On Thu, May 23, 2013 at 7:32 PM, Edith Andrews

Hi Matt,

This is actually Ginger Andrews, Edith's daughter. I want to report a Western Kingbird, seen on Nantucket at about 6:05 p.m. on May 17. I had no idea how unusual spring records were until I looked at Veit and Peterson's Birds of Ma.

    The circumstances are thus: Mom and I had been out birding and were driving home. Just where North Sheep Pond Road splits to join Red Barn Road there was a flurry of wings as two birds flew up from a puddle. One was unquestionably an Eastern Kingbird, which we expect as they have nested near this spot for the last several years. The other gave me a moment of "what the heck was that?!?" as it had yellow under the tail. Both birds perched on adjacent bushes about 15-20 feet apart and about 30 to 40 feet from me. They sat for almost a full minute, I'd say, giving me good looks through my Svarovski 10x42 binos, and good comparison with each other. I could clearly see the white border on the tail of the Eastern Kingbird, for example. I ID-ed the other bird as a Western Kingbird based on its yellow undertail coverts, white breast and throat, dark grey/black head, back and wings, black bill and slightly darker black line through the eye. I am familiar with the Western Kingbird as we had one here for several weeks last fall. The bird I saw last friday was in much better shape with the yellow tush very yellow and the feathers nice and crisp. It appeared slightly larger than the Eastern Kingbird. After a good long look both birds flew, and I watched the Western head east towards Clark's Cove. Mom was with me, but unfortunately her eyesight is such that all she could say these days is that she "saw a flash of yellow." I called other birders, but they couldn't relocate the bird. So, as no one else saw it I'm afraid it can't be a confirmed sighting, but I thought you'd like to know.

    Sincerely,

    Ginger Andrews

On May 24, 2013, at 4:34 PM, "Edith Andrews" <efa@nantucket.net> wrote:

Hi Matt,

    I'm afraid I didn't take any special note of the tail, and as I've never seen any of those other kingbirds they just never crossed my mind. We have Westerns fairly regularly in the fall so I was content to call it that. W/ hindsight I'd say that the black went all the way to the end of the tail with no border, but as to the outer tailfeathers, I just didn't take note. And it seemed like the yellow did not start until well down on the belly, as opposed to further up on the breast, but that's the best I can do.

    We'd be delighted to take a look at the list for the archives and send on whatever info we have. Julia Blythe is now the collections manager for the Maria Mitchell Assoc. so she's been working on those specimens; she may be a help too.

    Ginger and Edith