

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Least Flycatcher (Empidonax minimus) 2. Number 5 <sup>2 ad</sup>  
<sub>3 im fledglings</sub>
3. Location Sweet Marsh (East side)
4. Date: July 5, 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 7:30 am. to 7:45 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):

The birds were first found by the almost continuous "che-bek" songs coming from a small grove of River Birch. When located I noticed two adult birds catching insects on the wing and then taking the insects to one of three fledgling birds located within about a 20' to 30' square area where they were waiting for the adults to bring food to them. They were about 10' to 30' up in the River Birch trees. It looked as though they were only out of the nest a few days, and could not fly very well. Adults were a dark gray on head, back, darker gray on wings and tail with light wing bars and a slight eyering. Lower mandible was light yellow color. Upper mandible black. Breast and belly was white to very light gray color. Actions were those of typical small Empidonax Flycatcher.

7. Description of voice, if heard: a "che-bek" call repeated almost constantly while observed. Accent on "bek" part of call.
8. Description of behavior: Setting on small branch, would then dart out and catch insects in air and return to perch or carry several insects to one of the three fledglings.
9. Habitat - general: Small patch of deciduous woods bordering open marsh near dike.  
specific: Small group of River Birch, fairly dense, on East side of Sweet Marsh.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
The only similar species seen in vicinity and that would prefer being close to this habitat type would be the Willow Flycatcher (E. traillii) which is ruled out because of the "che-bek" call

11. Distance (how measured)? At closest 15 feet 12. Optical equipment: 7x35 B+L Binoculars  
measured by eye (estimate)

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Bird was to ~~my~~ East of my location throughout observation. Sun to East also filtered through River Birch trees. (Light on bird was very good to excellent.) No harsh shadows.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Have heard and seen this species many times during migration. I am also familiar with other four Eastern Empidonax species and their calls, i.e., Acadian, Willow, Alder, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. I am also familiar with Eastern Pewee and its calls and habitat preferences.

15. Other observers:  
Lynn Heaps, Sacramento, CA.

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes but it was first time she had seen or heard this species and was not familiar with this species prior to this time.
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Lynn Heaps, as analytically as she could under the circumstances (new life bird)

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
R.T. Peterson, A Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies. As a reference on how to spell the scientific name only. No influence on my observation.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 5 Hours

Signature: Francis Moore Address: 264 Western Ave.

Date: July 5, 1981 City, State: Waterloo, IA 50701