

2000

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5-2 1st
6-1 2nd

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Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

CFO-RC FILE X: _____
RESULTS: _____

Red 7/23/00 upe

Species (please include common and scientific name): WINTER WREN**Date(s)** of Observation: 6/21/00**Number of birds** seen: 1 Sex: presume male (singing) Plumage: drab brown

- (breeding??)

Exact location: USFS discontinued forest service road directly east of Brainard Lake; exact location about 1/2 mile east of trailhead of Long Lake trail connection, and at base of Niwot Ridge**County:** Boulder Nearest town: Ward Elevation: 10,000 ft.**Length of observation:** actual viewing time, about 3 minutes. Listening time, over an hour.**Time(s)** of observation: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.**Other observers** who saw the bird(s) with you: none. I was confirming the audio identification of the bird for another BCNA Indian Peaks birdcounter, Mike Figgs, who will file separately.

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): see above

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position): Weather sunny, windless. Visibility excellent. Angle of morning sun on the bird was about 45°; bird's position for the 3 minutes duration was quite constant at about 3/4 profile, facing observer.**Optical equipment** used: Leica 8 x 42s**Distance** from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): perch was about 30 ft. in height during viewing, and tree was about 50 ft. from observer. Bird changed positions several times during an hour, but was always hidden behind spruce/fir foliage (inner 1/3 of topmost branches) except during the "window of opportunity" described.Was bird(s) photographed? If so, have you submitted photos? Nope.
Who took the photographs?Describe the **general and specific habitat** in which the bird(s) occurred: high-mountain spruce/fir ecosystem at base of 200 ft. talus; wet willow-filled drainage and much deadfall in immediate proximity (other birds present were Wilson's warblers, YR warblers, Lincoln's sparrows, RC and GC kinglets in abundance, Olive-sided flycatchers, woodpecker species not observed, and other common high-altitude species).

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification): It sang repeatedly, continuously (not to say frenetically) for the entire period of observation, about an hour. Usually it remained in the top 1/5 of spruce and fir trees, on inner branches (thus hidden from view). It changed positions about five times but was not observable on these occasions. It had favorite perches. It did not appear to be feeding but simply exhibited breeding song (remarkably persistent...). No other breeding behavior was observed, nor was any other bird of the species present.

Describe the bird in detail.

At the distance mentioned (50 ft.) no small details were notable except for the following: beak was not very long (less long than that of canyon wren or rock wren) and not particularly incurved. Tail appeared very short but was observed during only the briefest of moments, during a change of position. Bird was almost uniformly drab brown, with very little contrast between breast and back (lower belly stripes mentioned in the field guides were not visible). Auricular patch was however visible—slightly darker than head. Inside of pink mouth was visible during song! No other field marks were observed, alas.

Describe bird's call or song: absolutely diagnostic (this observer is more confident with aural identification of many species than with visible), to wit: The song is quite unique, with the possible exception of a few prairie singers or tundra/prairie like the horned lark, and the latter sings with much more frequent breaks. This bird sang quite continuously, as described above. The song is along series of scratchy, twitterings, with a rather up-and-down melody. It carries for an amazing distance (I heard it as I approached the site, from a distance of over 200 yards). I did not hear its call.

In any case, no guessing was necessary: the bird had already been identified by a more capable observer.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:


Only remotely similar species would be other wrens, and none of them have a song which at all resembles this one. I would willingly pass a blind quiz on wren songs, and bet my Leicas on a 100% grade (except for cactus wren—haven't seen/heard one yet)! Given the song and the habitat, there is no doubt.

What is your **prior experience** with this and similarly appearing species? Only those winter wrens heard in California old-growth forests.

List books, guides, recordings or other **sources consulted** and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): the usual field guides (Peterson and Natl. Geog.), consulted during observation; and the usual CDs (Peterson and Cornell), consulted upon return from hike.

This report is from **notes** made during ____ or after ____ observation: Both.
or later from memory ____ : Completed for this report.

Date of written report: 7/15/00, as per request by original observer, Mike Figgs.

Reporting observer: 



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7/17/00

Dear Records Committee:

I file this report at the request of Mike Figgs, who felt that we should begin to have written records of appearances of Northern Rockies species at this level (I had felt that ~~the~~ the Indian Peaks records were sufficient but I think Mike feels doc. should be situated in a broader context).

He is a busy man, so I hope he gets around to filling out his own report. He, after all, found the bird on his count & asked me to go have a look to confirm*. If you'd like a reference for either one of us, give Bill Kasmpfer or Paula Hensley a call.

In any case, will be including this sighting in the T-P birdcount (BCNA, 20 yrs. +), and will keep an eye out for future appearances in our sector.

Thanks for your work in keeping track of all this for Colorado.

JMK

* which I did, a week later.

However a 3rd visit did not show the wren to be still present.