

Eastern Kingbird: A fun-to-watch bug catcher

BY BRUCE MCCAMMON

I enjoy traveling around our area, within Washington, the Pacific Northwest or to foreign countries.

Travel means that there will be new birds to see and habitats to explore.

The diversity one experiences with travel makes life more interesting.

Sometimes, though, a familiar bird shows up when you're a long way from home. I'm always pleased to see an old friend in places that are new to me.

Among the birds we see each spring and early summer is the Eastern Kingbird.

These birds are smaller than an American Robin and have distinctive field marks that make it easy to identify. The marks include the bright white breast and blue-black head, back



Bruce McCammon is retired, color-blind and enjoys photographing the birds in north central Washington.



and tail. A white band at the end of the tail is another distinctive mark.

They have a fairly high pitched, buzzy song.

Eastern Kingbirds are flycatchers and will frequently perch on wires or branches to scan an area for flying insects. Like other flycatchers, the Eastern

Kingbird will fly off a perch to snag an insect or two and return to the perch. It's fun to sit quietly and watch the antics.

This photo could have easily been taken in the Horan Natural Area in Wenatchee or any of the suburban foothills of north central Washington — it wasn't.

I took this photo in Ohio last

May on a trip to see a wide variety of warblers.

Seeing the Eastern Kingbird sitting along the trail as we headed to our car at the end of the day made me smile.

The bird let me approach to a respectful distance and posed in nice, uniform evening light. How could I resist?