

Ash-throated Flycatcher – Jefferson County

Unanimously Accepted - Vote (7-0)

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: It is safe to say that the bird in question is a *Myiarchus* flycatcher, and it is too pale to be Great Crested Flycatcher, the only *Myiarchus* species found in eastern United States. So that leaves the *Myiarchus* flycatchers in the west to consider. There are three regularly occurring *Myiarchus* flycatchers in the west, plus Nutting's Flycatcher, a vagrant species from Mexico and Central America which is starting to show up more frequently in the southwestern United States. Of those species, Dusky-capped Flycatcher can be eliminated, as the bird in question is clearly not that species. The remaining species, Ash-throated, Brown-crested, and Nutting's flycatchers are very similar and not easily separated in the field, except by voice. The field marks observable in the photos do seem good for Ash-throated Flycatcher. And fortunately in this case, we have definitive recordings that clearly confirm this species as Ash-throated Flycatcher. Furthermore, of the western species of *Myiarchus* flycatchers, Ash-throated is the only one with a pattern of vagrancy to the eastern United States. I would like to commend the observer for recognizing a bird that many might pass off as a Great Crested Flycatcher, and for obtaining such good photographs and recordings.

CM2: Clear photographic evidence was presented that allows identification of these two birds as Ash-throated Flycatchers: whitish throat, cinnamon patch on wing, white wing bars, white edges to secondaries, light yellow belly. The whitish throat and smaller bill helps rule out Great Crested Flycatcher and Brown Crested Flycatcher. The distinct white wing bars and lighter yellow belly help rule out Dusky-capped Flycatcher. Having Wil confirm the ID from the audio recording helps establish the identification of these two birds as Ash-throated Flycatchers.

CM3: Audio and images confirm this species.

CM4: Good write up by the submitter. White'ish throat and pale yellow belly transition looks good for *Myiarchus cinerascens* along with the smaller bill when compared to Great Crested Flycatcher. Extensive rufous in tail eliminates Dusky-capped. Most similar looking LaSagra's and Nutting's (which I seen and heard) calls are different and would be off-the-charts rarities. The vocal recordings clinch the ID for me. Amazing that there were two. During mid-November to mid-December several Ash-throated Flycatchers were found along the mid-Atlantic.

CM5: Clear audio recording, very descriptive description, well-seasoned observer I have had personal experience with in species identification. No reason to not accept this identification by a careful observer.

CM6: Excellent documentation including detailed photographs and audio recording.

CM7: I am voting for this record on the strength of the photos presented in the report. The bird in the photos is clearly a flycatcher with a dark, pointed bill, slight crest and bristle feathers around the bill. The cinnamon markings on the wings and tail indicated this is either an Ash-throated Flycatcher or a Great-crested Flycatcher. However, the two distinct white wing bars in the median and greater coverts is a clear distinction that this bird is an Ash-throated Flycatcher. Additionally, the crest of the bird is more indicative of an Ash-throated Flycatcher with a warmer cinnamon wash than the more drab, brown typical of the Great-crested Flycatcher. The Great-crested Flycatcher also typically has a darker gray throat than the Ash-throated Flycatcher and this bird in the photos has a light gray throat color. Interestingly, the first Ash-throated Flycatcher record

for the state was located in Jefferson County on 12/15/1990. This record is also in Jefferson County among the orchard habitat that mimics their preferred shrubby habitat in western North America. Thus, I am voting to support this sighting as the second record of Ash-throated Flycatcher in WV.