

Willow Flycatcher

Empidonax traillii

A small drab flycatcher of wet, brushy areas, the Willow Flycatcher is best identified by its voice. Nearly identical to the Alder Flycatcher; the two species were considered the same until the 1970s.

Keys to Identification

Adult description

- Small flycatcher.
- Two whitish wingbars.
- Thin white eyering may be lacking.

Immature Description

Immatures browner above, yellower below, and wingbars buff or yellowish brown.

Cool Facts

- Flycatcher songs are innate, not learned like those of most songbirds. Young Willow Flycatchers reared in captivity with Alder Flycatcher tutors sang typical Willow Flycatcher songs.
- When the two species are found together, the Willow Flycatcher will keep Alder Flycatchers out of its territory. But it expends more effort to keep out other Willow Flycatchers.
- If a Brown-headed Cowbird lays its eggs in the nest of a Willow Flycatcher, the flycatcher may bury the cowbird eggs in the nest lining, or even build a completely new nest over the top of the first one.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 5.1 - 6.7 inches
- Wingspan - 7.5 - 9.4 inches
- Weight - 0.4 - 0.6 ounces

