

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

1. **English and Scientific names:** Pacific-Slope Flycatcher *Empidonax difficilis*
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 age unknown; presumed male because of call?
3. **Parish:** Plaquemines  
**Specific Locality:** Morel's Woods in Triumph
4. **Date(s) when observed:** 1/26/2019 and 3/08/2020
5. **Time(s) of day when observed:** please see checklist excerpts
6. **Reporting observer and city/state address**  
David P. Muth  
2765 Orchid St.  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
muthd@nwf.org
7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):** please see checklist excerpts
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):** please see checklist excerpts
9. **Light:** ok
10. **Optical equipment:** Eagle Optics Platinum 10x50
11. **Distance to bird(s):** 10-15 meters
12. **Duration of observation:** Intermittently over perhaps an hour total during two sightings.
13. **Habitat:** Natural levee forest along intermittent bayou, adjacent to road and mowed yards under live oaks.
14. **Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation:** See Ebird checklists below. Assuming the sightings 14 months apart or of the same individual, the bird was first encountered 1/26/19 along the road in Morel's in dense vegetation beneath a somewhat open hardwood canopy, on

the far side of the bayou bed. The yellow coloration and teardrop rear to the eyering immediately indicated “Western Flycatcher” and we spent a good deal of time trying to obtain photos and hoping to hear it call, which it did not on that occasion.

On March 7, 2020, Remsen and company found an Empid in virtually the same location which see <https://ebird.org/checklist/S65671217>. As it happened, I was heading down the next day, and we found the bird again and this time after trying recordings of both species it began calling, and Becky Lloyd was able to obtain a recording.

15. **Description:** Please see photos and link to recording in checklists below.

First sighting Jan. 26, 2019.

CHECKLIST S52073924

Sat **26 Jan 2019** 12:48 PM [Edit date and effort](#)

**Morel's Woods** [Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, United States](#) [Edit location](#)

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Species:






**Morel's Woods**  
Plaquemines, US-LA


DATE	#	OBSERVER	
2020-03-08	1	David Muth	📷
2020-03-07	1	Vitek Jirinec	📷
2020-03-07	1	Alexandre Cowles	📷
2020-03-07	1	Cameron Rutt	📷
2020-03-07	1	Van Remsen	📷
2019-01-26	1	Jack Rogers	📷
2019-01-26	1	Marky Mutchler	📷
2019-01-26	1	Mark Meunier	📷
2019-01-26	1	Van Remsen	📷
2019-01-26	1	David Muth	📷




C

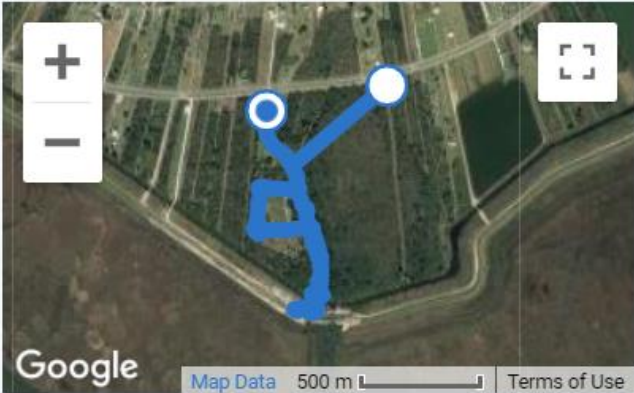
<https://ebird.org/checklist/S52073924> 1


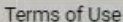
**David Muth** +5 



Jack Rogers , Mark Meunier , Marky Mutchler , Michele McLindon , Van Remsen 

**Traveling** Complete 

 6  3 hr, 30 min  1 mi



Google  500 m 

 eBird Mobile Tracks 

Mostly cloudy, 55, near calm. Checked one ditch ROW near road, then entered at gate along bayou, walked to pumping station, walked edge behind trailers..

Submitted from eBird for Android, version 1.9.5

[Edit comments](#)

 **60**

Species observed

+3 other taxa

462 individuals

**30** Lesser Scaup

**1** Pied-billed Grebe

**15** Mourning Dove

**1** Clapper Rail

**1** Ring-billed Gull

**4** Caspian Tern



Details: "Western" type. Photos. Located by MMe while mobbing tape playing; perhaps associated with mixed species flock; sallying or relocating perches from understory (lantana) layer up into shrubs, saplings and then into live oak canopy, An empid, frequent upward tail flicks, a rich yellow green with browner overtones, prominent eyering with obvious teardrop. See photos. Seemed somewhat responsive to tape playback of songs calls (especially?) Cordilleran, but out of sight during much playback so nothing definitive. Heard response briefly during COFL playback but difficult for me to describe or be certain of exact nature of call. At one point after we had left and returned we heard what was probably it giving a few two-noted upslurred calls--DPM.



