
January 1981

Traill's Flycatcher on Florida's Southwestern Coast

Florida Field Naturalist

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1981) "Traill's Flycatcher on Florida's Southwestern Coast," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 9 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol9/iss3/4>

This General Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Fla. Field Nat. 9(3): 41, 1981

Pileated Woodpecker takes Red-bellied Woodpecker nestling.—The Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) eats primarily large ants, termites, and wood-boring beetles and occasionally wild seeds and fruits (Bent 1939, U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 174; Brown 1978, Fla. Field Nat. 6: 18-19). Therefore, this record of a Pileated eating a nestling Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) seems noteworthy.

On 15 May 1980 at about 1000 Leeds heard adult Red-bellied Woodpeckers scolding near a nest that he had been observing for several weeks. The nest was located in a dead pine in his backyard at 8041 Hillsdale Rd., Jacksonville, Florida. As Leeds approached the nest he saw a Pileated Woodpecker in the act of robbing it. The bird was perched with its head inside the hole. The Pileated removed a naked young Red-bellied Woodpecker from the nest, and began swallowing the struggling young bird which was peeping loudly.

One adult Red-bellied Woodpecker was perched on a dead limb about 20 cm from the Pileated, scolding intensively. Leeds watched the other parent fly at, but not actually strike the Pileated. At this point, Leeds hurled a missile at the predator in a futile attempt to save the young bird. The Pileated flew away, carrying the young Red-bellied and pursued by the adults.

On the next day, adult Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen in the area, but not at the nest. Thus it seems likely that the Red-bellied nest failed due to this predation.

Both Red-bellied and Red-headed woodpeckers are known to prey occasionally on the eggs and young of other birds (Conner 1974, Auk 91: 836; Watt 1980, Wilson Bull. 92: 249; Bent 1939). This is the first report of nest predation by a Pileated Woodpecker.—ROBERT W. LOFTIN, *University of North Florida, Box 17074, Jacksonville, Florida 32216* AND JERRY LEEDS, *8041 Hillsdale Rd., Jacksonville, Florida 32216*.

Fla. Field Nat. 9(3): 41-42, 1981

Trail's Flycatcher on Florida's southwestern coast.—In March 1978 we established a banding station on Casey Key, a barrier island in Sarasota County, Florida. The station, about 0.5 h, is on the bay side of the island and is adjacent to our residential property. The area is half covered with trees and shrubs (*Avicennia germinans*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, *Coccoloba uvifera*, *Myrica* sp., *Rhizophora mangle*, *Schinus terebinthifolius*, *Sabal palmetto*) and half with grass. Paths are mowed beneath the nets but otherwise plant growth is unrestricted.

At our banding station we netted Trail's Flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii*, *E. alnorum*; Eisenmann 1973) as follows: one in 1979 on 9 September and seven in 1980; one on 6, 15, and 23 September and 2 October, and three on 13 September. All were judged immatures, based on the width and color of the wing bars (Bordner 1970). Other *Empidonax* flycatchers netted in 1980 include: Yellow bellied (*E. flaviventris*), two on 2 October, one on 3 October; Acadian (*E. virescens*), one on 30 September and 2 October, two on 3 October; Least (*E. minimus*), one on 8 September.

The flycatchers were identified using criteria in Woods (1969) and Bordner (1970) and based on our 20-years residence in Ohio where each year from 1-3

pairs of Traill's nested on our property and including 5 years of operating a banding station for 9 months of the year during which time more than 500 *Empidonax* flycatchers were banded. For all the Florida *Empidonax* we netted we recorded the length of wing chord and culmen, wing tip distance from longest secondary tip to longest primary tip, and the emargination of the sixth primary. Color of unfeathered parts was also noted.

These appear to be the only records of Traill's Flycatcher from southwestern Florida. Stevenson (1976) considered Traill's Flycatcher a rare (or uncommon) fall migrant in Florida with records clustered either in the Tallahassee region, 20 August-17 October (23 records, 22 being immatures, Crawford 1976) or in southeastern Florida around Homestead, Dade County, where Fisk netted 2 adults and one immature on 1 and 2 October 1969 (Ogden and Fisk 1970) and 27 (14 adults, 11 immatures, 2 unknown) from 24 September-19 October 1970 (Fisk 1971). As in the Tallahassee region, our Sarasota County records span September and extend into October while the Homestead records range from late September to mid-October. Because Willow, Alder, and Least flycatchers cannot safely be separated in the field except by voice (Stevenson 1976), further netting can contribute to our knowledge of *Empidonax* spp. migration in Florida.

We are indebted to Fred E. Lohrer for his invaluable assistance in researching the literature on the *Empidonax* complex in Florida.

LITERATURE CITED

- BORDNER, D. L. 1970. Key to eastern *Empidonax* flycatchers. EBBA News 34: 143-145.
- EISENMANN, E. 1973. Thirty-second supplement to the A.O.U. check-list of North American birds. Auk 90: 411-419.
- CRAWFORD, R. L. 1976. Willow and Alder flycatcher records at a north Florida TV tower. Fla. Field Nat. 4: 1-4.
- FISK, E. J. 1971. Increase of fall Traill's Flycatchers in southern Florida. Bird-Banding 42: 121.
- OGDEN, J. C., AND E. J. FISK. 1970. Traill's Flycatcher, a transient in peninsular Florida. Bird-Banding 41: 40.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1976. Vertebrates of Florida. Gainesville, Univ. Presses of Florida.
- WOODS, M. 1969. A bird-bander's guide to determination of age and sex of selected species. University Park, Pa., The Pennsylvania State Univ.
- STANLEY STEDMAN AND ANNETTE F. STEDMAN, 1156 Casey Key Rd., Nokomis, Florida 33555.

ERRATUM

In the note on White-winged Doves (*Zenaida asiatica*), *FFN* 8(2): 51, third paragraph, line 4, *northwestern* should read *northeastern*.