

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Bewick's wren 2. Number 2

3. Location Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA

4. Date: 24 April 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 9:15 AM to 9:20 AM

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

small bird, body about size of house wren but more slender. Tail only slightly shorter than body length. Folded wing tips barely came past base of tail. Bill long, slender, pointed, lightly decurved. Bill + legs dark grey. Tail often cocked above back. Feet rather large.

Upperparts rich brown (♂), grey-brown (♀). Underparts pale grey, with some darker indistinct mottlings. Dark line through eye, pale stripe above eye [these more marked in ♂ than ♀] upperside of tail dark. Underside of tail: central feathers dark, outer feathers white with dark crossbars.

On 5.13 discovered nest - a saucer of twigs 6" wide 1 1/2" high, on a beam when the end of the toolshed. ♀ on nest, or bringing insects. Could hear no young.

On 5.25 nest deserted - no eggs or young inside. a single egg found outside nest; egg pitted as if pecked or clawed.

7. Description of voice, if heard: on 14 sighting (4-29) both birds continually gave a buzzy 'bzze', like a gnatcatcher but much lower in pitch. Also a 'tek' note.

8. Description of behavior: 4.29: moved rapidly through trees, continually emitting 'zee' notes; 5.13 ♂ carrying insects to incubating female; 5.21 both birds scolding at man ^(over) ~~near~~ in toolshed.

9. Habitat - general:

specific: toolshed with piles of lumber, plumbing material, junk, near edge of a forestal ravine; on other side is a grassy clearing and an apartment complex.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: Slender decurved bill, habit of cocking tail, compact body suggest wren. Long tail and song eliminate cardinal, marsh wren, only other species with ~~white~~ white-eyes.

11. Distance, (how measured)?
20-50' east

12. Optical equipment:
8x40 Binocs.

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
SUN ~~to~~ at various angles; behind obs. some of the time.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: have seen Bewick's wren in WNA, WA; have seen all N. Am wrens.

15. Other observers: C. S. Nowlan, N. Palmi, T. Staedt.

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
James Huntington made original obs.

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? notes made on spot

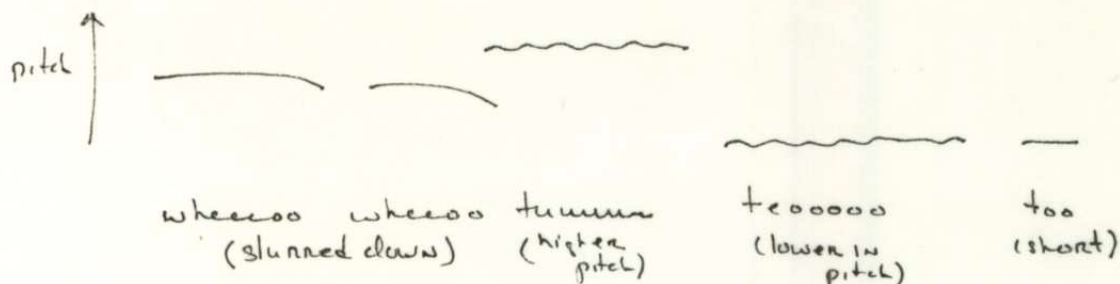
Signature: Michael C Newlan Address: 408 Wates St

Date: 5-23-81 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240

voice

later obs: birds gave a $\tilde{z}aa - \tilde{z}aa - \tilde{z}ca$ 3-note rattle when agitated.

→ song: mellow whistles, often with a 'tremolo' effect:



overall effect rather song-sparrow like, but more mellow, less metallic quality to notes.