/29/06.

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Garden area between two houses
and woodland/roadside edge.

DISTANCE TO BIRD first sighting approx. 10-15 yards

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) first observation in the rain;
2nd near dusk, 3rd time in bright morning sun. This bird has been
observed at various times of day and under many different conditions/light.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED NIKON MONARCH 10X42 + SWAROVSKI AT80 HD Scope

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual):

The very dark tail of this bird along with its dark bill,
yellow belly identified the bird as a Tyrannus kingbird and not
one of the Myiarchus flycatchers. The white edging seen mostly
along the base of its tail identified the bird as a Western Kingbird.
See notes attached.

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) The bird is eating
Euonymus and Bittersweet berries, then it sits and spits out
the seeds. Since 12/25/06 when discovered, the bird has
remained in the same area, close to its food source.

VOCALIZATIONS I heard him calling very softly only one time.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:

Photograph Video recording Audio recording Drawing

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name Steven Hartshome

Address 71 Trappers Run

City Morgantown State PA ZIP 19543

e-mail (optional) hollhart1@juno.com phone (optional) 610.286.5032

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

General condition _____

If collected (by permit), location of specimen if known _____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others) See my notes attached.
Dark tail with white edging made me sure this was a western
Kingbird.

DISCUSSION – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it: _____

Please call or e-mail if you have any questions.

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES I had never seen a
Western Kingbird before. This was a life bird for me!

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? (why or why not) Yes. In the past I have
missed important details when seeing birds for shorter time periods.
This one has enabled careful observation and study.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation _____

After observation The Sibley Guide to Birds

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 1-10-2007

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER Holly Hartshome

Notes on the Western Kingbird in Southern Berks County 12/25/06-Present

I was out for my walk on Christmas day, (12/25/2006 at 1:00 p.m.) trying out my new Nikon Monarch 10X42 binocular. It was chilly, gray, overcast, and just beginning to rain when I found a "flycatcher" perched about 3-1/2 to 4 ft. off the ground atop some vines and branches just inside a small patch of woods at the edge of a yard along the east side of Shiloh Rd., Morgantown, Caernarvon Township, Berks County. My very first thought was Northern Mockingbird, looking just at the bird's head, back and tail – the head was grayish with a dark eye line, similar to NOMO – but after looking more closely I saw right away it was not a mockingbird.

I watched the bird for several minutes while it sat there and spit out seeds. Odd behavior, I thought, as I couldn't recall ever seeing a bird spitting out seeds. While watching the bird (from approximately 10-15 yards away), I had a very good look at the tail, which was long and dark. When the bird flew and revealed a bright yellow belly, I immediately thought it was a Great-crested Flycatcher. That would have been odd this late in the year! I watched the bird for several more minutes. It flew in quick, short bursts, returning to a different nearby perch each time, snatching bittersweet berries. After grabbing and eating about a half dozen berries, it sat still for 20-30 minutes, spitting out seeds.

I went home to check my books—when I found the Great-crested Flycatcher in my field guide, I knew that was not the bird I had seen. I'd had a very good look at the tail, which was as dark as a wet telephone pole; it was not rufous. Looking at other yellow-bellied birds, I found the Western Kingbird, which looked a lot like the bird I'd seen. But there were other kingbirds that looked similar—I needed to have another look.

I returned on Tuesday afternoon but did not see the bird. Disappointed, I came back again on Wednesday afternoon and this time found the bird in the same location at 4:20 p.m. I watched the bird for 20 minutes until it flew off into the woods behind the house.

Because I was certain now that I had been watching a Western Kingbird, and knowing where the bird went to roost for the evening, I returned at dawn on Thursday with my photographer husband, his cameras and scope. We found the bird at 7:20 a.m. and photographed it in various poses and light. Two of these pictures are enclosed. The white edge on the bird's tail was hard to see in the field but, as you can see, it is very clear in the photographs. That confirmed the bird for me so I reported the sighting on Cornell's E-bird and e-mailed the news and the photos to some other birders I know. Saturday, December 30 many other people came to see the kingbird. It has been seen regularly – I believe daily – ever since, usually in or near the Euonymus or the bittersweet vines. This report is prepared on January 10, 2007. I spotted the bird this afternoon at 3:40 p.m. in the same location, eating bittersweet berries.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

December 30, 2006 and January 4, 2007

Shiloh Rd., Berks County (near Morgantown interchange on the PA turnpike)

I observed this bird on two days feeding on berries in backyards. It was obviously a yellow-bellied kingbird type (i.e. Western, Cassin's, Couch's, Tropical, White-throated, etc) because of the yellow belly, medium size, gray/ brown wings, greenish gray back, stout bill, and medium - long tail. Identification to Western Kingbird was simple, as the bird showed a dark tail (at least two generations of rectrices, with old being brown and new central recs black) with white edging to the outer rectrices. The head was gray with a darker gray mask through the eye. The wings showed two generations of coverts and flight feathers, with inner primaries and outer secondaries new (replaced) and outer primaries and inner secondaries (except for a few fresh tertials) worn and unreplaced. This "typical" molt progression combined with truncate outer rectrices and lack of obvious pale edging to the central rectrices indicates an adult (after hatch year, AHY) kingbird.

Conclusive photos that I took of the bird have been attached.

I consulted Pyle et al (1997) for ageing criteria before I observed the bird.

Tom Johnson

Hummelstown, PA

1/6/06

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) near Morgantown, Berks County, PA, 30-Dec-2006

Observer:

Geoff Malosh
450 Amherst Ave.
Moon Township, PA 15108-2654
412.269.1413
pomarine@earthlink.net

Facts:

Temperature: 45 F
Wind: calm
Sky: mostly clear
Time: 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Equipment: Leica 10x42 BN binoculars
Camera: Canon 20D with 100-400mm f/5.6L lens
Photos or audio recordings: 3 photos submitted
Accompanying observers: four others
Documentation date: January 10, 2007
Submission date: January 10, 2007

Photos:

- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006a7s_8581.JPG - flight shot showing outer rectrices
- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006c7ps_8608.JPG - front view showing the bird regurgitating a berry seed
- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006d7ps_8612.JPG - front view

Location:

In a small neighborhood on Shiloh Road north of Morgantown, just north of the second overpass over I-176.

Observation:

The bird was found flycatching and feeding on berries in several yards in the Shiloh Road neighborhood. Local homeowners allowed access to their properties, and I was able to observe the bird from a range of 25 to 150 feet for a period of about 1 hour until I left the scene. The bird seemed in good health and was very active.

There were four other birders who observed the bird during my stay at the location.

Discussion:

The photos attached clearly show one of the "yellow-bellied" kingbirds—largish flycatcher with yellow underparts, gray head, darker gray/green back, dark gray/brown wings, dark tail, etc. The white outer rectrices, most visible in the blurry flight shot attached, are diagnostic of Western Kingbird and eliminate all other similar *Tyrannus* flycatchers.

Prior experience:

I have seen many Western Kingbirds in the western United States and in Florida. This is my second record for Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Western Kingbird (Tyrannus verticalis)

Date of Sighting: 25 December 2006 to 11 January 2007

Location: BERKS

County : MORGANTOWN

Observer(s): Holly Hartshorne m. obs

Date of Submission: 2007

Submitted by: H. Hartshorne, C. Rutt, T Johnson, G Malosh

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: Audio

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
J. Stanley B Coviter	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date: 12/6/07