

1999 - 93

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

*Red 1/20/99 wpl*  
ACCEPT 7-0

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE  
Contopus virens

Location: Ft. Lyon Wildlife Easement; near Las Animas; Bent County, Colorado

Date: May 1, 1999

Setting:

I found this bird in the trees edging the opening around the old marshy area at Ft. Lyon. There are numerous small dead snags and larger dead trees at the edge. This bird perched up about 20-30 feet high right on the tips of dead trees. This is a semi-open park-like area within the wildlife easement. I found the bird early on a wet morning. I first heard the bird and then located it for observation. I watched it from 6:40 - 6:50 a.m. at distances of 20-40 feet. I used B&L Elite 10x40 binoculars. The bird's song was a clear, sad-sounding, whistled "pee-oh-wee" given 2-4 times per minute. The bird perched in a very upright manner and would sit still for a few minutes, then fly off to a nearby perch and repeat. While perched, the bird was placid and did not flick the wings or tail. Later in the morning I led a small group of other CFO birders to the sight and about 6 others saw this bird. May 1st was a morning of light rain, following 3 days of rain and floods. There was a low pressure system in New Mexico and winds were from the east and south.

Description:

This was a small, slim, erect flycatcher about 6" long or so, with a barely peak-headed appearance. The face was plain greenish-brown and lacked an eyering. It had two white wingbars. The wings were fairly long, reaching well beyond the rump. The upperparts were quite greenish. The underparts were pale yellow, with a lighter, less yellowish throat and breast. The sides of breast were gray (partial yellow vest). The bill was dark above and an entirely yellow-orange lower mandible.

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.

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. This bird's song bore no resemblance at all to the rougher, distinctive song of the Western Wood-Pewee.

Experience with Species:

I have seen at least four previous Eastern Wood-Pewees in Colorado: May 1988; May 1990; fall 1993; spring 1995. 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.

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