Video:

Media:



[© Marky Mutchler Macaulay Library](#)



[© Marky Mutchler Macaulay Library](#)





© [Marky Mutchler Macaulay](#)

[Library](#)



© [Marky Mutchler Macaulay Library](#)



© [Jack](#)

[Rogers Macaulay Library](#)



Second sighting Mar. 8, 2020:

CHECKLIST S65599628

**Sun 8 Mar 2020** 3:18 PM [Edit date and effort](#)

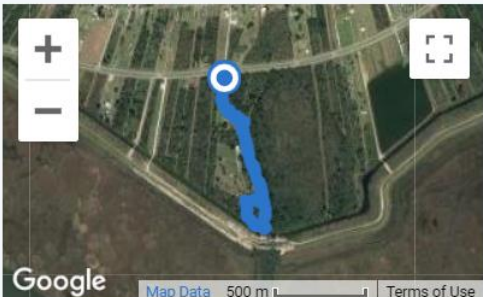
**Morel's Woods** [Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, United States](#) [Edit location](#)

**David Muth** [Share](#)

Becky Lloyd [i](#), Mark Meunier [i](#), joan garvey [i](#)

**Traveling** Complete [+](#)

[i](#) 4 [🕒](#) 2 hr, 42 min [📏](#) 0.8 mi



Google [Map Data](#) 500 m [Terms of Use](#)

[i](#) eBird Mobile Tracks [+](#) Large map

69, clear. Ese 10.  
Submitted from eBird for Android, version 2.0.8

[Edit comments](#)

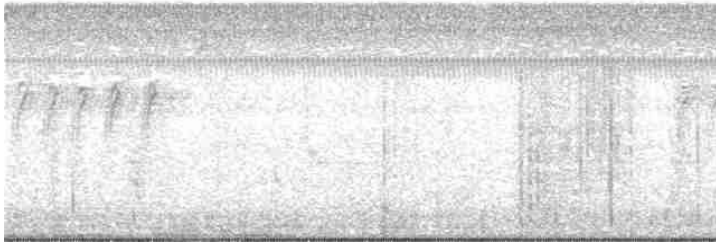
**34**  
Species observed  
+1 other taxa  
249 individuals

- 1 **Chuck-will's-widow**  
Large brown caprimulgid flushed.
- 1 **Killdeer**
- 3 **Anhinga**
- 10 **Cattle Egret**
- 1 **Green Heron**
- 3 **Black-crowned Night-Heron**
- 1 **Black Vulture**
- 8 **Turkey Vulture**
- 3 **Bald Eagle**

## 1 Pacific-slope Flycatcher

Details: Western type empid from same area as reported yesterday by Remsen *et al.* and where one seen January 26, 2019. Gave two note call, second note seemed lower in pitch to me, and seemed to be in response to recording of COFL (but of course we had also played PSFL). Also seemed to show agitation during COFL playback, once swooping down on Joan. Our in-field assessment was COFL however, none of us has much experience with either species' calls. Steve Cardiff suggests the recording indicates PSFL. As a consequence, I am listing it as such and await review by LBRC--DPM.

Media:



[© Becky Lloyd Macaulay Library](#)



[© joan garvey Macaulay Library](#)





© [joan garvey Macaulay Library](#)



© [joan garvey Macaulay Library](#)





© joan garvey Macaulay Library

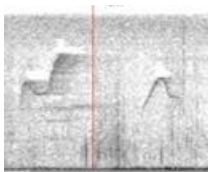
## 16. Voice:

See Becky's recording. We had been playing snippets of both COFL and PSFL before the bird began calling, though there was a separation—the bird did not immediately respond. On the recording you can hear Joan and Mark, and I believe me giving a “shhh” because I could see Becky recording. To the best of my recollection no one was playing calls during the recording, and I am quite certain no one was playing anything beyond the first couple of seconds.

I spent a lot of time tonight listening to this and to recordings of both species on Xeno-Canto, a few examples of which I have attached below. There is a repeated note here:

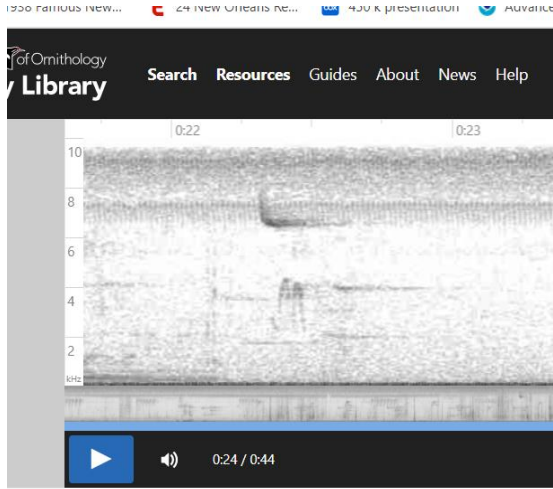


That looks in sonograms closer to PSFL than to COFL, though I cannot personally reconcile what I hear with verbal descriptions in popular field guides. In most PSFL call note sonograms there is a dip and then a rise like in Becky's recording. In most COFL recordings the sonograms do not have the dip before the rise. In her recording, the dip-rise is often followed by a separate parabolic note:



Which I believe is the calling Empid but which does not match any of the recordings I found on Xeno-Canto.

