

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 as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: **Gray Flycatcher** (*Empidonax wrightii*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
One individual of unknown sex
3. Locality: LOUISIANA: (parish)
Vermilion Parish: White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area, S Gueydan

Specific Locality:
WLWCA birding trail on S. leg of trail

4. Date(s) when observed:
17 November 2011
5. Time(s) of day when observed:
0930 to 1215
6. Reporting observer and address:
Michael A. Seymour, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):
None
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
Confirmation of identification by LSUMNS
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):
Clear skies; bird seen from multiple angles of lighting and shading – backlit, front lit,

side lit, etc.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):

Vortex 6.5x32mm (brand new); Photos by Canon S5IS (excellent condition)

11. Distance to bird(s):

This bird was ridiculously tame, oftentimes, literally, feeding at my feet. It could be approached to about 8 feet without flushing (but would fly closer). It was probably the most approachable bird I've ever seen (outside of fishing pier pelicans)!

12. Duration of observation:

Over the course of about two and a half hours off and on.

13. Habitat:

Along bush-hogged levee with vegetation on both sides – mostly lantana, privet, yaupon, live oaks, hackberries, etc. The surrounding matrix is marsh/rice agriculture.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

Bird was first found perched about two feet off the ground in a yaupon, where it would fly out to snatch insects off the ground on the trail. It "whitted" frequently, not unlike a Least Flycatcher's call. It allowed very close approach and, often landed much closer after grabbing a meal (basically, it ignored my presence). The bird was rarely seen more than two feet off the ground, and, in fact, utilized lantana for perching most of the time. The telltale tail dipping was evident almost immediately. The bird continued to feed along a roughly 200 foot stretch of this nature trail. And could always be easily relocated due to its call. It was attacked by both an Eastern Phoebe and a Northern Mockingbird while I watched it.

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):

Bird was noticeably smaller than a phoebe with noticeable, thin, even eye-ring and bold white wing bars. The bird was very pale gray overall with a slight greenish olive tinge to the back. Lower mandible orange with black tip (seen in photos). Tail dipping behavior (videoed) is fairly diagnostic for the species. This individual did not respond to playback of any *Empidonax* that I attempted (including Gray Flycatcher).

16. Voice:

Definitely heard "whit" calls, but may have heard others...

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):
Relied heavily on tail dipping to clinch identification. Also, bird was pale gray, unlike most other empids. Sibley Guide shows "pale band across forehead" which my photos do show. Thin eye ring eliminates a few western species. This bird was fairly large, too.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):
Yes, obtained by me. Photos and video attached are courtesy "Michael A. Seymour/LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries."

19. Previous experience with this species:
I did get to view the bird in NE La. in 2008. But that is the only other observation.

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

a. at time of observation:

Called other birders while in field to get concurrence on the identification.

b. after observation:

LSUMNS personnel, Sibley's Guide, internet sources.

21. This description is written from: x notes made during the observation
(notes attached?); notes made after the observation (date:);
 x memory; x photographs and videos.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain:
Yes.

23. Signature of reporter: Michael A. Seymour
Date: 18 November 2011 Time: 1330

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? Yes

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

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