

DOCUMENTATION --
RARE BIRD SIGHTING

2006-13(R82)
1982-1146

MOUNTAIN WEST REGION
AMERICAN BIRDS

Species: Least Flycatcher
(Vernacular name)

Empidonax minimus
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 11 June 82, 12 June 82 Time Bird Seen: 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm
7:30 am to 8:00 am

Locality: 320 Gordon Ln. Murray, Utah - in the cottonwoods alongside Cottonwood Creek
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 10x50 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: N/A

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: fresh-not worn - adult

Light conditions: Partly cloudy with good light under full canopy of foliage

Distance from bird, and how measured: 30-75 feet - measured visually

Describe the bird's overall behavior: The bird was first noticed by its repetitive call which I interpreted as "che-bek". Upon seeing the bird flying out from a perch and hawking insects, I decided to look at it closer. After one hour of observation the bird appeared to stay within an area about 75 x 200 feet. Constantly flycatching and calling its two part call. (15 min total over the 1 hr. span)

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

residential area, planted lawn on both sides of Cottonwood Creek approx 100 x 300 feet in size. Mature cottonwood trees in full foliage presenting a 75% canopy.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

none

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Bird was first heard calling "che-Bek" repeatedly. Individual recognized as flycatcher in empidonax group by compact size, ^{white} eye ring, short bill, grayish brown back and throat light, breast olive not yellow and tail slightly forked not rounded or square, light wing bars.

The only other birds it even slightly resembled were the western & the gray flycatchers. But after having seen hundreds of both I just couldn't call it either. I can't stress the voice quite enough in this case. "che-Bek"!! Unfortunately I wrote the above description after observing and not during. A few hours later, around 6pm 11 June 82.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

The bird was calling from a perch. It sounded to me like "che-Bek" or chebek. At times it was definitely two part with heavy emphasis on the last syllable, stressed a "beK". The "K" very clearly heard. Loud & persistent.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

willow flycatcher - voice & habitat, ~~eye ring~~ ^{was} not a round tail
western flycatcher - voice, belly ^{was} not as yellow, didn't flick wings
Hammond's flycatcher - voice & habitat
Rusky flycatcher - voice & habitat
Gray flycatcher - voice & habitat, bird wasn't gray

Prior experience with this and similar species:

no prior exp w/ E. minimus. However I have exp in identifying the other Empidonax group I have listed.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after X ^{and habitat description from} observation; from memory X.

NAME (print):

Brad Stovall

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 1371 Susanville, Ca 96130

Signature:

Brad Stovall

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
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Denver, Colorado 80206

1875

While in Norway, I. & J. (1875)
at the same time, I described a new species,
from my collection and from my list.

Very distinctive new - I described it after the
materiality of my list of the same.

Like young with first winter of yellowish color.
Observed in cottonwoods along Colorado River,
330 miles N. Norway I.

Found to me this bird a pale chestnut
at the same place. I described it as
pale chestnut, but it is the same as the
one I described (Hemlock). It was found in
Hemlock, etc. but the same bird will probably be

Found in
Hemlock
Hemlock, etc. 1875
"Hemlock Hemlock" etc.