

Nick,

Here is my submission to the PORC for the Ash-throated Flycatcher that was in my yard January 4th and 5th.

On January 4th, I was starting up the steps of my back porch at 111 W. Big Spring Ave. Newville, when a bird flew up from a bush on the left side of me and perched on a wire about 8 feet in front of me and 5 feet above me. I was able to study the bird for about 10 minutes as it sat there spitting out seeds from Euyonmus berries it was eating. I was able to observe the bird from several angles as I slowly walked around the bird getting to within 4-5 feet of it. In general the bird looked like a pale Great-crested Flycatcher. Field marks include the following:

All dark bill

Grayish-white throat and breast

Pale yellow belly and under tail coverts

The under tail was mostly rufous with fairly large black ovals on both sides of the tail at the end of the tail.

The crest of the bird seemed slightly darker than the back, and it seemed to me that the rump onto the tail seemed a bit more brown than the back.

The bird's wings had a fairly small rufous window on each, with pale wing bars.

I managed to get a few other looks at the bird with binoculars on the 4th and then once again on the 5th. In all 7 people saw the bird including Andy Markel, Linda Franz, Herb Weigle, Chuck Chalfant, Elisabeth Gauthier (who is non-birder, but who let me know earlier in the day that she had seen an unusual bird in the yard) and Dale Gearhart who took pictures, three of which are attached.

I'm certainly no expert on this species as the only other one I have ever seen was the one in Lebanon County a couple of years ago. The combination of the overall paleness of the bird, the all dark bill, and the under tail would seem to rule out any other less likely possibility (i.e. Dusky-capped, Brown-crested, and Great Crested).

Vern Gauthier
Newville