

625-01-1993

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) in Lancaster County

by Jonathan Heller

On the morning of 13 November 1993, while birding near Washington Boro, I discovered a Sedge Wren. The site is located along a brushy powerline cut about 0.5 miles east of route 441 and between Blue Rock Road to the south and Charlestown Road to the north. The habitat where I discovered the wren consists of an extensive area of low brushy cover (in the powerline cut) bordered on two sides by deciduous woodland and on one side by an alfalfa field. In addition, a small stream runs through the cut and nearby woodland.

That morning, I visited the area primarily to search for sparrows. Upon approaching the powerline cut, I noticed large numbers of sparrows and other songbirds. Once I began "pishing" and playing a tape of a screech owl, large numbers of the songbirds were attracted.

At about 1020 hours I noticed a small wren in a bush about fifteen feet away. About the size of a Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), its tail was short and stubby like that species, but its breast was light tan. Immediately after my initial observation the wren came into full view. Looking first at the back, I noticed a brown back with obvious white streaking. At this point I concluded that the bird in front of me was a Sedge Wren. For the next two minutes, the bird moved through the bushes in front of me. At its closest approach, the wren was only six feet away. Other plumage features I noticed included a faint tan stripe above the dark eye. This stripe set off the slightly darker crown, but the effect was not very noticeable. As I mentioned before, the breast was light tan. This coloration darkened on the lower breast and belly and extended to include the undertail coverts. The extremely short and stubby tail was tan with dark markings. Although my view of this bird leaves no doubt in my mind that I actually saw a Sedge Wren, I cannot explain what it was doing so far out of habitat and out of season.

My prior experience with this species is confined to Delaware--specifically in and around Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. To the best of my knowledge, this Sedge Wren represents the first sighting reported in Lancaster County since June of 1975.

Jonathan Heller

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Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*)

Date of Sighting: 13 November 1993 to 13 November 1993

Location: WASHINGTON BORO

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Jonathan Heller

Date of Submission: 1993

Submitted by: Jonathan Heller

Written Description: YES Photo: NO Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
J. Skinner			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

9-25-94