

Bird Studies Canada/ Long Point Bird Observatory

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RARITY REPORT

In order that any sight record or banding of a rare species can be accepted for the historical record, it must be properly documented. LPBO cooperators are therefore asked to complete a form in every case where a rarity is being claimed. Guidance as to which species are considered rare in the Long Point area may be obtained from the Migration Program Manager. Each observer should prepare his/her description independently and preferably before consulting any field guides or other literature. PLEASE PRINT.

Species claimed: Cassin's Kingbird

No. of birds: one

Age: Unknown

Sex: Female?

Date(s): 9 June 2015

Place: Long Point Tip

Time(s) of Observation: 4 pm to 6 pm.

Who first saw the bird(s): Taylor Brown

Who first identified it: Mark Conboy & Matt Iles

Other observers (names and addresses): Mark Conboy, Matt Iles, Denis Lepage, Stu Mackenzie, Ron Ridout

Any who disagree: No

Your previous experience with the species: Observed on one trip to Arizona.

Your previous experience with any closely similar species:

(a) Formerly: Western Kingbird observed several times in Ontario and numerous observations on trips to the central U.S.

(b) Same day:

Species present for comparison: Eastern Kingbird for size and call.

Which were beside it for comparison: EAKI close by.

Distance from observer(s): As close as 50 ft on one occasion.

How measured: Estimated

Optical aids used: 8 x 42 Zeiss Conquest and 20-60x Kowa scope

Weather conditions (at time of observation)

Visibility: unlimited

Cloud Cover: <10%

Lighting: Full frontal sun at times

Wind direction and speed:

Other relevant conditions:
(eg. rain, snow cover, etc.)

For "Waterbird " records only

Lake conditions:

Wave height:

Height of observer above lake:

Was observer's position sheltered:

Weather system preceding the date of observation (if known):

Attach weather map clipping from local or national newspaper if relevant.

Associated movements of other species:

Was the bird trapped: No

Band # if banded:

Was it photographed: Yes

If yes, by whom (name and address): Ron Ridout

Specimen or parts preserved:

Present location:

Circumstances: Sometime early in the afternoon on 9 June, Taylor Brown was performing a net check near the tip of Long Point when she heard a strange call that she did not recognize. After spending some time tracking it down she discovered a ‘kingbird’ flycatcher that she did not quite recognize. After studying the bird she left it to alert the rest of the team of banders to the presence of this strange kingbird. Apparently they spent some time before relocating the bird. But upon re-discovery, they realized that the bird was a Cassin’s Kingbird.

Since there was a scheduled crew change for later in the afternoon, Denis Lepage and I were able to accompany Stu Mackenzie on a boat trip to the Tip. Upon arrival, we began a search for the bird in the grove of trees near the Tip where Taylor had first found it and seen it as recently as 20 minutes before our arrival. After a search of about 20 minutes the bird was found at about 4 pm. From that point on we followed it about the Tip as it fed in the general area for the next 2 hours. It would frequently be lost from sight as it flew some distance and was absent at times for up to 20 minutes. The entire time, it was quite skittish and rarely allowed approach closer than 100 ft. or so. At about 6 pm. it disappeared from view for the final time.

Description:

Give separate description for (a) in the field (b) in the hand. Include full measurements and wing formula with hand descriptions.

A medium-sized yellow-bellied kingbird similar in length and shape to a nearby Eastern Kingbird. Dark gray head, breast and back. Contrasting white malar moustache and chin. Bright yellow belly sharply demarcated from dark grayish-olive lower breast. Wings lighter brownish-gray than back with bright edgings to coverts and flight feathers. Short squarish to slightly notched tail with a narrow buffy edging to outer retrices and a buffy tip to the upper side of the tail. Fairly short black bill.

Call: On two occasions I heard two distinct call types by the bird. The first heard twice was a two-syllabled (first note emphasis) loud sharp “chick-weer”. The second type heard once was several sharp “kee-dee” given in rapid succession. Both identical to calls on the Sibley and Nat. Geo phone apps.

Similar species eliminated:

Western Kingbird: Head, breast and back dark gray not pale gray. White malar and chin contrasting sharply with head and throat/breast. Dark breast clearly demarcated from brighter yellow belly not pale gray breast blending smoothly with pale yellow belly. Wings paler than back with bright edging to all coverts not a darker gray overall. Pale tipped tail appeared shorter than WEKI with no noticeable white outer webbing to outer retrices.

Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird: Smaller than these species with a shorter, narrower bill. Shorter only slightly notched tail not long and deeply notched and black with pale tip not plain grayish brown. Head and breast dark gray not pale gray. White malar and chin contrasting sharply with head and breast. Back dark gray not greenish.



Dark gray head with no contrasting darker facial mask and a contrasting bright white malar moustache. Bill smaller, more peg-shaped than a Western Kingbird. The tail is square tipped in this photo. The distinct demarcation between the grayish-olive breast and the yellow belly is apparent.



The distinct white chin and malar area contrasting with the dark gray head and throat/breast are very apparent. The dark grayish-olive breast contrasting sharply with the yellow belly is also obvious. Tail is square tipped



In this photo, the distinct white malar area is apparent along with the bright edging to the coverts and flight feathers. The paler wing coverts lighter than the back can be seen. A close examination of the tail reveals a narrow buffy to the outer feather. This is consistent with the species. In the photos there are no apparent pale ends to the underside of the tail feathers. However on two occasions when the bird was flying away, a pale end to the upper side of the tail feathers was visible when the tail was spread.



Another view of the contrasting white chin and malar area. The contrasting bright edging to the wing coverts and flight feathers are also apparent. The wings, while not entirely obvious in this photo, are paler in colouration than the back.



This large magnification of the two outer primaries is included in an attempt to determine sex. ASY male can be ruled out by the lack of extreme emargination but is the emargination of p10 enough to indicate that the bird is a female and not an SY male? I believe that p10 is broad enough with some emargination at the tip to indicate that it is a female. If so then the precise age cannot be determined as a small percentage of SY females will have moulted p10 by early June making it anything SY or older.

(Continue on extra sheet if required)

Did you refer to any guides/other literature:

(a) at the time: Sibley, Nat. Geo. phone apps

(b) afterwards: Sibley, Nat. Geo. & Pyle

Finally, is this record 100% certain? Yes

Signed:

Date: 16 October 2015

Ron R. Pyle

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