



62504-2006

Documentation for the PORC

Species: Sedge Wren

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Other Observers: Chuck Gehringer and at least one other birder.

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 North Shenango Township, Crawford County.

Date and Length of time observed: June 21-26, 2006. I first heard the bird singing on June 21, 2006 around 5:30 PM. It sang off and on until 7:10 PM (when I left). This bird was fairly bold and with some patience would clamber up the grass and into view as it would sing. Therefore I had many opportunities to both view and photograph the bird. I returned to the area and observed the singing male on both June 23 and again on June 26 for a total of another 3 hours.

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: This bird was much more viewer friendly than some of the other Sedge Wrens that I have observed on their breeding grounds. It primarily would begin singing from a low, hidden perch in the grass, but as it would continue singing it would eventually work its way higher in the grass until it was almost completely visible. Then it would either suddenly dive down into the grass as though it was frightened or slowly work its way down some grass stalks and disappear. It could remain quiet for 5-10 minutes so I would pretty much have to wait till it began singing again until I could observe the bird. On June 21st, I may have observed two different birds as I flushed up what I thought was a Sedge Wren in front of me and immediately afterwards the male was singing behind me (?). On June 23rd, upon walking into the birds territory, the male started to chip and chatter from a tuft of peripheral grasses. This lasted for a few minutes before he flew to his more typical area and then began to sing. While the bird was upset by my presence, it became visible and I watched him erect and lower his crown feathers on three different occasions.

The grass was green, tall (5-6 feet high), and thick. This tall-grass habitat was quite small in size and very homogenous, but surrounding the area was a weedy field that contained breeding Bobolinks, etc. This could be a kind of grass that would be present in some hayfields?? The two small grass patches where the bird was mainly singing from were on the lower side of two small man-made ponds which created a slightly wet soil, but only enough to feel/see as one walked through the grass.

Weather: June 21 was partly to mostly cloudy with a good breeze that made photographing the bird in wind-blown grasses quite challenging.

Description: Upon hearing the song well, I knew the bird was a Sedge Wren. Unlike other Sedge Wrens which I have heard, this male began the song with three (instead of two) introductory chips and then ended with a dry rattle tsik.....tsik.....tsik..... tsik-tch-tch-tch-tch-tch-tch. I initially heard the bird from a nearby road which was

approximately 0.2 miles away from the actual singing male. Additionally, I was able to hear the bird chip and chatter. The chip was often in pairs and sounds like the introductory chips to its song. The chatter was a harsh tchhhh-tchhhh-tchhhh.

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 black and white streaks. 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 poor 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: 21 June 2006 to 26 June 2006

Location: NORTH SHENANGO TWP.

County : CRAWFORD

Observer(s): Cameron Rutt, Chuck Gehringer

Date of Submission: 2006

Submitted by: Cameron Rutt

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

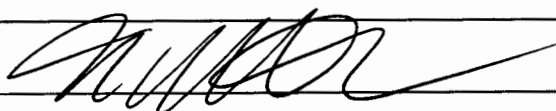
Recording: No

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	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

4/10/07