

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Least Flycatcher Scientific Name: Empidonax minimus

Date: June 18, 1989 Time: 11:00am and again at 1:00pm Length of time observed: ~15 minutes

Number: 1 Age: Adult Sex: male

Location: Beaver Dam, Utah, Box Elder County. Adjacent to mile marker

104 on State Highway 30

Lat/long: 2 Elevation (if known): ~4400 ft.

Distance to bird: minimum of 5 feet Light conditions: Diffuse light under tree canopy & full sun

Optical equipment: 10x40 Bushnell binoculars

Weather: Clear

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The bird observed was an Empidonax flycatcher with a very clear eye-ring and two distinct wing bars. Its head was moderately large relative to the body. The color above was gray to greenish gray. The throat was whitish grading into light gray on the breast and belly.

The bird was calling frequently during both observation periods - using its distinct 'che-bek' call note. The 'che-bek' phrases were often sung one after another with little separation.

The bird responded immediately to a tape recording of a Least flycatcher (National Geographic) and came within 5 feet of the observer, calling emphatically.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: (see other side) The bird called while sitting on generally exposed perches.

Behavior: The bird was first observed sitting on dead or open branches under the forest canopy singing much of the time. It moved between several such perches. When the recording was played, the

Habitat: bird moved immediately toward the observer, moving between various perches, looking for the 'phantom' bird.  
A grove of large willow trees (black willow) along a prairie with standing water in the bottom.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

The distinct 'che-bek' call note and delivery pattern eliminated all other Empidonax flycatchers. The coloration and relatively large head was consistent with Least Flycatchers and is unlike all other Utah Empidonax flycatchers.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have seen and heard them many times each year over the course of 16 years of banding in Michigan.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

None

Significance of record in this area or the state: 1st State Record!

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting  notes made later  from memory

Observer: Ronald J. Ryel

Signature:

Address: 825 N. 600 E.  
Logan, UT 84321

Ronald J. Ryel

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Larry Ryel

Corinne Melmer

Keith Archibald

Date prepared: June 18, 1989

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen  
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