

## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

## EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE

Contopus virens

Location: Rocky Ford State Wildlife Area; Rocky Ford; Otero County, Colorado

Date: May 21, 1995

Setting:

I was birding Rocky Ford State Wildlife Area alone. This is a small wooded area associated with the riparian corridor along the Arkansas River. I first detected this bird from the song which it gave several times. I was able to find the bird and observed it for several minutes in my B & L 10x Elite binoculars. The total observation time was less than 5 minutes, mid-morning. I watched the bird from about 40-50 feet. It sang while I watched it. It kept to the middle and upper levels of mixed, leafed-out trees along an open part of the wildlife area. It sat quietly, not wagging its tail and then would fly out in aerial sorties, returning to a different perch. It gave its song from the perch. The sun was good.

Description:

This was a small, slim, erect flycatcher about 6" long or so, with a vaguely crested appearance. It lacked an eyering on the greenish-brown face. It had two indistinct off-white wingbars. The wings were fairly long, reaching well beyond the rump. The upperparts were olive-green to greenish-brown. The underparts were very pale yellow, especially on the belly. The throat and breast were whitish-yellow. The sides of breast were grey. The bird lacked a strongly vested appearance. The bill was dark above and a clear, pale orange underneath, all the way to the tip.

The song was a clear whistled "pee-o-wee". It was a single slurred phrase with three notes. The "pee" was on a single high pitch and moderately long; the "o" was lower and short in duration; the "wee" was the longest note and highest and rose in pitch as it was given. It bore no resemblance at all to the rougher, distinctive song of the Western Wood-Pewee.

Similar Species:

Empidonax flycatchers are nearly always eyeringed and have much shorter wings, barely reaching beyond the rump. Most habitually wag their tails. Western Wood-Pewee is very similar but differs by having a dark, or mostly dark, lower mandible; being browner and less green above; having a more strongly vested appearance below; having a less yellowish underside. The song is distinctive, separate and diagnostic.

Experience with Species:

I have seen at least three previous Eastern Wood-Pewees in Colorado: May 1988; May 1990; and fall 1993. I have seen quite a few Eastern Wood-Pewees in the east, including Kentucky, Wisconsin, Texas and Illinois.

This report is prepared from notes made after observation.

Mark Janos  
10 Sedum Ct.  
Pueblo, CO 81001

