

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPER BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

34-90-33

A

Species: Alder Flycatcher | Empidonax alnoy
(Vernacular name) | (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): 29 May 1990 Time Bird Seen: ~13:00 to 13:10 p.m.

Locality: Olive marsh
Pueblo, Colorado
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoculars.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: _____ Plumage: adult, spring

Light conditions: Excellent, diffuse sun in shady undercover.

Distance from bird, and how measured: ~30-100 feet estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Perching quietly below scattered small trees in grassy marsh edge. Feeding by flycatching along willow & water, smaller undergrowth under cottonwoods & elms. Flicks wings and tail after landing but not thereafter. Gives call note fairly often. Perched 3-5 feet high, usually, on bare branches in understory.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Marshy area; shady growth; riparian woodland.

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.

Smallish empid with strong greenish tones. Wingtips just extend past rump with long primary extension. Two fairly distinct wingbars, are pale yellowish white. Small bill with all pale lower mandible. Undersides pale grayish, washed w/ faint yellow; darker across breast, white on chin & throat. Wings & tail dark. Tail med. - long & rounded. Head grayish, clearly contrasting with strong olive green back. Virtually no eyering, just a faint narrow pale ^{one} at lower back of eye, partially encircling eye; but so faint as to not be very obvious. Face darker than rest of head.

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

Often gave call note, a dull, flat, sharp "peet", not the usual sharp rising "whit" that I expected. At first, I thought I was hearing a warbler as the call note was so distinct & different.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Medium size, all pale lower mandible & long primary extension, along with nearly absent (or at least inconspicuous) eyering point to: "Trails" type flycatcher.

The "peet" call note shows Alder Flycatcher rather than Willow ("whit") Flycatcher. Gray head contrasting sharply w/ olive back & dark face suggest Alder, rather than Willow Flycatcher.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have at least moderate experience with all empids (with exception of Yellow-breasted Flycatcher). I have a lot of experience w/ breeding Willow Flycatcher.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory .

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Signature: Mark Janos

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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