





Documentation for the PORC

Species: Sedge Wren

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Other Observers: Gary Edwards, Jerry Stanley, Kathie Goodblood, Russ States, Nancy Baker, etc

Location: Since this information is privy to the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (to which I am employed), I cannot give a specific location. However, the bird was seen/heard in Clinton Township, Venango County.

Date and Length of time observed: July 9, 2006. I first heard the bird singing on one of my counts for the BBA around 8:30 AM. Upon closer investigation, I was able to determine that there were actually 2 different males countersinging. However, the one male only sang sporadically while the other male sang much more continuously. The wrens were still in sight and singing when I left the field at 9:50 AM. The one male in particular was very bold and would climb up the grass and into full view as it would sing. Therefore I had some excellent opportunities to both view and photograph this bird. Local birders have heard and seen the birds in subsequent days.

Optics: The bird was seen through both my Swarovski 8.5 by 42 EL binoculars and my Swarovski ST-80 scope with a 20x-60x zoom eyepiece. I was able to be within approximately 25-30 feet of the singing bird at a distance that it still felt comfortable to expose itself while singing.

Habitat and Behavior: Throughout this write-up I will mainly refer to the more cooperative of the two males, specifically noting whenever I am speaking of the other male. This bird was the most viewer-friendly Sedge Wren that I have ever observed on their breeding grounds. This male would fly to a visible perch and begin singing. When it was done, it would either fly to a different location and drop out of sight, continue singing elsewhere, or work its way down some grass stalks and disappear. It could remain quiet for a few minutes, but seemed to be singing for a good portion of the time. I was even able to observe the bird singing while in its short, weak, fluttery flights. A couple of times, this male was so bold that it would even fly towards me to perch and begin singing. Unlike other Sedge Wrens, this individual would work its way to the very top of a grass stalk and sing, being completely visible. The other male was heard only a handful of times although I was able to view that one as well.

This grassy field appeared to be a pretty typical hayfield. This habitat was pretty thick and appeared much less homogenous than the other areas where I have observed Sedge Wrens on their breeding grounds. In addition to the predominant grass, I saw milkweed, daisies, other flowers, etc. The average height of the field was somewhere in the neighborhood of knee to thigh height. The field looked fairly lush so it must have gotten a good amount of rainfall, however it didn't seem to be supplied with any additional water source. The entire field was fairly expansive with the two singing males only occupying a small patch of interior habitat.

Weather: I am unable to remember specifics about the weather, but the day began fairly cool turning much warmer as the morning progressed.

Description: Upon hearing the song well, I knew the bird was a Sedge Wren. Both males began the song with two introductory chips and then ended with a dry rattle tsik.....tsik..... tsik-tch-tch-tch-tch-tch. I initially heard the bird from a nearby road which was approximately 0.3 miles away from the actual singing male.

I was able to obtain excellent views of this bird as it would often sing from "exposed" perches. The bird was very small with a relatively short tail. It had a thin, short bill that was orange on the lower mandible and dark on the upper mandible. The inside linings to its mouth were also orange. It was plain underneath with a buffy wash on the undertail coverts, flanks, and across the breast (which formed an indistinct breastband). Otherwise the throat and belly were white. The dark eye was offset by a plain face and a pale (but not white) supercilium. The supercilium was defined by a dark eyeline that extended back from the eye, but the lores were pale. The crown was darker with pale streaking especially on the sides and rear of the crown. The front of the crown was an unmarked brown with a blackish border to the crown along the upper edge of the supercilium. The back and tail were very well marked. The upperparts were generally brown with strong, paler barring especially on the rectrices, remiges, and coverts. However, it was the back that contained the boldest patterning. The back was predominantly black with short white streaks extending from the lower nape to the upper edge of the wing. Between the boldly marked back and the streaked rear crown was an unmarked brown nape. The wren also contained pink legs.

Similar Species: The Marsh Wren would likely be the specie that could cause the most confusion. However, this bird lacked the rufous rump and scapulars, obvious white supercilium, and the distinct, separated streaking on the upper back. Also, this wren was generally marked with pale buff overall (especially on the underparts), had streaking on the crown, more barring to the wings, and had a shorter bill than a Marsh Wren would exhibit.

Note: I was able to obtain a number of fairly decent pictures and a grass sample from the habitat. Pictures were digiscoped with a Sony Cyber-Shot camera and none of the pictures were tampered with in any way. If anyone would be interested in the grass sample, please let me know.

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Sedge Wren      Cistothorus platensis

Date of Sighting: 1 July 2006 to 28 July 2006

Location: CLINTONVILLE

County : VENANGO

Observer(s): Cameron Rutt m.obs

Date of Submission: 2006

Submitted by: Cameron Rutt

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

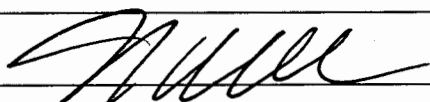
Specimen: No

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								
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	6							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

7/30/07