

625-03-2006

Documentation for the PORC

Species: Sedge Wren

Name: Cameron Rutt

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Phone Number: 215-453-9585

Other Observers: none

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 Greenfield Township, Erie County.

Date and Length of time observed: June 9-17, 2006. I first heard the bird singing on June 9, 2006 around 12:00 PM. It sang off and on until 1:15 PM (when I left) with about seven different song bouts. It would sing for about 1-3 minutes before becoming silent again. I only glimpsed the bird one time for about 5 seconds. I returned to the area and heard the singing male on both June 10 and June 17.

Optics: The bird was seen through my Swarovski 8.5 by 42 EL binoculars. Upon viewing the bird, I was only around 10 meters away from it as it popped up out of the grass, not knowing I was so close by.

Habitat and Behavior: This bird was extremely shy and retiring, even more so than the 5 other males I have observed and heard on their breeding grounds. It was completely uninterested in any noise I made and was very reluctant to emerge from its grassy vegetation. It primarily sang from a low, hidden perch in the grass. Unfortunately, I am not very well acquainted with plant identification so I struggle to find an accurate description for the habitat. The grass was green and relatively "short." The thickest grass was only about knee or thigh height. The habitat was very homogenous with a few scattered bushes on the periphery of the grassy vegetation. This could be a kind of grass that would be present in some hayfields?? The grass patch where the bird was mainly singing from was not too far away from a stream and looked fairly lush so it was likely well watered.

Weather: As far as summer days go, June 9 was actually quite cool, overcast, and windy. However, June 17 was much the opposite with hot temperatures and sunshine.

Description: Since my view of the bird was so brief, the best identification feature was the bird's song. Upon hearing the song well, I knew the bird was a Sedge Wren. The song started with two introductory chips and then ended with a dry rattle tsik.....tsik..... tsik-tch-tch-tch-tch-tch. The rattle could vary between songs as there seemed to be a higher pitched version as well as a lower pitched one. The rattle was generally quite slow, never approaching the trill of a Chipping Sparrow. The song carried surprisingly far as I was able to hear it from the road which was probably over 100 meters away from the singing male at one point. I heard the song well quite a few times, even at some very close and tantalizing ranges.

The fleeting look I got yielded a very small bird with buffy underparts, a pale supercilium, and a streaked back. All in all, the song, quick glimpse, and habitat provided an undeniable Sedge Wren experience.

**Similar Species:** There are a few species that would be similar in appearance to the Sedge Wren, but in my opinion, nothing sounds like a Sedge Wren. Sibley describes a staccato rattle given by the Common Yellowthroat as being similar, but as far as I know they don't begin the rattle with the introductory chips like the Sedge Wren. The Marsh Wren would likely be the most similar specie for a fleeting view in a "wet" grassy habitat but this bird lacked the rufous upperpart tones, white supercilium, and appeared buffy below.

**Note:** Although I obtained a picture and grass sample from the habitat, I was unable to photograph the bird. If anyone would be interested in either of these, please let me know.

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Sedge Wren    Cistothorus platensis

Date of Sighting: 9 June 2006 to 17 June 2006

Location: GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Cameron Rutt

Date of Submission: 2006

Submitted by: Cameron Rutt

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			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/6

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

4/6/07