

Rock Wren
27 Sep 1914
National, Clayton Co., IA
Althea R. Sherman
also 28 Sep; Sherman 1915

Record Number: 81-BP
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Sherman, A.R. 1915. The Rock Wren at National, Iowa. Auk
32:234.

Bent 1948

VOTE (1981): 2-III, 3-IV, 1-V, 1-VI

IV, lack of seeing eyestripe bothers me.

IV, eye-line, breast streaks, tip of tail do not fit; not
heard. otherwise description OK.

V, amazing how such a detailed description can miss all the
diagnostic marks!

III, IV?, details ??? no eyebrow-stripe or eye-line noted, nor
stripes on underparts. faded plumage?? no size comparison made.

Rufous on wings agrees? house wren?? im rock??

III, nice detail for the period.

VI, Single observer - Extensively described. Key rock wren
marks on the tail were not seen. Might have been a young
Bewick's.

IV, Description not totally convincing - eye stripe and tail
band not well seen, but probably this species. Rather far out of
range.

REVOTE (at meeting, 1 May 1981): no change.

Rock Wren

Sherman, A. R. 1915. The Rock Wren at National Iowa. Auk 32:234.

The Rock Wren at National, Iowa.— A single individual of this species (*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*) was observed on the morning of September 27, 1914, and was still here the next day. It was found in a wet ravine about the roots and thick sprouts of willow trees that grow about thirty feet from my bird blind. It had a favorite spot where in full view it would sit many minutes preening itself. While it was under observation a House Wren and English Sparrows were present with which it could be compared. Its head was not so slim as that of the House Wren, but seemed fuller or rounder, suggesting more the head of the Warbling Vireo, which was emphasized by its ashy color, while the very light breast rendered it conspicuous against the dark bark of the willows. It cocked its tail and scolded in true wren fashion.

The bird could not be taken. It was watched on both days as long as I could spare the time, and the description of it, here given, was written down while the bird was present. Rump and tail a dull rufous, the color being brighter on the rump; head and nape ashy, with a brownish wash, there being a gradual blending of this ashy with rufous along the back until the brighter rufous of rump is reached; a tinge of rufous on the tertials, the rest of the wings dark gray with darker bars; tail, rump, and back barred; no bars nor stripes could be detected on nape, head or under parts except tail; no light or white stripe over the eye; throat and breast a grayish white, somewhat lighter than corresponding parts of the *Passer domesticus*. The most strikingly marked portion was the under part of the tail, buffy white in color with conspicuous lateral bars of dark brown or black. A subterminal band of black on the tail is mentioned, also figured, in books of Mrs. Bailey, and of Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, also in 'The Birds of Washington.' I failed to see this though it might have been possible had I been on the lookout for it, as I was for the stripe over the eye. In the hand, traces of such a streak probably could have been found. The bird was studied from thirty to thirty-five feet away and I used both 8-power and 5½-power Bausch and Lomb binoculars, the latter being better for near distances.

Our place is six miles from the Mississippi River. This brings the occurrence of the species very near to the eastern limit of Iowa; and it makes the 148th species identified on our place with four or five more just beyond our borders.— ALTHEA R. SHERMAN, *National, Iowa*.

Bent, A. C.: Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and Their Allies. Bull 195 US Nat Museum, Washington, 1948. pp 292-293

Casual records.— There are a number of records for the rock wren beyond its normal range. In Alberta it was recorded at Edmonton on June 29, 1898, and at Chippewyan on June 12 and 17, 1914. One was seen at Dell Rapids, S. Dak., on July 20, 1924; one was seen at Pipestone, Minn., on May 13, 1922; one was reported at Monguagon, Mich., on October 31, 1910; another was observed at Urbana, Ill., on May 26, 1926. There are several records of its occurrence in Iowa as far east as National, on September 27, 1914, and one record of its breeding near Sioux City in June 1898. Birds were seen there in other years but no evidence of breeding.