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RECENT SEDGE WREN OBSERVATIONS IN NEBRASKA

The Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) in Nebraska was considered by Rapp (1958) an uncommon migrant in the eastern third of the state, and a rare breeder in suitable marshes in the eastern quarter, and by Johnsgard (1986) as an uncommon spring and fall migrant in the east and a rare summer resident in the eastern third of the state, mostly east of a line from Knox to Gage counties. Recent articles have prompted questions concerning the rarity of Sedge Wrens nesting in Nebraska (Bedell 1987, Lingle and Bedell 1989) and the possibility that may be nesting late in Nebraska, after having nested earlier elsewhere in their range (Lingle and Bedell 1989). Singing males and/or nests have recently been recorded in nine counties, as far west as Phelps Co. (Cink 1973, Bedell 1987, Lingle and Bedell 1989, and Dinan, pers. comm.)

During August 1989 I recorded Sedge Wrens in four new locations, including two new county records, and in one previously known location. See Table 1 for a listing of recent Sedge Wren observations. All observations occurred in dense, reseeded native grass stands, bordering rainwater basin marshes. All of the Wrens observed were singing, some songs were solicited by the playing of a recording.

The two Wrens observed at Mallard Haven, Fillmore Co., on 2 August were in extremely tall, dense stands of big bluestem and switchgrass, on a north-facing slope on the north side of the basin. The two singing birds were first observed perched near the top of the grass, they then flew low just above the grass for a short distance before dropping into the dense vegetation.

One bird was observed on 24 August at North Lake Basin, Seward Co.. This basin was dry, with a stand of tall, dense grass along its western perimeter, dominated by mangrass and switchgrass. This was the first time I used a recording to establish the presence of Sedge Wrens. Walking a transect through the grass, I stopped every 10-12 feet to play a recording of a Sedge Wren. Each time I stopped I faced four directions and played the recording twice in each direction. The bird responded to the recording by singing and moving around me in a circle.

On 24 August I visited Harvard Marsh, where in 1987 Paul Bedell recorded 26 singing Wrens. This basin has a large stand of big bluestem on its east and northeast sides. Using the recording as described previously, I elicited responses from three Wrens. One of these curious Wrens perched in the grass within two feet of me, approximately three feet off the ground.

Krause Lagoon, Fillmore Co., has an area of tall, dense grass on the south and east borders of the basin that is dominated by Indiangrass. Scattered throughout are dense stands of big bluestem and switchgrass. On 30 August, using the recording, I located three Wrens in the stands of big bluestem and switchgrass.

Table 1. Recent Records of Sedge Wrens

Date	Location	Source
6/ 9/70	Hwy 281 10 mi. S of Bartlett, Wheeler Co.	Cink 1973
6/24/71	*3 mi. SSW of Winnebago, Thurston Co.	Cink 1973
7/17/71	*SE of Clay Center, Clay Co.	Cink 1973
7/ 8/72	*North 27th St. Marsh, Lancaster Co.	Cink 1973
5/20/80	*Federation Marsh, Lancaster Co.	Nest. Survey <i>NBR</i> 49:9 #
7/29/87	Taylor Ranch, Hall Co.	Bedell 1987
8/12/87	Pintail Marsh, Hamilton Co.	Bedell 1987
8/16/87	Rainwater Basin #157, Clay Co.	Bedell 1987
8/17/87	Harvard Marsh, Clay Co.	Bedell 1987
8/19/88	Marshall Farm, Phelps Co.	Lingle 1989
8/28/88	*Boone Co.	Lingle 1989
9/ 3/88	Jack Sinn area, Saunders Co.	Dinan pers. comm.
9/ 8/88	*Mormon Island, Hall Co.	Lingle 1989
8/ 2/89	Mallard Haven, Fillmore Co.	This article
8/24/89	North Lake Basin, Seward Co.	This article
8/24/89	Harvard Marsh, Clay Co.	This article
8/30/89	Krause Lagoon, Fillmore Co.	This article
8/30/89	Smith Lagoon, Clay Co.	This article

* Observations of nests or young

Detail obtained from Nest Record Card, filed by Ducey

On 30 August I also located two singing Wrens at Smith Lagoon, Clay Co., both birds responding to the recording. This basin has a dense grass stand on its southwest perimeter that is dominated by big bluestem and switchgrass.

It is unknown whether all of the observations in Table 1 represent breeding birds or migrants, but in some cases nests or young have been found. It is apparent that this elusive little bird may not be as rare in Nebraska as once believed.

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