



Figures 1 and 2. Pacific Loons (*Gavia pacifica*) photographed by Jerry Amerson at the ash pond, Plant Scherer, Monroe County, Georgia, on 26 October 2006.

A SUMMER POPULATION OF WILLOW FLYCATCHERS IN BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA — From 2002 to 2004, a small population of Willow Flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii*) summered in Bibb County in Middle Georgia at the Macon Cherokee Brickyards. This flycatcher is a rare to uncommon summer resident in North Georgia, with known breeding records south to Athens and near Atlanta (Beaton, G., P.W. Sykes, Jr., and J.W. Parrish, Jr., 2003, Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, GOS, Occasional Publ. No. 14). The Willow Flycatcher has been an accidental transient in Middle Georgia (Johnson, P., 1998, Annotated Checklist of Birds of Middle Georgia, 64 pages. Available from: Ocmulgee Audubon Society). This small Macon population was thus about 121 to 161 km south of recently known breeding sites. In 2002, Ty Ivey found one or 2 calling Willow Flycatchers from 8 June to at least 23 July (Oriole 67:65) at the Macon Cherokee Brickyards. In 2003, Ty Ivey found the species from 17 May to early July (Oriole 68:34). In 2003, up to 5 birds were seen. Nesting was suspected, but not confirmed. In 2004, the birds were present from 16 May until at least 11 June (Oriole 69:86). The birds did not return in the following years (2005, 2006, and 2007).

On 8 June 2002, Ty Ivey located the first singing Willow Flycatcher at the Macon Cherokee Brickyards, Bibb County. Marie and Jerry Amerson and Paul Johnson visited the area in June with Ty Ivey, and saw at least one bird. The bird was located at the south edge of the “shop pond,” a formerly mined pit (possibly 20 ha) that is now an open-water wetland, complete with water lotus (*Nelumbo*

lutea), lily pads (*Nymphaeaceae*), Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), and willow trees (*Salix* spp.). Ty Ivey identified one or 2 birds using their call notes on 23 July. It is probable that at least one pair summered in this location in 2002.

The birds returned in 2003, as Ty Ivey found the species on 17 May, 7 June, 21 June, and in early July. On 21 June 2003, Ty Ivey, Ken and Arlene Clark, and Paul Johnson walked the eastern dike of the shop pond and found 5 birds, at least 3 or 4 of which were singing. Our 2002 sightings were limited to the southeastern edge of the shop pond, but in 2003 we located the birds along the entire dike on the eastern side of the pond. Either we missed birds at this location in summer 2002, or the population increased in 2003. Because territorial songs are given by female and male Willow Flycatchers (Ehrlich, P. R., D. S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye, 1988. *The Birder's Handbook*, New York [NY]: Simon & Schuster, Inc.), there were 2 to 3 pairs of flycatchers, or at least one pair with grown fledglings, at this location in 2003.

Ty Ivey again found the flycatchers in early July 2003. The exact departure date is unknown due to our not checking the area later. On a birding trip to the Macon Cherokee Brickyards on 15 August, Ivey and Johnson did not see any Willow Flycatchers. In 2004, Ty Ivey found 3 birds on 16 May (Oriole 69:86). One or 2 birds were photographed by Jerry Amerson on 5 June (Fig. 1) and later heard on 11 June. It is unknown when the birds left in 2004. The birds did not return in 2005, 2006, or 2007.

The Willow Flycatcher (Fig. 1) had a broad bill, a broad tail, a whitish throat, 2 wing bars, and a brownish head and back as described by Sibley (2000, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, New York [NY]: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.). The calls conclusively identified the *Empidonax* sp. as the Willow Flycatcher. In 2002, Johnson recorded these calls: "FREET-bu," or "FRIT-bew," and "Free-beeu." Variations were "REEP bu-bu-bu" (bouncing ball) and "Reet-Reet-Reete FREET-brue." The call was a rising "Reet" or "Wheet." On 21 June 2003, Johnson again recorded various calls of the flycatchers in addition to sketching them. The full song was "Fitz-bu-fe" (an uprising "Fitz," a sharply descending "bu," and a rising "fe"). Another call was "fritz-beu" (an even "fritz" before a falling "beu"). The single call was a short rising "whe" or "whit." These calls conclusively identified the Willow Flycatcher. Sibley (2000, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, New York [NY]: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) noted the song beginning with an "R," like "RITZbew or RRRITZbeyew." It was interesting to have a "North" Georgia species in Middle Georgia for several summers. These records demonstrate that Willow Flycatchers can extend their range farther south in Georgia.

Paul Johnson, 901 Santa Fe Trail, Macon, GA 31220



Figure 1. Willow Flycatcher photographed by Jerry Amerson at the Macon Cherokee Brickyards, Bibb County, Georgia, 5 June 2004.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER SEEN AGAIN ON THE ALBANY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AFTER AN 8-YEAR ABSENCE — On 28 December 2002, Donny and Silvia Lanier, Tod Lanier, and I found a male Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) in Baker County during the Albany Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This species has been seen twice before in the Albany/Dougherty County area, once on 22 January 1950 (Burleigh, T.D., 1958, *Georgia Birds*, Norman [OK]: University of Oklahoma Press) and once on the Albany CBC on 17 December 1994 (Johnson, P., 1995, Second record of Vermilion Flycatcher in Dougherty County, *Oriole* 60:6-8). The second bird remained in the area through 4 March 1995. The 2002 Baker County sighting is probably within 16 km of the Vermilion Flycatcher's location on the 1994 CBC.

At about 1200, our CBC team reached our turn-around spot in Baker County, a major power line cut on Tarva Road, 18 km south from the intersection with GA 62 (Leary Road). This power line marked the edge of the count circle. A pig farm was on the north side of the power line, just inside the CBC count circle. When Tod Lanier and I scanned the pigpen, I noticed a finch-sized bird sitting on top of a post. As we had not seen a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)