

- Bohemian Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*), (2004-444-455). Two birds seen and photographed in Guymon, Texas, on 2 December 2004. *Berlin Heck*, David Arbour.
- Bohemian Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*), (2004-499). Two birds seen north of Woodford, Carter, on 25 December 2004. *Brush Freeman*.
- Golden-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), (2004-188). One adult male seen at Hogshooter Creek, Washington, on 14 May 2004. *Bonnie Gall*.
- Golden-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), (2004-363). One bird seen at Little River NWR, McCurtain, on 14 September 2004. *Dan Reinking*.
- Baird's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus bairdii*), (2004-430). One to 2 birds seen near Balko, Beaver, on 15 October 2004. *Joseph A. Grzybowski*.

RECORDS REJECTED

The OBRC believes it is important to note that rejection of a record does not necessarily mean the identification was incorrect. In some cases, conditions of the observation were brief or distant, or the observation was made under difficult viewing conditions. In other cases, the description provided was incomplete or did not rule out other possible species. The OBRC thanks all contributors of documentations and strongly encourages continued participation in this process, which serves to strengthen the ornithological record of bird occurrences in Oklahoma.

- Mottled Duck** (*Anas fulvigula*), (2004-303-306-320-330). One bird seen at Red Slough WMA, McCurtain, from 2–16 August 2004 and photographed on 3 August 2004. Photographs of bird did not rule out a possible Mallard / Mottled Duck hybrid.
- Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*), (2004-057-064). One adult male photographed on Canton Lake, Blaine on 7 February 2004. Photographs showed bird to be a hybrid between Barrow's Goldeneye and Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*).
- Yellow Rail** (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), (2004-160). One bird heard in small depositional wetland in a cattle field, Kay, on 19 April 2004. Identifications based only on calls or songs are difficult to evaluate, and the OBRC in this case could not rule out other possible sources of the calls.

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Willow Flycatchers nesting at Red Slough, McCurtain County.—From 2001 to 2004, I made a number of observations on the nesting of Willow Flycatchers

(*Empidonax traillii*) at and near Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. On 26 June 2001, Marvin Davis, Garey Harritt, and I, were surveying birds at Red Slough WMA and encountered a Willow Flycatcher carrying nesting material on a levee separating unit #26 and Pintail Lake. A bird also was heard here making the typical sneezy "Fitz-bew" song of the species (Peterson 1980). Three observations of singing birds were made at this location on 11 and 28 May and 5 June 2001 and were assumed to be of migrants. The bird noted on 26 June 2001 eventually led us to its nest in a groundsel-tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*) underneath a willow (*Salix* sp.) on the lakeside of the levee.

The nest appeared to be about three-quarters complete. George and Marty Kamp, Lou and Mary Truex, and I checked the nest again on 3 July 2001 and found that it was finished and contained 2 eggs. However, on 5 July 2001, it contained only 1 egg, and on 10 July, the nest was empty, although 1 of the flycatchers was seen entering the nest bush.

On 17 July 2001, I encountered 2 Willow Flycatchers about 100 m south of the original nest site along the levee. They were clearly agitated at my presence and were both giving a "whit" call. I assumed that the birds were reneesting so I quickly left the area to minimize disturbance. I never located a second nest, but Willow Flycatchers were present in this area through at least 15 August 2001. On 22 July 2001 while guiding the Indian Nations Audubon Society field trip, I collected the original nest, including a partial eggshell found on the ground under the nest, and gave them to Dan Reinking to keep at the Sutton Avian Research Center.

Between 21 May and 10 July 2002, there were a dozen sightings of Willow Flycatchers in unit #26 adjacent to the previous year's nesting location. On 18 and 24 June, and 10 July 2002, while scanning across unit #26, I spotted 3 different Willow Flycatchers sitting in the tops of young willows; 2 of the birds were singing on at least 1 of these dates. This strongly suggested that there were 2, and possibly 3, pairs of Willow Flycatchers nesting in this area. The habitat was dominated by groundsel-tree mixed with young willows. The ground underneath was wet with dense patches of giant softgrass (*Juncus* sp.). No attempt was made to enter this area in search of nests in 2002.

In 2003, 1-2 birds were regularly observed in unit #26 from 26 May to 15 July. On 17 June 2003, single singing birds were found at 2 new locations at Red Slough. One location was along a brushy berm beside a drainage ditch immediately north of unit #16's water control structure. This bird was never relocated during 2 later attempts. The other site was on the Ward Lake levee, which is adjacent to the Red Slough WMA and part of the Red Slough Wetland Reserve Program. The levee at Ward Lake is quite high and covered in shrub type vegetation and young trees including willows. On the lake side of the levee, a dense thicket of buttonbush was growing in the water; a field full of groundsel-trees occurred on the other side. There was a drainage ditch nearby containing medium-sized willows.

