

(27 May 1995)

SUBMIT REPORT TO:

UTAH ORNITHOLOGISTS
UTAH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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Lat/long 18 Record type _____ Serial No. _____
Habitat _____ Disposition _____ Cx Nos. _____

Common Name Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
Scientific Name Empidonax traillii extimus
Obs. date 27 May 1995 Time(s) 0730-0815
Duration of obs. 35 minutes
Distance from bird varied 30 feet-150 feet
Light conditions partly cloudy
Optical equip. Pentax 10x50 binoculars
Photo equip. no
Notes made at time of sighting xx Date report prepared _____
Notes made later from memory _____ 27 May 1995

Weather at time of this observation.
cool for late May, about 55-60°F
The evening before had a hard thunder shower with gusty winds
Prior weather and number of days since change
May has been cool and rainy.

Locality
Moab, Utah. An area of 4th E. between the millcreek bridge and Mulberry Ln., down Mulberry Ln. to SW corner of Rotary Park

Enter number of birds in each category.	GENDER(S)	AGES(S)	PLUMAGE(S)	PHOTO(S)
Total number observed.	Males <u>1</u>	Adults <u>1</u>	Breeding <u>1</u> Transition _____	Available _____
<u>1</u>	Females _____	Juv/Imms _____	Eclipse _____ Dark phase _____	Enclosed _____
	♀ or Imms _____	2/3 yr birds _____	Winter _____ Light ph. _____	none
	Unknowns _____	Unknowns _____	Other _____	

Description of bird: Size, colors, all field marks OBSERVED. - Unique features of this individual, if any.

A small bird, about 6 inches long, with the large-headed look typical of flycatchers. Back dark, brownish-gray or olive gray color with not a great contrast between back and tail. Wings some darker, with two wing bars. No visible eyering, or any other facial markings. Beak dark or black (possibly lighter under lower mandible) long and heavy, probably medium for a flycatcher. Chin/throat light or whitish. Breast grayer than throat. Lower belly had a distinct light yellowish wash. Wings short in comparison to tail, wingtips not coming much past the rump. Tail seemed longish because of the short wings but actually was not longish in comparison to the bird's body. The tail was flipped upwards a short way quite often, frequently in a series of such movements with times in between when the tail was still. The tail moved upwards quickly then returned to the previous position.

This bird foraged frequently, flying out from a perch and nearly always landing on a different perch. It was eventually lost in thicker brush near Millcreek. The first clue to the bird's presence was it's song, "fitz-a-hugh" in a rather rough tone with the center syllable sometimes almost like a stutter. This song was given often during the observation and helped in relocating the bird when it flew from a perch.

28 May 1995--I observed bird of same description less than 1 block from previous sighting, near creek next to Rotary Park. Key marks were yellow wash, tail flick, frequent "whit" call. Did not sing. In park were 1 W. Wood-peewee and Olive-sided Flycatcher. *In view about 6 min.*

3 June 1995--bird of same description in my neighbor's and my backyards. Called often, did not sing. Lighter lower mandible visible. (about 3 blocks from original sighting area) *Seen 5 times btwn 8:20 + 12:30, 3-5 minutes each time - kept moving.*

Sightings by others

8 June 1995--Damian Fagan in his yard at 371 E. 100 N. He reports that he got 10-15 seconds of tape of the song.

9 June 1995--Damian Fagan--while running Breeding Bird Survey, about 1/2 mile up-river from Colorado River bridge, one bird singing on the Arches N. P. side of river.

<p>Field marks which were <u>not</u> seen. Why not?</p> <p>lighter color of lower mandible not clearly noted although the beak did not seem uniformly dark</p>	<p>Variations from expected field marks.</p>
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List similar species and describe why or how you eliminated them.

Western Wood-peewee: doesn't flick tail
 Eastern Phoebe: lacks wingbars
 Gray Flycatcher: drops tail
 Dusky, Hammond's, Least, and Acadian Flycatchers: all have eye ring
 all of the above eliminated by song
 Alder Flycatcher: different song
 Willow Flycatcher(Northern area): lacks the middle syllable in the song

Behavior of this bird. Other species seen with this one. Any interaction between birds?

No interactions seen with other birds although many were around (other species)
 Tail flicking was frequent
 Bird was foraging in a typical flycatcher pattern of flying out from a perch. However it usually landed on a different perch than the one it flew from and seemed to work it's way around the area. Usually it landed from 3 to 7 feet of the ground.

Habitat at this location. Adjacent or near by habitat, if significant.

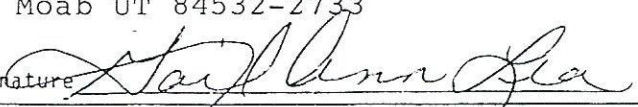
Riparian area adjacent to a small creek, in an area that was bulldozed clear of brush and snags several years ago.

Describe bird's song or sounds.

song: rough sounding "fitz-a-hugh" or "fitz-a-a-hugh" given fairly quickly, not drawn out
 call: clear much sweeter (in comparison to song) "whit" or "whiit" usually given several times in succession

Print reporter's name, address, phone number

Gail Ann Lea
 469 Sundial ph.801-259-5501
 Moab UT 84532-2733

Signature 

What is your experience with this or similar birds?

have seen 1 other Willow (subsp. unkn) in 1989, it was singing locally familiar with Western Wood-peewee & to lesser extent Western (Cordilleran) and Gray Flycatchers

Corroborating observers not reporting separately.

_____	_____
Print Name	Signature
_____	_____
Print Name	Signature
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Print Name	Signature
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Print Name	Signature

10-8-93

Dear Ella,

Thanks for your response this summer to my Willow flycatcher sighting. I personally question whether the subspecies can be separated in the field and was hoping you would have more info. The resources I used in ID-ing the bird as SW subsp. were (1) the tape of the SW ³⁰⁴¹ call with the middle syllable, which I got from Nelson and which I believe he got by way of Hugh Kingery. I am assuming you have it--it was made as a study and diagnostic field-work tool, from near Espanola N.M. (2) the info in the Federal ¹⁹⁸¹ report designating it as endangered, which mentions the syllable and (3) 'word of mouth' at the Partners in Flight meeting in Moab last March

--the comment was made that the US Fish & Wildlife (I believe by way of the US Biologic. Svc.) had made an arbitrary cutoff for the SW Willow's range but that they really didn't know that for sure because it hadn't been studied that well above that line (therefore I couldn't eliminate the possibility of a SW right off the bat because we aren't really that far out of its supposed range).

My main concern is whether any of the other subspecies ever possibly also make that middle syllable. Apparently the SW doesn't always but the big question is do the others NEVER.

Oh, I also used the call note as well as the song, but I believe that is the same or similar for all subsp. and serves more to help clinch the sp. identification.

Frankly, in this case, I'm glad my job is to turn over my information and let someone else figure out what to make of it!

Fall migration has seemed very slow here. Warblers have been in short supply. On



10-5 another birder and I saw 1 Townsend's Warbler female in the Mathison Preserve. It's an uncommonly seen fall migrant here (to my knowledge 1 at a time, and not every year). On 9-23, in the LaSal mtns. the bird club saw 2 Lewis' woodpeckers in the ponderosas, another uncommon sp/fall migrant for us.

Otherwise I'm not aware of any unusual sightings or numbers. Numbers seem low to me but it may be only my perception because I haven't been consistently in the field so I haven't seen as many birds as usual. No wonder I'm feeling deprived. Will keep in touch with any news or information from here.

Sincerely,
Gail Lea