

Species: SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN (SEdge WREN)

Cistothorus platensis

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 6 and 7, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 6:30 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.-MDT

Locality: Bonny Reservoir

Nearest Town: Idalia

County: Yuma

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

None

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Light Conditions: Direct sunlight on bird on 5/6; overcast on 5/7.

Distance from bird (how measured): 20 feet to 50 feet.

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Breeding adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Very secretive. Attention called to the bird's presence initially by hearing song. Got the bird to expose itself only briefly by constant "pishing" (on 5/6) and with tape recorder (on 5/7). Bird hid in tall grass and sage brush most of the time, scolding. Popped into view on three occasions atop of a sage brush, sang once or twice, then dived into grass.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

Small, buffy brown wren with cocked tail. Underparts generally buffy. Crown, brown with light streaks. Lacked conspicuous white eyeline of Long-billed Marsh Wren. Back, brownish, lightly streaked with white or light buffy. Tail, brown, barred with black. I didn't get a good look at the undertail coverts. Bill, short, stubby, dark. Eye, dark.



Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Song is what called my attention to the bird on both days. A dry, almost insect like "Chip-Chip-Chip-Chip-Chrrrrrrrrrrrr". Staccato in quality. On May 7, the bird nearly sang along with the tape recorder. Call note, a dry "Chip". Also, scolding note "trrrrr-trrrrr".

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Open field adjacent to riparian woodlands composed of tall grasses (4"-6") intermixed with small sage brush (10"-12").

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Long-billed Marsh Wren: Has solid, unstreaked brown crown with conspicuous white eye-line. Has much different song - more guttural rattle as compared with dry insect-like song of Short-billed.

All other North American Wrens: Were eliminated by song.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have never seen this species before. However, I have been playing a tape of its song at likely spots for almost two years, and I recognized it immediately when I got close to the bird. Have seen all other North American Wrens and am familiar with all through extensive experience throughout the United States except for Brown-throated Wren which I have seen on two occasions only.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard Field Guides supported observation.

Taped song compared with singing bird on the spot clinched the observation.

This report was written from notes made during x after        observation; from memory       

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