

Elizabeth Christiansen  
4120 Y Camp Rd.  
Burlington, Ia. 52601

FIELD REPORT - Bewick's Wren

DATE OF FIRST SIGHTING - 11 April 1986

DATE OF LATEST SIGHTING - 23 April 1986

LOCATION: 4120 Y Camp Road, Burlington, Iowa 52601

WEATHER: The first day (April 11), the weather was fairly warm, 68 degrees F, partly cloudy, very little wind. The weather stayed like this for the next few days until we had a spell of winter with snow and temps. around 30 degrees F. Weather since has been brisk with some rain.

HABITAT: The habitat is cleared upland oak/hickory timber. There is a pond (under 1 acre), and a meadow (about five acres), along with an open machine shed and several brush piles of cleared timber. Surrounding the house and cleared area are timber-covered slopes, bordered on one side with a creek.

SIGHTING DATES: Every day, April 11 - 23, except: 1) the day of the snowstorm and 2) a day we were out of town.

OTHER OBSERVERS: Dana Christiansen, Bob Cecil, Cal and Bernie Knight, Jim Fuller, Chuck Fuller, Jerry White and friend.

HOW DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER BIRDS, PROMINENT FIELD MARKS: At first sight, with the sun behind it, the bird looked to be a gnatcatcher, because of its long tail. As it flew closer, the glaring white eye line and white breast were really visible. I notified Bob Cecil, who told me to look for two things: the white-notched underside of the tail, and the sideways action of the tail. The next day, strangely enough, the bird seemed to spend most of its time under our car, poking around. I got a very good look at the tail and pretty much clinched the identification. The song also fit the guide's description exactly, with a long trill at the end. The bird would fly to a perch and sing, with its head tipped back and tail tucked down.

BEHAVIOR: We have found the bird, almost exclusively, except for the first two days, around the brush piles and old machinery around our place. If we heard the bird singing, we would follow it to the brush pile. If we approached the brush pile, the bird would pop out and call (its call is like a weak house sparrow's chirp), and hop around. The bird has ranged no farther than a few tenths of a mile, actually just to the bottom of the hill (to another brush pile). I have great hopes for this bird nesting because I've heard it singing almost every day, and it has stuck with us through the snow storm.