

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Western Wood-Pewee, *Contopus sordidulus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 HY (fleshy orange-yellow gape) sex unknown
3. Parish: Cameron Parish
Specific Locality: east Cameron, private property
4. Date(s) when observed: 23 Sept 2023
5. Time(s) of day when observed: ca. 12:30 p.m.

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Paul Edward Conover
City: Lafayette
State: LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good light
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Vortex 12x binos
11. Distance to bird(s): specimen
12. Duration of observation:
13. Habitat: Live oak woods with high bare snags
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The bird was first observed in high dead snags on a hackberry, then began flycatching and changing perches, selecting high dead snags on live oaks.
15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*):

A brownish pewee with dense smoky breast markings and a solidly black bill.

Upperparts: Evenly brownish-tinted from base of bill to rump. Brownish color especially evident in sunlight or ambient daylight vs artificial light. No strong contrast between crown, nape, and back, or between crown and sides of face. Sides of face equally dark except for small paler loreal area. Narrow whitish eyering.

Rump and tail: Upper rump brightest part of back due to brighter brownish fringes to feathers in this area. From the upper rump to tail, the color of the rows of uppertail coverts grades stepwise from the color of the mantle to color of tail in three to four slight color changes; however, most uppertail coverts similarly edged brownish.

Tail blackish-brown with thin pale brownish-white bracket-shaped tips.

Wings: Lesser coverts same rich brown as mantle. Median and greater coverts contrasting darker brown with buffy edges forming two wingbars. Edges of median coverts forming thin wispy fringes; those of greater coverts broader and more coherent. Thin buff edges to inner primaries with only buffy tip on outer primaries, broader paler margins to secondaries. Buff edges on tertials similar to those on greater coverts.

Underparts: Pale cream yellow ground color. Throat brown with small pale yellowish-brown open are in center. Throat merging with dense brownish vest completely and broadly connected across breast and extending down flanks. Bottom of vest split by pale cream yellow-washed line running broadly along keel and broadening into similarly-colored open pale area on belly and undertail coverts. Undertail coverts with some broad dusky feather centers.

Underwing linings dark-centered with rich buffy/tawny ground color.

Legs blackish. Eyes dark brown.

16. Voice: Did not hear.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Western vs Eastern main area of confusion.

Data for this specimen:

Mass = 11.1 g

Wing chord = 81 mm

Tail = 58mm

Distance from longest uppertail covert to tail tip ("Tailclear") = 28 mm;

Extension of primaries past secondaries/tertials ("Wingtip") = 20 mm.

Pyle uses "Tailclear" and "Tailclear minus Wingtip" to separate these species, with the latter described as the most reliable. This bird shows:

Tailclear minus Wingtip for this bird = 8 mm

Pyle states that Western should show <6.5 mm for this value, but notes that perhaps a 8-10 mm cutoff is appropriate.

Pyle also states that, for tailclear, the lower limit of the range for Eastern is 31.4 mm. The range for Western is 24.9 to 33.9

Tailclear for this bird = 28 mm.

Hubbard (Eastern Wood-Pewee Specimens from New Mexico, Plus a Reevaluation of Mensural Criteria for Identifying This Taxon, 2002: <<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/occasionalpapers/6/>>) introduced a new ID metric, the percentage produced by dividing Tailclear by Tail measurements.

Tailclear/tail (28 mm/ 58 mm) for this bird = 48.3%

Comparing these numbers to Hubbard's data, with circles for all values that fall within each sex/species ranges:

With exception of thin orange-yellow line along cutting edge and fleshy orange-yellow gape, bill completely blackish, or with perhaps very dark horn at extreme base of lower mandible.

Eastern Wood-Pewee									
	Males				Females				
	N	Mean	SD	Range	N	Mean	SD	Range	
Chord	30	84.2	2.1	79.5–88.0	25	79.9	1.8	75.5–83.5	81
Wingtip	30	24.0	2.6	20.0–28.5	25	22.1	2.8	18.0–26.5	20
Tail	29	65.1	1.9	62.5–70.0	25	62.0	2.1	58.5–65.0	58
Tailclear	29	34.9	1.9	31.0–39.0	21	32.9	1.5	30.0–35.0	28
Tailclear/Tail	28	53.7	2.3	48.4–57.6	21	53.2	1.6	50.8–56.4	48.3
Tailclear–Wingtip	29	10.8	2.3	7.0–15.0	21	10.6	3.0	6.0–16.0	8
Western Wood-Pewee									
Chord	41	85.1	2.2	81.0–91.0	34	80.7	1.4	78.5–84.0	81
Wingtip	41	24.4	1.7	21.5–29.0	34	22.6	2.2	18.5–26.0	20
Tail	37	63.6	2.3	59.5–69.0	33	61.1	2.1	57.5–65.0	58
Tailclear	33	30.7	1.7	27.0–34.0	34	29.4	1.4	27.0–32.5	28
Tailclear/Tail	30	48.5	2.6	43.8–52.8	33	48.1	2.0	42.9–51.2	48.3
Tailclear–Wingtip	33	6.5	2.5	0.5–10.5	34	6.8	2.4	1.0–11.5	8

Female Western Wood Pewee is the closest match. Tailclear and Tailclear/Tail values are exclusively in Western ranges.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): None in the field. Specimen and specimen photos only.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen Western fairly regularly on trips out west for the past several years, and have seen and collected several in the state. I've also seen thousands of Easterns.

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation: Pyle, Hubbard.

21. This description is written from: Specimen review

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes, I think this individual fits the classic phenotype for Western Wood-Pewee. I hope that the DNA is run someday to verify this.

23. Date: 24 Sept 2023