

sedge wren *Cistothorus platensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Troglodytidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The sedge wren is also known as the short-billed marsh wren. This tiny bird is about four to four and one-half inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). It has a buff-colored area under the tail. The crown and back feathers are streaked. The thin bill is slightly curved downward. This bird tends to hold its tail in an upright position.

BEHAVIORS

The sedge wren is an uncommon migrant, uncommon summer resident and very rare winter resident in Illinois. It lives in wet grasses, sedge meadows, weedy fields, clover, alfalfa fields and shrub areas. Most spring migrants appear in April and May. Eggs are produced from June through August. The nest is globe-shaped with a side entrance and made of dried or green sedges. The nest is built to incorporate living plants as well as dead plant materials. The male builds several dummy nests in addition to the nest in which the eggs are laid. Four to seven, white eggs are deposited by the female, and she incubates them over the 12- to 14-day incubation period. Usually two broods are raised. Fall migration usually starts in October. The sedge wren winters as far south as northern Mexico. This bird eats insects and spiders. It may sing all day and all night. The song is a chattering “chap chap chap chap chapper-rrr.”

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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