

# Rare bird sighted

By DELORES JOCHIMSEN

Messenger staff writer

**A**merica's smallest bird, other than the hummingbird, has been observed in a moist meadow in Kennedy Park by Dr. and Mrs. Ray Schamel.

The sedge wren, one of three species of the wren family that range into Iowa, were observed singing breeding, territorial songs, Mrs. Schamel said.

"WITH WEBSTER County's critical loss of habitat it is very significant to discover an area of appropriate habitat still available and these particular wrens present, since they are considered scarce," she said.

"This wren species has declined markedly in New England and has disappeared as a regular breeder in most northeastern states," Schamel said.

The sedge wren is shy and secretive, difficult to flush from cover to observe, she said.

THEY MEASURE 4 to 4½ inches and nest in wet, grassy meadows or shallow sedge marshes. They lay five to seven white eggs

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in a soft feather and hair-lined globular nest located close to the ground and containing a side entrance.

Schamel said she finds it encouraging that this rare bird would find suitable habitat is a small area of Webster County.

Mrs. Schamel is a member of the Webster County Conservation Board and both she and her husband are enthusiastic ecologists.

Fair Dodge - M. Jochimsen  
April 25, 1986

1423 No. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501

July 13, 1986

Mr. James J. Dinmore  
4024 Arkansas Drive  
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Mr. Dinmore;

Mrs. Mina Lander here in Fort Dodge urged that we report to you the sighting of a special bird.

On June 22 & 23 my husband and I were hiking the nature trail on the north side of Badger Lake in Kennedy Park, just north of Fort Dodge.

In a grassy meadow with a few small deciduous shrubs we identified and tape recorded two Sedge Wrens singing territorial songs. In our twenty years of bird watching this was our first sighting of these small birds, so we were indeed excited.

Several of our field guides indicated this bird is "scarce" and has discontinued breeding in the N.E. U.S. Considering the lack of habitat in Webster County and the lack of knowledge of this bird by other "bird watchers" in this area we decided to report our sighting to our local newspaper, "The

Fort Dodge Messenger". Enclosed you  
will find the clipping which appeared  
on the front page.

Yours truly,  
Jan Schamel