

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Alder Flycatcher (Empidonax alnorum) 2. Number 1
3. Location Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Van Buren County, Iowa.
4. Date: 12 July 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 8:45 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.
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):  
"Small, Empidonax species; brown with light wing bars (2); black bill; slight eye-ring; white neck; whitish breast with tawny sides. Song: -- see-bee-o (Accent on 2nd syllable). About 10 yards away on low branch of shrub - bird about 6' off ground; near creek and puddles in path. Creek about 10 yards away."  
Quoted from notes made at sighting.
7. Description of voice, if heard: see-bee-o; accent on 2nd syllable which was higher in pitch. Heard bird sing four or five times.
8. Description of behavior: Bird simply sat on end of branch. Did not flit out and return to branch while I was observing.
9. Habitat - general: Forested area (near Ely Ford in Lacey-Keosauqua SP).  
specific: Low shrub about 10 yards from creek at edge of forest area.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: I eliminated Least and Acadian Flycatchers because of song primarily; also this bird was browner than other Empidonax I am familiar with.
11. Distance (how measured)?  
Estimated
12. Optical equipment:  
Bushnell binoculars; 7 x 35
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Hot, clear, muggy day. The sun was directly on bird from 3 o'clock; I was about 75° right of bird from that point. → Excellent lighting and view of bird.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: I have never seen Alder Flycatcher before, but have seen Least; Acadian; Yellow-bellied Flycatchers of Empidonax complex plus the more obvious Eastern Pewee; Phoebe; etc.
15. Other observers:  
None.
16. Did the others agree with your identification? N/A
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: N/A
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Looked in Petersen's Guide and Roberts' Birds of North America after identifying species for confirmation.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
After sighting bird I made notes quoted above. Form in draft on same day.
- Signature: James P. Sandrock Address: 1634 Morningside Drive
- Date: 29 July 1981 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240