

DOCUMENTATION --  
PAVE BIRD SIGHTING

~~MOUNTAIN AREA REGION~~  
~~AMERICAN BIRDS~~

34-96-44

Species: ALDER FLYCATCHER  
(Vernacular name)

Empidonax alnorum  
(Scientific name) *Accepted 7-0*

*Rec'd 8-70*

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): 25 June 1996 Time Bird Seen: 1015 to 1045

Locality: Waterton parking lot, Jefferson County, Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 10x40 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Not photographed

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Male (?) Plumage: adult

Light conditions: partly cloudy

Distance from bird, and how measured: As close as 20 feet (estimated)

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Bird was very active, constantly moving from tree to tree in the thick brushy area where I first spotted it. It was singing constantly each time it perched.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Thick brushy area adjacent to the parking lot at Waterton. Area had numerous deciduous trees 15 to 25 feet tall.

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.

Appearance was a longish non-descript empid. with a minimal eyering and inconspicuous wing bars. The underside of the lower mandible was entirely pale. Bird had a whitish throat and appeared to have an indistinct grayish breastband. Underparts appeared to be dull yellowish gray. Upper parts appeared to be darker olive-grayish. Estimate it to have been 5 to 6 inches long. Voice, not appearance was the identifying field mark.

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

When I got to the parking lot about 1015 (to look for a reported Hooded Warbler), soon after leaving the car I heard a flycatcher singing a loud, nasal "fee-bee". Instant reaction was "alder flycatcher"; second thought was "it can't be; it must be a Willow Flycatcher" so I ran back to the car to get a tape for comparison. Returned and spotted the bird in the top of a small tree still singing "fee-bee" with accent on 2nd syllable. Song matched exactly with that

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

of Alder Flycatcher on NGS tape. In addition to the "fee-bee" song, the bird also sang a raspy ascending-then-descending "wheer" (again similar to the NGS tape). Only real ID contender would be Willow Flycatcher, but song is completely different. I was able to observe and hear the bird for approx. 1/2 hour.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Alder Flycatcher: have seen & heard them in Minnesota, Michigan, and Alaska

Willow Flycatcher: Have seen and heard them in Colorado (But none recently - last in 1990)

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

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Signature:

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