

A Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) Observed in Anderson County, South Carolina

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On 21 December 2003 (10:35 h), Jane Chew, Bing Somers and I found a Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) at Dobbins Cattle Farm, in Townville, Anderson County, SC. I first noted the phoebe perched on a barbed-wire fence that runs through a pasture next to McAdams Road. The bird repeatedly flew from its perch to capture prey from the ground. Its flycatching behavior, including tail wagging, indicated that it was a phoebe, but when I examined the bird through binoculars it became apparent that I was not seeing an Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*). The tawny-orange of the bird's abdomen and vent contrasted with the gray of the breast, back and head. The gray pattern on this bird's head suggested a black mask, noticeably different from the uniformly dark head of an Eastern Phoebe. We noted that its tail was black and that it had wing bars, although these were indistinct. The bird did not vocalize. The day was perfectly clear, with no wind, and with the sun behind us, we watched the bird for 10 min at a distance of 30 m. The three of us concurred that the bird was definitely a Say's Phoebe. Before this sighting, Chew and I had observed this species on numerous occasions in the western United States. This appears to be the fourth confirmed sighting of a Say's Phoebe in South Carolina.

Editor's Note: In 2004, this report was accepted by the SC Bird Records Committee (Record No. 12-03-11). As of 1989, the Say's Phoebe was on the South Carolina definitive list, based on the publication of three reports: one from Eastover (Richland Co.), 18 Jan 1969 (*Chat* 35:112, 1971), a report from Bull Island (Charleston Co.), 30 September 1979 (*Chat* 45:44-45) and one for a bird seen near McClellanville (Charleston Co.), 15 March 1986 (*Lesser Squawk*, the newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society, May 1986, p. 4). In addition to these three records, several other reports are available, although these have not been fully evaluated. – WP