

42-88-38 A

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING  
FOR  
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: SEEDGE WREN  
(Vernacular name)

Cistothorus platensis  
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): Found 15 June 1988 still there when last checked on 11 July 1988 Time Bird Seen: all times of day

Locality: Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge  
8 mi. S. Walden, Jackson Co., Colorado  
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x36 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: None

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: \_\_\_\_\_

Light conditions: Variably OK to excellent, depending on day.

Distance from bird, and how measured: Repeatedly seen as close as 5m

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Secretive, but singing & frequently from tops of small weeds, <sup>top of</sup> sedges, and while skulking around inside thick sedges/grasses. Would make frequent short flights <sup>between</sup> patches of the taller grasses/sedges. Very fast wingbeats on short rounded wings, therefore relatively slow flight speed (much slower than the abundant Savannah sparrows, for example). Short tail occasionally cocked while in ~~flight~~ flight - typical Cistothorus behavior. No indication the bird had a mate, but I did see it carrying a blade of grass at one point.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Wet meadow full of sedges, rushes, grasses, & forbs. Water depth varied from soggy ground to ~1 foot deep. The thick sedge patches where the wren was often found were 2-3' tall.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Kevin Cook, Fort Collins, CO; a couple from Evergreen whose names I didn't write down, but one of whom helps with banding at Colorado Bird Observatory (Barr Lake); others I don't know about.



Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Size: very small wren - same size or smaller than Marsh Wren with shorter tail, shorter bill.

Culmen slightly decurved. Tail often cocked up in the air, typical of wrens.

Plumage: ~~overall~~ <sup>dorsally</sup> brownish; white streaking noted on crown + back; narrow white supercilium; grayish-white throat + breast, buffier on the belly but not as bright as some I've seen. ~~Dark~~ Brown barring on wings + tail.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--

i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: Song the ~~typ~~ dry chatter typical of this species, with 1-3 introductory syllables before going into the trill, which is slower, drier, + less musical than the Marsh Wren song. Call note very harsh and dry, much more reminiscent of the call of a Brown Thrasher than a Marsh Wren.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Marsh Wren has dark unstreaked crown, more prominent supercilium, longer bill, usually longer tail, predominantly rusty dorsal coloration compared to <sup>warm</sup> brown of the Sedge Wren; Song slightly faster, especially during the trill, and much more musical. Marsh Wren call note a 1-2 syllabled "tch-tch", nowhere near as harsh as a Sedge Wren.

Prior experience with this and similar species: Very familiar with both. I've heard Sedge Wren songs in New York, Virginia, and New Mexico (spring of 85), and learned their call notes on the wintering grounds in Louisiana + Texas.

This report was written from notes made during \_\_\_\_ after ☒ observation; from memory ☒.

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Signature: Bill Howe

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee  
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