On 24 July 2003, Paul Dickson and I found 3 different Willow Flycatchers 1 of which was an adult calling, scattered along 1.6 km of the Ward Lake levee. Another was a juvenile in fresh plumage with buffy wing bars apparently already fledged. Later that same day, I found another juvenile with buffy wing bars, fly-catching from a low limb of a pecan tree in the yard of a house at the south end of Mudline Road. On a return visit to the Ward Lake levee on 29 July 2003, I observed an adult Willow Flycatcher feeding a fledgling.

During summer 2004, I located 11 Willow Flycatcher territories at Red Slough. Five were in unit #26, 4 were along the back edges of Otter Lake, 1 was in unit #21, and 1 was at the Ward Lake levee. On 3 June 2004, I found a Willow Flycatcher building a nest in a groundsel-tree in unit #26. Close examination of the nest revealed it to be in the early stages of construction. The nest was still under construction on 8 June 2004. On 21 June 2004, a Willow Flycatcher was observed sitting on the nest, and on 28 June 2004, the female was observed catching insects and visiting the nest apparently feeding young.

On 5 July 2004, Berlin Heck found the nest missing. I examined the nest site the next day and found no evidence of it on the ground below. The missing nest puzzled me until I read in the account by Sedgewick (2000) that Willow Flycatchers, when a nesting attempt fails, use the materials from the first nest to build a second for renesting. Both the male and the female were present at this site for several more weeks with the male singing, suggesting a second nesting was attempted.

While searching for additional territories on 22 June 2004, I flushed a Willow Flycatcher off a nest in a different part of unit #26. The nest also was in a groundsel-tree and contained 3 eggs. I checked back on 6 July 2004 and found an adult bird sitting on the nest. Two weeks later on 20 July, I checked it again, and it contained only 1 egg. The adults were both nearby fly-catching, and 1 occasionally chased the other. The next day I returned hoping to find fledglings but only saw the adults plus a third Willow Flycatcher that 1 of the pair was aggressively chasing.

According to the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee (2000), Craig and Ottawa counties are the only ones in which Willow Flycatcher is normally found in summer. Nesting records attributed to Traill's Flycatcher, 1 nest with eggs in Craig County (1912) and 3 nests with eggs in Tulsa County (1927), were undoubtedly Willow Flycatchers, as was a singing male at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Alfalfa County, that was seen and heard regularly from 27 June to 5 August 1963 when it was collected (Sutton 1967). A singing adult with 2 young was reported in south Tulsa County on 7 July 1971 (Sutton 1982). On 31 July 1979, an adult Willow Flycatcher was observed feeding 1–2 fledglings near Lake Etling at Black Mesa State Park, Cimarron County (J. Grzybowski, pers. comm.). During the Oklahoma Breeding Bird Atlas Project (1997–2001), no breeding confirmations of Willow Flycatcher were recorded except for the initial nest found at Red Slough (Fantina 2004).

In Arkansas, Willow Flycatcher is listed as a state endangered species. Historically, Willow Flycatchers were common on the Grand Prairie of east-central Arkansas. They also occurred in prairie habitat in northwestern Arkansas (James and Neal 1986). Holimon and James (2003) were able to document recolonization of this species as a nesting bird in Arkansas after an apparent disappearance lasting about 30 years. Several sightings of singing birds during the nesting season, including 1 in Lafayette County near the Red River during the late 1990s may represent an isolated nesting population (P. Dickson and M. Parker, pers. comm.). Currently, it is a rare breeder in Arkansas with only a handful of birds in Benton and Boone counties where prairie habitat has been saved or restored (M. Parker, pers. comm.).

Texas has no nesting records of Willow Flycatcher from recent decades. The only reported nestings are old records from west Texas of the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (G. Lasley and M. Lockwood, pers. comm.). Louisiana has several reports of singing birds in appropriate breeding habitat from late May through late July in northwestern Louisiana but no confirmed breeding records (P. Dickson and V. Remsen, pers. comm.). *The Louisiana Breeding Bird Atlas* (Wiedenfeld 2000) does not list the species as a breeder.

Apparently, Willow Flycatchers are either expanding their breeding range south or there has always been a small Red River breeding population that has gone unnoticed in southeastern Oklahoma and possibly along the Red River in adjacent states (P. Dickson, pers. comm.). The Partners In Flight Landbird Conservation Plan (2004) lists Willow Flycatcher as a "Watchlist Species" of high priority because of a recent nation-wide decline in its populations.

Peter Custis on his expedition up the Red River in 1806 reported prairies along the Red River varying from 40 acres to several hundred acres and occurring from Oklahoma down river well into Louisiana (Freeman et al. 2002). Because the Willow Flycatcher is associated with prairies in Arkansas and Oklahoma, it may very well be that these small prairies along the Red River historically harbored small breeding populations of these birds that have gone undetected (P. Dickson, pers. comm.).

Population status of this species in southeastern Oklahoma is unknown, but it is likely very low due to little available habitat outside of Red Slough WMA. Other sites nearby such as Grassy Slough may support breeding birds. A survey of the Red River floodplain of southern McCurtain County is needed to determine the extent and population size of this species in this area.

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