

March 4, 2007

Mark A. McConaughy
3787K Logans Ferry Road
Pittsburgh, Pa 15239-3910

Thank you for submitting your report of a Sedge Wren in Bell Township, Westmoreland County, PA on August 26 and 28, 2004.

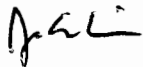
The sighting was voted upon (3/4) as a Class IV-A record: a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observers identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.

Some dissenting voters felt that the description of the song: a buzz, buzz, buzz into a trill, was a little misleading. A chip, chip, chip into a trill would be a more appropriate description. One voter felt the chance of Common Yellowthroat was not completely ruled out.

The committee recognizes the distinctiveness of the Sedge Wren song, habits and identification. It was felt that the lack of supporting visual details and slight confusion in the song description does not conclusively support the identification.

Thank you for taking the time to submit this report.

Sincerely,



J. Eric Witmer
Chairman: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Record # 625-02-2004

625-02-2004

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review list or not on the Official List of Birds in Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

SPECIES (Common and Scientific Name): Sedge Wren, *Cistothorus platensis*

Subspecies: NA

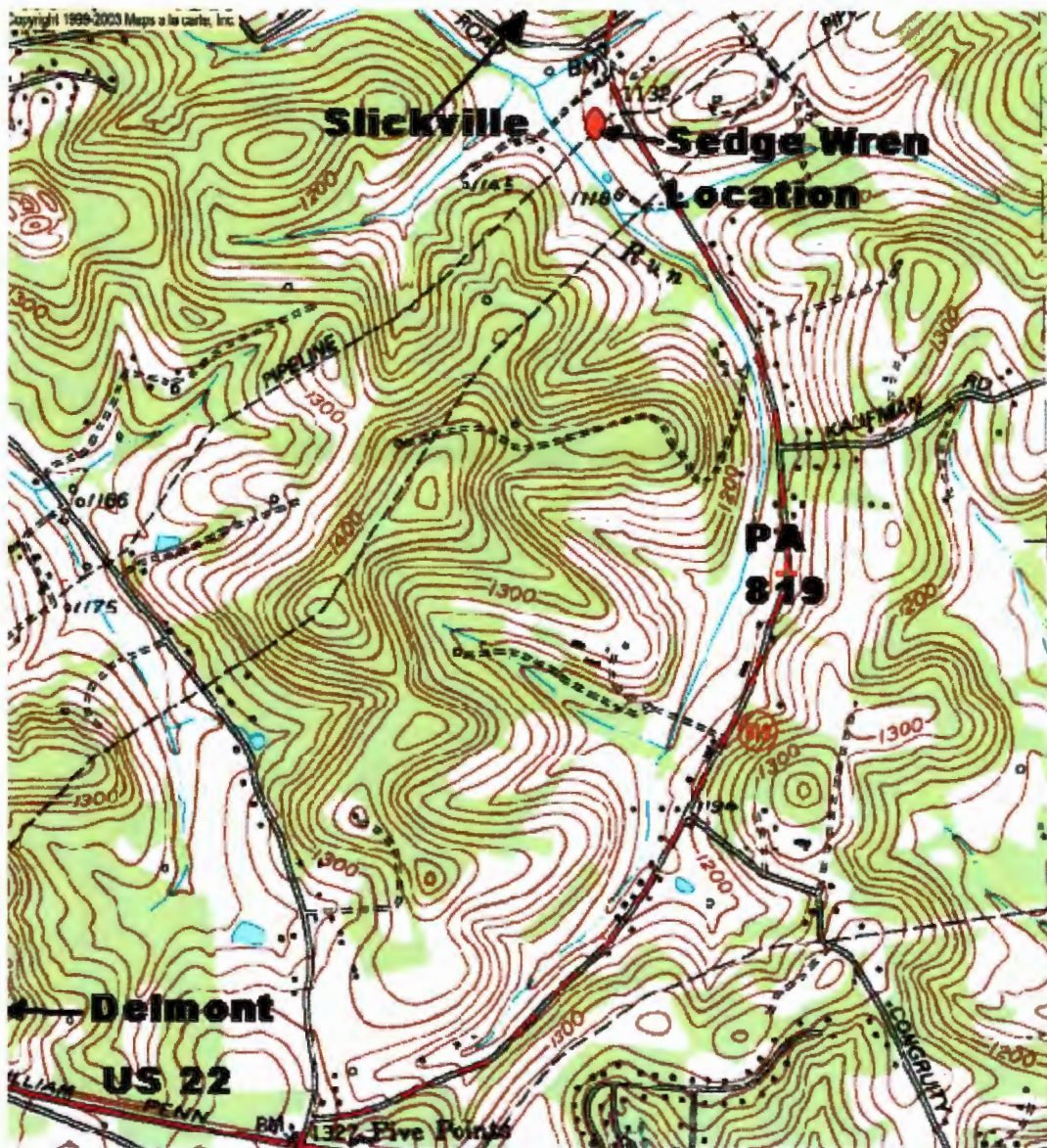
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS: 1 **SEX(ES):** Unknown

AGES(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g., immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable):
NA

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 8/26/2004 and 8/28/2004 **TIME:** Between 6:30 and 7:30 AM

LOCATION (city, borough, township): Between Slickville and Five Points in Bell Township, Westmoreland County

EXACT SITE (e.g., name of park, lake, road): In a farm field on the west side of PA 819 and just south of its intersection with Porters Road (see map below). This is between Five Points and Slickville in Westmoreland County.



OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name: Mark A. McConaughy

Address: 3787K Logans Ferry Road

City: Pittsburgh State: PA Zip: 15239-3910

Email (optional): TimeTraveler@msn.com

Telephone (optional): 724-527-5585 (day/work), 724-733-5299 (home/night)

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

Dennis Lauffer, Mike Fialkovich and another person from Three Rivers Bird club whose name I don't remember.

HABITAT (e.g., mowed field, woodland edge, any other details):

It was in a fallow farm field that had a lot of milkweed, goldenrod and various wild grasses. The field was partially mowed near PA 819 and the bird was in the unmowed area.

DISTANCE TO BIRD: We were able to get within 20 yards of the bird, but never got a real good look at it in the weeds.

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you):
Sun was behind us as it was just rising in the east. It was foggy the first morning, but no so much that you couldn't see the weeds, etc. The second morning was clear.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: Ears were the most important equipment, but I also had Leica 10x40 binoculars, a Leica APO 78 scope and a Sony DSC-707 digital camera – all of the latter were not much help.

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species Present; “jizz”= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual):
We only got brief glimpses of the bird as it flitted around in the weeds. It was a small brown bird – and that is all I could tell in those fleeting glimpses. However, it was making the typical Sedge Wren buzz, buzz, buzz into a trill call at a single pitch.

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing):
It was moving around in the weeds and we could see the stems of the grasses, etc., moving as it walked around on the ground. We would also see grasshoppers taking off en masse to get out of its way, but couldn't really see the bird due to the dense weeds.

VOCALIZATIONS: The typical Sedge Wren call of buzz, buzz, buzz into trill – all at the same pitch. We did make one attempt to use a taped Sedge Wren call to get it to come out for some photos. It responded to the Sedge Wren tape call by calling back, but did not jump out or up on the weeds for us to photograph it.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, IF ANY: Unfortunately, we couldn't obtain any of these in spite of making two tries to do so. The call just wasn't loud enough to record with the microphone on my cassette recorder. The call was in competition with the car background noise along PA 819 which drowned it out on the recording. We never got a good chance to photograph the bird.

Photograph ☐ **Video recording** ☐ **Audio recording** ☐ **Drawing** ☐

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional): _____

Telephone (optional): _____

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

General condition: _____

If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known:

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others):

The identification was based primarily on the call and the view that it was a small, brown bird. No other wrens make the type of call noted. The only other bird that makes a call that might even be confused with it is the Clay-colored Sparrow, but the Clay-colored Sparrow doesn't make a trill at the end of the call.

DISCUSSION – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

Dennis Lauffer was the individual who found the bird on the morning of 25 August 2004 when delivering morning papers to the family that owned the property. He notified folks about the bird and I checked on it the morning of 26 August 2004. Dennis was also there that morning (a Thursday). On 28 August 2004, a Saturday morning, Dennis, Mike, the other individual and I tried to get close enough to get documentation for PORC. Unfortunately, that attempt was not very successful.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES:

I do not have much experience with Sedge Wrens outside of tapes and books. Dennis Lauffer has found several other Sedge Wrens in this general area of Westmoreland County (not the same field) over the last decade and Mike has also had experience with in Michigan.

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? (why or why not):

Based on the call and brief glimpses, I don't know what else it could be except a Sedge Wren.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation: Peterson Tape of Bird Calls from the Eastern United States.

After observation: _____

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 15 November 2004 – I wasn't sure I should even turn in a report with such poor documentation, but decided it should be at least noted.

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER: 

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Sedge Wren (Cistothorus platensis)

Date of Sighting: 26 August 2004 to 28 August 2004

Location: BELL TOWNSHIP

County : WESTMORELAND

Observer(s): Mark McConaughy et al.

Date of Submission: 2004

Submitted by: Mark McConaughy

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

| Member | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV-A | Class IV-B | Class IV-C | Class V | Abstain |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|
| R. Wiltraut | | | | X | | | | |
| D. Heathcote | | | X | | | | | |
| P. Guris | | X | | | | | | |
| J. Stanley | | | | X | | | | |
| E. Witmer | | | X | | | | | |
| R. Leberman A. Gernat | | | | X | | | | |
| M. Sharp | | | X | | | | | |
| TOTALS | | 1 | 3 | 3 | | | | |
| DECISION | | | | | | | | |

Comments: 4/3 GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary)

Date:

8/8/06

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round Two

Species: Sedge Wren (Cistothorus platensis)

Date of Sighting: 26 August 2004 to 28 August 2004

Location: BELL TOWNSHIP

County : WESTMORELAND

Observer(s): Mark McConaughy et al.

Date of Submission: 2004

Submitted by: Mark McConaughy

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

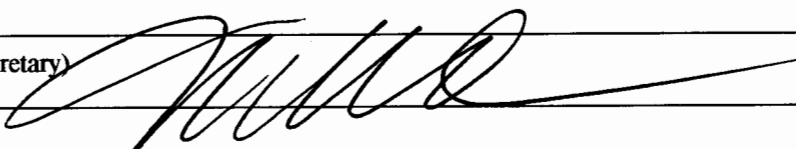
Recording: No

| Member | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV-A | Class IV-B | Class IV-C | Class V | Abstain |
|-------------|---------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|
| R. Wiltraut | | | | X | | | | |
| A. Guarente | | | X | | | | | |
| T. Johnson | | | | X | | | | |
| J. Stanley | | | | X | | | | |
| E. Witmer | | | X | | | | | |
| J. Heller | | | | X | | | | |
| G. Malosh | | | X | | | | | |
| TOTALS | | | 3 | 4 | | | | |
| DECISION | | | | X | | | | |

Comments:

3/4

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

1/29/07