

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Western Kingbird

Location: My Yard - small acreage in northern Warren County, IA

Habitat: Mixed open woods and field edge with creek and many shrubs

Date(s): 8/5/89 and 8/7/89

Time: 6:15 pm to 6:30 pm
7:10 pm to 8:05 pm

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: none

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under-tail, legs, feet). Also mention behavior and voice.

This bird was the size of an eastern kingbird, which I assumed it was until observing the white outer tail feathers and lack of a white terminal band on the tail. Perched the bird showed a pale gray head with a thick black bill. A heavy black line extended from the bill through the eye. The back and wings were a grayish brown with buffy edges to the wing coverts. The squared tail was between a slate gray and black with white outer tail feathers. The throat and breast were a dirty white shading to a pale yellow belly and undertail coverts. The bird was hawking insects from the tops of trees until it was chased by an Eastern kingbird. The buffy-edged wing coverts and pale yellow underparts would indicate juvenile plumage - perhaps one from a possible nesting in Polk Co. approximately 20 miles away?

Similar species and how eliminated:

Myiarchus Family - lack of rusty tail

Cassin's Kingbird - white outer tail feathers

Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds - squared tail

Thick-billed Kingbird - thinner bill, tail shape, outer tail feathers, no mask

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Viewed at 10 to 80 feet in good light with sun usually to the back. Flew directly overhead at one point. Viewed through 7x26 Bushnells.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Many years of experience of kingbird/flycatcher identification including all of the western species.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Society, Field Guide to the Birds of North America was consulted prior to completion of this documentation

How long before field notes made? 2 minutes of initial sighting; further notes after second observation How long before this form completed? 2 weeks