

LATE FALL RECORDS OF YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER ON LONG ISLAND

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Not all late fall *Empidonax* flycatchers are western strays. On three different occasions I have encountered Yellow-bellied Flycatchers in November on Long Island. These birds showed little or no yellow below, and could be identified only in the hand..

On 2 Nov 1980, Anthony J. Lauro and I captured an *Empidonax* flycatcher while we were banding birds at Tobay Pond (John F. Kennedy Sanctuary), Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County. It was identified in the Department of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History as a juvenile Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, sex undetermined, and is now # 824664 in that collection. It was the first November record of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher for New York State (Am. Birds 35(2):165).

Sarah Plimpton and I trapped, banded, and released New York's second November Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on 12 Nov, 1988 at Gilgo Beach, Town of Babylon, Suffolk County (Am. Birds 43(1):74). We identified this bird using the criteria of wing formula combined with measurements of wing chord and bill breadth set out in Allan R. Phillips, Marshall A. Howe, and Wesley E. Lanyon, "Identification of the Flycatchers of Eastern North America, with Special Emphasis on the Genus *Empidonax*," (Bird Banding 37(3): 153-171). We photographed it and sent the pictures to Lanyon, who found the photos "too overexposed to be helpful," but concurred in the identification based on our measurements (letter to the author dated 8 Jan 1989.). We did not examine this bird's skull ossification to determine age, but Lanyon thought it "probably an immature male." This is still the latest observation on record of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in New York State.

Sarah Plimpton and I banded and released the third bird, also at Gilgo Beach, on 4 Nov 2001 We identified it in the hand by the same criteria. We did not determine its age and there was no way to determine sex. We took a series of photographs.(Fig.1) After release, this bird was seen in the same general area through 11 Nov by A. J. Lauro and other observers (N. Am. Birds, in press).

Although the first two of these records were published at the time in *American Birds*, none were published in *The Kingbird* and therefore not noted in *Bull's Birds of New York State* (1998 E. Levine ed., Cornell University Press, Ithaca , NY) The next time someone decides to do a later version of this work, no doubt most published records will be available in an electronic database and therefore be included.

In light of these three records, it is likely that Yellow-bellied Flycatchers showing little or no yellow are regular in small numbers on Long Island in November. This possibility needs to be kept in mind when attempting to identify late fall *Empidonax* flycatchers in the field in northeastern North America.



*Yellow-bellied
Flycatcher
(Empidonax flaviventris)
Gilgo Beach
4 Nov 2001
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