

Middlewestern Prairie Region  
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

Late Sighting

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species ~~Este~~ Eastern Wood-Pewee 2. Number: one
  3. Location Brookside Park Ames, Story County, Iowa
  4. Date: 13 October 1982 5. Time Bird seen: abt 11 AM ~~to~~ abt one minute
  6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):  
flycatcher; about size of Phoebe. rather dark colored - dark gray-brown - no contrast between head and back; dusky breast; wing bars; no eye ring; did not wag tail; not as 'big headed' as Phoebe; lower mandible light colored.
  7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
  8. Description of behavior: was sitting in tree about 12 feet off ground then flew to another tree sitting abt 15 feet off ground, then flew off. 'Lazy' - Empy's are
  9. Habitat - general: woods usually more active or ambitious.  
specific: trees at edge of woods. These trees were still in the area where the grass is mowed; it flew off into the more natural woods area.
  10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Phoebe: lower part of beak light; wing bars; no tail wagging; no contrast between head and back  
Empidonax : bigger; darker; no eye ring; lazier; no olivish on back; or trace of yellowish below
  11. Distance (how measured)? 35 feet at closest. 12. Optical equipment:  
8 X 50 binoculars
  13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
overcast; sun to left of me ~~and bird~~ as I faced bird. overcast pretty thick.
  14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Saw two Pheobes the same day and have seen many EmpY's earlier this Fall.
  15. Other observers:
  16. Did the others agree with your identification?
  17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
  18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
A Field Guide to the Birds Peterson  
Birds of North America Golden Press  
I might not have mentioned the lack of contrast between head & back if it hadn't been mentioned in the books. However as I saw both this bird and two Phoebes the same day, and remembered the appearance to be sure on this point, it was in order to mention it.
  19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
About 1 1/2 hours later. Knew it was a late sighting and that documentation might be reqd.
- John M. Sterling* Address: 1120 Marston  
Signature
- Date: 31 October City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010

(over)