There is also a high-pitched single syllable note which sounds like the NOCA-like note that I have heard on other Louisiana “western” types, but which I do not recall hearing in the field:



So, despite the impression I had in the field, where I was trying to match verbal field guide app descriptions of what I was hearing, memory of the calls I had just played, and what I actually heard, I do tend to think Cardiff’s assessment is probably correct. But nothing would surprise me.

Becky Lloyd’s recording:

<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/214466901>

## Pacific-slope Flycatcher

*Empidonax difficilis* | ML214466901

© Becky Lloyd

[Search this contributor](#)

8 Mar 2020 3:18 PM

[eBird Checklist S65623273](#)

Morel's Woods

Plaquemines, Louisiana, United States

[Search this location](#) | [Illustrated Checklist](#)



29.3313, -89.4814 [Map](#)

**Age** Not specified

**Sex** Not specified

**Sounds**

**Behaviors**

**Breeding**

**Tags**

**Playback** Unspecified

**Media notes**

**Observation details**

Western type empid from same area as reported yesterday and where one seen last year. Gave two note call, second note lower in pitch, in response to recording of COFL. Identification based on analysis of audio by Steve Cardiff.

**Technical Information**

Recorder

Microphone

Accessories

Original file size 4,317KB

17. **Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):** see discussion above under voice. Some Xeno-Canto examples:



**xeno-canto**  
Sharing bird sounds from around the world

Search recordings...  [Advanced Search Tips](#)

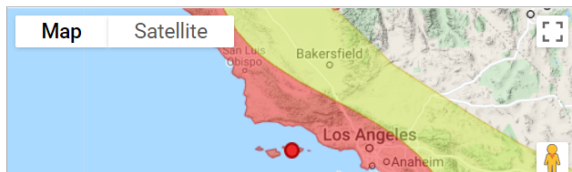
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**XC297477 · Pacific-slope Flycatcher · *Empidonax difficilis***

**Remarks from the Recordist**

bird-seen:yes  
playback-used:yes

**Location**



**Recording data**

<b>Recordist</b>	Ross Gallardy
<b>Date</b>	2015-03-19
<b>Time</b>	09:30
<b>Latitude</b>	34.01
<b>Longitude</b>	-119.7417
<b>Location</b>	Santa Cruz Island, California
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Elevation</b>	320 m
<b>Background</b>	none

**Actions**

- [Download audio file](#)
- [Download full-length sonogram](#)
- [Embed](#)
- [Discuss](#)
- [Edit](#)
- [Delete](#)
- [Add to Set](#)

**Audio file properties**

<b>File type</b>	mp3
<b>Length</b>	26.4 (s)
<b>Sampling rate</b>	44100 (Hz)
<b>Bitrate of mp3</b>	128000 (bps)

**XC400450 · Pacific-slope Flycatcher · *Empidonax difficilis***

**Recording data**

<b>Recordist</b>	Richard E. Webster
<b>Date</b>	2014-12-16
<b>Time</b>	10:13
<b>Latitude</b>	27.0303
<b>Longitude</b>	-109.0146
<b>Location</b>	Arroyo La Aduana, Álamos, Sonora
<b>Country</b>	Mexico
<b>Elevation</b>	700 m
<b>Background</b>	Dusky-capped Flycatcher ( <i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i> ) goat bells

**Actions**

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**Remarks from the Recordist**

wintering bird calling from fairly high in a fig tree; individual No 3 recorded today; presumed nominate; male position-note and female position-note from same bird;  
bird-seen:yes  
playback-used:no

**Location**



**Audio file properties**

<b>File type</b>	mp3
<b>Length</b>	23.8 (s)
<b>Sampling rate</b>	44100 (Hz)
<b>Bitrate of mp3</b>	128000 (bps)

**XC343254 · Cordilleran Flycatcher · *Empidonax occidentalis***

**Recording data**

<b>Recordist</b>	Thomas Magarian
<b>Date</b>	2016-07-23
<b>Time</b>	13:40
<b>Latitude</b>	48.0072
<b>Longitude</b>	-112.7233
<b>Location</b>	Blackleaf Canyon Area, Teton County, Montana
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Elevation</b>	1700 m
<b>Background</b>	none

**Actions**

- [Download audio file](#)
- [Download full-length sonogram](#)
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- [Edit](#)
- [Delete](#)
- [Add to Set](#)

**Remarks from the Recordist**

Recording amplified.  
bird-seen:yes  
playback-used:no

**Location**



**Audio file properties**

<b>File type</b>	mp3
<b>Length</b>	40.7 (s)
<b>Sampling rate</b>	44100 (Hz)
<b>Bitrate of mp3</b>	320205 (bps)

18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):** please see checklist excerpts

19. **Previous experience with this species:** Limited as to voice, but numbers seen out west and a few in Louisiana, including the first and third of the complex.



**20. Identification aids:**

a. **at time of observation:** Sibley and IBird Pro Apps.

b. **after observation:** NG etc.

21. **This description is written from:** reference to checklists, listening to recording and memory

22. **Are you positive of your identification?** no   **If not, explain:** Unfamiliar with calls of either type.

23. **Date:** 2/15-17/21

**Time:** 1730 h.

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