



### Age, sex, and subspecies

A review of specimens at the Field Museum showed several differences between hatch year and adult Fork-tailed Flycatchers during the northern spring. The two most consistent and noticeable differences were in feather wear and head color. Hatch years had much fresher

*An Eastern Kingbird, left, poses in the same camera frame with the Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Paul Douglas Forest Preserve, Cook County. 16 May 2005. Photo by Eric Secker.*

plumage, which is especially pronounced in having blacker wing coverts and flight feathers.

Additionally, hatch year birds invariably had at least some brown in the crown, most often on the top of the head. The Paul Douglas bird, however, had very worn, brown wing coverts, primaries, and tail feathers and had a fully black crown, indicating an adult.

Subspecific identification is based on the shape of the emargination of the outer primaries (Lockwood 1999). Despite the worn state of the primary tips, photographs show relatively blunt primary tips with little emargination. This makes conclusive subspecific identification impossible, though it is highly probable based on its migratory patterns and history of vagrancy across North America that it belongs to the nominate subspecies. The blunt primaries, combined with the relatively short length of the unbroken left outermost tail feather, point to it being a female.

### Review of record

I conducted a review of North American records of Fork-tailed Flycatcher by searching *North American Birds (NAB)* and its predecessors after 1992. For pre-1993 records I relied on McCaskie and Patten (1994), the last thorough review of such records. They examined the original observer descriptions to decide which were acceptable; I only reviewed records in *NAB* and corresponded with appropriate sources to resolve discrepancies and learn the outcome of records reported as pending record's committee review.

North American Fork-tailed Flycatcher records show two seasonal peaks of occurrence, a larger one

**Figure 2.**  
All mid-continent and western Fork-tailed Flycatcher records.

| Date                               | Location                           | Source                     |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 28-30 October 1977                 | Dorion, ON                         | McCaskie and Patten (1994) |
| 29-30 September 1993               | Cayuga, ON                         | AB 48:106                  |
| 3-13 September 1996                | Arner, Essex Co., ON               | FN 51:50                   |
| 25-26 September 1996               | Nobleton, Lennox Addington Co., ON | FN 51:50                   |
| 29 October 1996                    | Dorland, Lennox Addington Co., ON  | FN 51:50                   |
| 2-19 October 2004                  | Thunder Bay, ON                    | NAB 59:68                  |
| 5 December 2004                    | Near Point Pelee N.P., ON          | NAB 59:259                 |
| 6 October 1983                     | Rumely, Alger Co., MI              | AB 38:206                  |
| 15 September 2001                  | Bay City S.P., Bay Co., MI         | NAB 56:56                  |
| 13-16 November 1978                | Columbia Co., WI                   | AB 33:180                  |
| 24 June 1988                       | Douglas Co., WI                    | AB 42:1292                 |
| 27-30 October 2000                 | Patrick Marsh, Dane Co., WI        | NAB 55:56                  |
| 24 October 2003                    | Oconto Co., WI                     | NAB 58:80                  |
| 6 September 1991                   | Duluth, Cook Co., MN               | AB 46:93                   |
| 3-14 May 1992                      | Grand Marais, St. Louis Co., MN    | AB 46:427                  |
| 16 May 2005                        | Hoffman Estates, Cook Co., IL      |                            |
| Late October, 1800s (year unknown) | KY                                 | McCaskie and Patten (1994) |
| 14-17 January 1995                 | Near Holla Bend NWR, Yell Co. AR   | FN 49:158                  |
| 27 May 1999                        | Cedoux, SK                         | NAB 53:293                 |
| 1 June 1988                        | Drumheller, AB                     | AB 42:1305                 |
| 25 August-7 September 1991         | East of Picabo, ID                 | AB 46:125                  |
| 8 September 2001                   | Pentigon, south Okanagan, BC       | NAB 56:94                  |
| 12-13 September 1995               | Chinook, Pacific Co., WA           | FN 50:108                  |
| 4-8 September 1992                 | Bridgehaven, Sonoma Co., CA        | AB 47:146                  |