

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X**Species:** Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*)**Date:** 11 June 2002 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** ? **Plumage:** Alternate**Locality:** private ranch ~1.5 mi. W of Norfolk **Elevation:** ~5900'**Nearest town:** Norfolk **County:** Larimer**Time observed:** ~10:00 **Duration of observation:** ~45 seconds

Description: After conducting a *Monitoring Colorado's Birds* transect on a private ranch, I birded the homestead on that ranch. I soon saw an *Empidonax* flycatcher (no species should be breeding at the site), so spent some time trying to get a good look at it, as a migrant this late in the season was probably a "good" one! About the time that I was going to give up and go home, I finally got a decent look at the bird (which was quite skittish). It really looked like an Alder. As it flew away again, it called once, confirming my visual identification. I quickly wrote a few notes and then headed out.

The bird was an obvious *Empidonax* flycatcher (green above, pale below, eye ring, two wing bars, upright posture, flycatching) on the large side for that genus. The crown, nape, face, back, and rump were all fairly bright olive-green. It had a thin, but distinct, whitish eye ring. The bill was relatively wide and long and bicolored with the maxilla black and the mandible yellow-orange. The wings were blackish with two distinct white wingbars. The tail was dark with a white outer web on each outer rectrix. The chin and throat were whitish, contrasting with a wash of greenish-gray on the chest. The belly and vent were white with a little washed of yellow on the vent. The primary projection was fairly long for an *Empidonax*, being a bit longer than half the length of the longest tertial and the primary tips extended beyond the tips of the uppertail coverts.

Similar species eliminated: Though I noted all relevant plumage features to identify this bird, separation from its sister species, Willow Flycatcher, was based almost entirely on the distinctive call note given once. Plumage features (color, eye ring size and color), overall size and structure (primary projection), and bill color and pattern eliminate all other *Empidonax* flycatchers. Call note also eliminates Eastern Wood-Pewee and plumage features rule out Western Wood-Pewee.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): The call note was a relatively sharp (for an Empie), slightly musical, 'peip' that was quite distinct from the Willow Flycatcher's "whit."

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >100 Alder Flycatchers and 100s of Willow Flycatchers. I have also seen >75 of all *Empidonax* that regularly occur in Colorado (100s of Least and Dusky). Additionally, I have seen 100s of both wood-pewees.

Light conditions: sun was variously behind me and to my left

Optical equipment used: Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of ~5 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

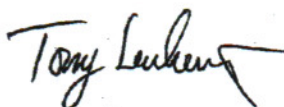
If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature: 

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: 17 January 2004 from brief notes that I wrote immediately after the sighting