

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: [Pacific-slope/Cordilleran “Western” Flycatcher](#)
(*Empidonax difficilis/occidentalis*)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): [1, probable hatching-year / 1st winter](#)

3. Parish: [St. Tammany](#)
Specific Locality: [Rue Petite, Covington](#)

4. Date(s) when observed: [30 December 2020](#)

5. Time(s) of day when observed: [11:25 am](#)

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Erik I. Johnson
City: Sunset
State: Louisiana

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): [none](#)

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): [none known – a few people tried to chase the bird later in the day, and I went back to the same spot as well, but no one had relocated the bird](#)

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): [Partly sunny. Although I was mostly looking south \(and SE and SW\) toward the bird, lighting didn't affect viewing conditions as the bird was mostly along the lower part of the treeline and generally in the shade.](#)

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): [Vortex Razor 10x42 binoculars; Nikon D7200 with 80-400 mm f/4.5-5.6 lens](#)

11. Distance to bird(s): As close as 15 feet, never more than 75 feet

12. Duration of observation: About 20 minutes – although for about 10 minutes of this I was talking with a homeowner who was curious and interested in what I was looking at. During some of that discussion, I continued to watch the bird move along the treeline.

13. Habitat: Residential with low pine/hardwood/scrubby treeline

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): It was silently and actively foraging with a mixed winter songbird flock (Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned Warbler, etc.) that was responding to me pishing and mimicking a screech-owl. I first saw the bird to my left (SE) at about hip level about 30 feet away as it flitted among outer tree branches. It was constantly flicking its tail, mostly upward and then back down to the normal level. Despite several attempts of playback, exhausting all of the various call and song cuts in the Audubon app for Pacific-slope and Cordilleran, it did not vocalize. It did seem to approach slightly more with the Cordilleran set of calls, but not obviously so. It eventually disappeared into the treeline and did not emerge despite another 15 minutes of searching.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*): I immediately recognized it as an Empidonax and it stood as being quite yellow. As I got my binoculars on it, I noted its all-yellow underparts from throat to vent, tear-drop yellowish eye ring, slightly crested look, and thin tail, and I recognized it was a likely “Western” Flycatcher. As I followed and studied the bird more closely, I wanted to be sure I could eliminate (the less likely) Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and I believe the lack of or very limited dusky vesting, narrow dark gap between the greater covert tips and yellow edging on the folded secondary flight feathers, and tear-drop eye ring does the trick.

As far as the bird’s age, it appears to have replaced the inner 3-4 greater coverts, and s8 and s9, resulting in molt limits consistent with a partial preformative molt as described in Pyle (1997, where he calls it the “first prebasic” molt per the older terminology). According to Pyle (1997), Cordilleran can replace more gr covs than Pacific-slope, although I’m not sure how valid this is, and regardless, the observed molt limit falls within his described overlap zone of the two species.

16. Voice: Silent.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The most similar Empid that looks like this would be Yellow-bellied (see #15). Acadian can be ruled out by this bird’s smaller bill, slightly different wing formula (Acadian often with

relatively long p6-7 “gap” in folded wing compared to p7-8 gap), and different eye ring (Acadian usually not this pronounced of a tear-drop). Pine Flycatcher probably should be in the realm of consideration, but I believe shouldn’t be this yellow bellow and should have a whiter eye-ring. Similarly, Least shares the eye ring shape, but wouldn’t be as yellow (especially in the throat), and also would have a shorter primary projection. In some photos of the bird I saw, its color seems dependent on the lighting – it looks whiter and duller in some images and more yellow in others. In the field, the bird looked quite yellow, generally, but also specifically in the underparts and eyering.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, my photos.

19. Previous experience with this species: None in Louisiana, seen a few times out west.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: Audubon app for Android, National Geographic 7th ed.

b. after observation: Bauman et al. (2014, Journal of Field Ornithology 85[4]), Pyle (1997), Kaufman’s Advanced Birding Guide (1990).

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	I only put very brief field notes into eBird. https://ebird.org/checklist/S78295340
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	I added a caveat to my note in eBird as I wrote up this long-form.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes, to species complex.

23. Date: 10 January 2021

Time: 10:30 am

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page? Yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes









