

Western Wood-Pewee  
8 Sep 1991  
Des Moines, Polk Co., IA  
\*Engebretsen  
IBL 62:16, 71

Record Number: 91-38  
Classification: NA

## DOCUMENTATION

Bery Engebretsen, 12825 NW 127th Ct., Des Moines, IA 50235

## REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:16  
Records Committee: IBL 62:71

VOTE: 3 A-D, 4 NA

A-D, My wife and I viewed this bird as well as heard its complete series of calls. 2 sets of tapes were played and it sounded nearly identical to Petersens. The bird even sang a small song which was heard on a National Geographic tape.

A-D, Good description of calls. Date appropriate for Western Wood Pewee to appear in Iowa.

A-D, I was unable to determine whether Western Wood-pewee would normally sing as a Fall migrant. I know from experience that Easterns do sing late into fall -- virtually up to the day they depart. As to the description of the song, it is certainly on track for Western. Even the caveats in Advanced Birding do not appear to rule out the identification here. There was no aggressive interaction, and there appeared to be a full song (in contrast to just a call), which according to the same guide, is very distinctive. I assume this bird is an adult, and would have a difficult time believing that a bird-of-the-year would be singing a full song. I was initially concerned that other listed observers saw, but did not document this bird. Upon closer reading, however, I see that they did not hear the bird sing and, subsequently, probably could not have added much to the description. We have some precedent for vagrancy by this species in Iowa and the Upper Midwest, and it has bred in W. Minnesota. We have also, upon re-review, affirmed a previous voice identification. If someone has information that this species does not sing as a Fall migrant, I will reconsider my vote. Until then, I will vote A-D.

NA, The written description of both calls seems to describe the two Western Pewee calls diagrammed in Kaufman. I am only aware of two records from Iowa only one of which was accepted. I just can't be certain of the ID based on my interpretation of the documentors written description of the calls.

NA, The description of the song sounds like a Western Wood-Pewee. There are August records for Minnesota. Bohlen cites 4 Illinois records, three based on call. Three of the records are for September and October. He considers the species hypothetical in Illinois until a recording or specimen can be obtained. Wisconsin has a June sight [sic] record by an experienced observer, but Robbins lists this species as hypothetical. Engebretsen does not indicate previous experience with this species. The other observers did not submit documentations. The description was written 7 hours after hearing the bird.

References: Robbins, S. D. 1991. Wisconsin Birdlife. Madison, Univ of Wisconsin Press; Bohlen, H. D. 1989. The Birds of Illinois. Bloomington, Univ of Indiana Press.

NA, This bird was not distinguished as to age (adult or juvenile). This would give an indication of its calls. The bird was also not giving its typical breeding call at this time of year and was giving some type of non-typical call or calls. The description of the bird itself is short and does not identify this bird as to Wood-Pewee species. It would appear that the evidence used here to identify this bird as a Western Wood-Pewee is the different types of calls that were not familiar to the documentor. Not many Wood-Pewee's give calls in the fall and these calls are far from the typical calls most birders are use to hearing a Wood-Pewee give. Nothing in the description of the calls from this bird indicates to me that this is a Western Wood-Pewee. This possibly could be a Western Wood-Pewee but, I cannot make that judgement from this description. A recording would have helped. The information by Kaufman (Advanced Boirding, 1990) on Wood-Pewee's is useful for this record.

NA, While it is possible that this could be a Western Wood Pewee, it is possible that this could be a juvenile E. Wood Pewee giving hoarse calls as Kenn Kaufman states in Advanced Birding (pages 182-183). Kaufman states that juveniles of either species may give calls that are harsher or hoarser than any calls of adults. He also says that this variability in voice makes it difficult to prove, by a mere description that one has heard the full song of either species outside its normal range. I must go the cautious route and vote NA on this record. It is a shame that the other observers present failed to document this potential rare sighting and add their impressions and details to this record for Iowa.

## BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Western Wood Peewee 2. Number: 1, possibly 2
3. Location Backyard of our home
4. Date: 9/8/91 5. Time Bird seen: 11<sup>00</sup> AM to "
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): A smallish flycatcher with no eye-ring, faint wing bars, pale throat, clearly a Peewee. The bird appeared 3 times, each for about 5 minutes. It called quite actively each of those times with several types of calls, none of which sounded like a typical Eastern Peewee. The one that first caught my ear was an ascending "peee" followed quickly by a two syllable "pee-peep". This was repeated several times on ~~all~~ trips. Another call was a descending "pee-yee" but slightly harsher and less mellow than our Eastern Peewee. Another:
7. Description of voice, if heard: time the bird made a series of rapid peeps unfamiliar to me, but heard on one of the two tapes available.
8. Description of behavior: Typical flycatcher behavior, would disappear for half hour, then return.
9. Habitat - general: Oak-hickory upland, mature, 1 mile outside of Des Moines.  
specific: flying from tree to tree - hickory, oak, dead limbs
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: From the moment I heard the call, it was clearly different. The bird was a Peewee. It called unequivocally several types of calls, only one of which seemed similar to our Eastern.
11. Distance (how measured)? 20' & more 12. Optical equipment: 7X35
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): overcast
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
15. Other observers: Armstrongs were present for one of its three tours through the trees. A Peewee appeared twice more, but did not call.
16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Peterson tape & National Geographic tape.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 7 hrs

Signature

Address: 12825 NW 127th CtDate: 9/8/91Des Moines City, State: IA 50325