

they all left the nest. They were well feathered and able to fly eight or ten feet at a time. As the young left the nest the parent birds became greatly excited, creeping about on the ground with outstretched wings and chipping to attract attention away from their offspring.

The nest was composed outwardly of dead leaves, tightly compressed, and was lined with the round stems of grasses and fine black rootlets.—ALBERT A. CROSS,

**The Short-billed Marsh Wren in the Montreal District.**—Mr. H. Mousley's recent record of a Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stel-laris*) taken at Hatley<sup>1</sup>, drew my attention to the fact that it is the only published record of the occurrence of this wren in Quebec Province, and it is quite time that the erroneous impression regarding its status here should be corrected, as at least a few observers have been aware of its occurrence in the Montreal District for several years past.

In this locality the Short-billed Marsh Wren has a decided preference for sphagnum bogs—not so much the bog proper as the firmer ground about the bog margins, where there is a certain amount of free surface water and a fairly heavy growth of grasses and sedges. Here the silky tassels of the cotton-grass, waving above the lesser growth, are a familiar sight and one is more apt to find swamp laurel in greater abundance than bushes of Labrador Tea, which appears to thrive better in the yielding sphagnum. Clumps of alders are also commonly found with an occasional tamarack sapling and sometimes beds of cat-tails, while often there is a thicket of poplars and birches in the background. The intrusion of a rail or wagon road into the bog appears to create the proper environment as it is in such places that I have found the birds most commonly, which leads one to surmise that the road-beds antedated this Wren's arrival here. It was near a railroad that I first saw the Short-bill, frequenting the undergrowth about a drainage ditch that parallels the high-banked road-bed, skirting the margin of a five-mile stretch of intermittent sphagnum bog known as the "Bad-lands," and situated near St. Janvier in Terrebonne County, about eighteen miles from Montreal.

These "Bad-lands" (from the farmers' view-point) comprise a number of more or less open sphagnum bogs interspersed with wooded areas or islands. The tree growth is mainly black spruce and tamarack with patches of poplar and white birch. Almost the entire area, lying between some forested sand-hills and the Mascouche River, and extending for several miles in a north-easterly direction, is of this character.

Since my first view of this Wren, on June 18, 1911, I have seen it on various occasions in different portions of this area and I consider it common and well distributed in loose colonies. Although it is difficult to form even an approximate idea of the number of Wrens occurring there, I believe that one hundred pairs would be a low estimate.

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<sup>1</sup> The Auk, 1918 and 1921.

On the above-mentioned date, in company with Mr. W. J. Brown, I noted twelve individuals—as nearly as it was possible to judge—actually, I saw only three of them as they have a mouse-like dread of casting shadows; in fact they are mouse-like in most particulars—even to building a mouse-like nest. All wrens are alike in one respect; when nest-building their great concern is to have an entrance through which only a wren can squeeze. As is well known wrens' nests are globular structures with side entrances. Even the House Wren, which has a tendency to depart somewhat from this habit, nesting in the hollow core of a stump, builds a roofed nest at the bottom of the cavity on which to rest the slender sticks that fill up any superfluous space in the entrance. So the House Wren, also, has a domed residence with a side-door.

One of the three birds seen was fairly conspicuous, perching for a minute or more in the top of a seedling tamarack, just within the shade of a clump of evergreens, where it clicked out its sputtering protest. Its mate (?), similarly engaged a short distance away, was seldom seen and never for more than a second or two. One could usually tell when the bird was in view by listening to its scolding as the muffled tone would grow gradually sharper, almost flinty, as the Wren slipped into view.

These alarm notes sound to me something like the syllables 'seet---sit---sit-it-it-it-it.' This utterance is not always exactly as I have written it; the pauses are variable in length, though not nearly so variable as in the alarm notes of the Winter Wren, which consist almost entirely of the syllable 'tchut' 'tchut' in a great variety of combinations, which often vaguely recalls the alarm note of the Song Sparrow. The notes of the Short-bill have been well likened to the sound produced by sharply striking one pebble with another, though this is more nearly true of the song notes.

After watching these birds for some time we decided that they were not going to give us any clue to the nesting-site and a thorough search was commenced which at length revealed the nest, almost resting on the moss at the base of a low kalmia bush. It was very loosely fastened to the bush and was fairly well hidden by surrounding grasses. In respect of being globular and having a side entrance it resembled the nest of the Long-billed Marsh Wren. Otherwise the loose construction and composition of very old grasses and sedges recalled nests of the shrew. Also it was resting practically on the ground, or moss. It contained two newly-hatched young and three addled eggs, two of which were cracked. As far as I could discover the lining consisted of down from poplar (?) catkins, a piece of fur-covered hare skin, and a few chickadee feathers.

On June 16, 1920, I saw a scolding individual in another locality a few miles distant, in a wet meadow within a cleared section of the afore-mentioned sand-hills. This bird was frequenting a bush-fringed drainage ditch in a low-lying part of the meadow where the grasses tended to grow in clumps. As I could find no other Wrens in the neighborhood it is probable that this bird was merely an overflow from the main bog colonies.

Visiting the north-eastern apex of this district, ten or twelve miles distant, on June 24, 1920, I counted nine individuals within a mile radius.

Coming to the present year (1921) my first note on this species was given to me by Mr. W. J. Brown who saw a large number (undetermined) on the 29th of May, in a sphagnum bog in Berthier County, about forty miles from Montreal. Mr. Brown was of the opinion that the Wrens had just arrived as a very small section of the locality was quite densely populated and they were not seen elsewhere. Here on June 17 I found the Wrens seemingly less numerous but better distributed, never noting more than two or three from any one point, although I recorded upwards of twenty individuals, and there were probably many more.

On my last visit to this district (August 21) I noted only four or five birds, apparently a family group, from which I secured a juvenile female.

There may have been others in the vicinity, in fact, judging by the scanty literature referring to this Wren's movements, it seems probable that no migratory movement had started at this date. Because one fails to see or hear this Wren is not necessarily proof of its non-presence. This is true generally of bog birds. This fact always calls to mind an occasion when a friend of mine was piloted to a bog, famous for its wealth of bird life. By a wet, miry route the bog was reached, evidently during a siesta, as 'scarce a bird was seen nor a bird-note heard' and my friend indignantly exclaimed, with much emphasis on the first word: "Now! where are your birds?"

In the district where the Short-billed Marsh Wrens occur there are at least nineteen species of summer-resident warblers, as well as many other birds, and yet, on certain days during the nesting season, I have walked for considerable distances in the open bog when there was scarcely a ripple of avian activity apparent. Sometimes a Marsh Hawk, gracefully skimming the surface of the bog, will be the only bird in view. The 'hide-and-seek' tactics of the smaller bog birds are probably due to the activities of this ardent hunter and to the forays of that arch-destroyer, the Sharp-shinned Hawk. Otherwise the bog has compensations in the matter of insect abundance and comparative lack of mammals, both human and four-footed. Also there is a dense carpet of mosses and other small growth with many canopied runaways which afford to the ground-haunting birds ample concealment and freedom of movement.

I find the Swamp Sparrow and Yellow-throat the most common nesting associates of the 'Short-bill,' while the Wilson's Warbler frequents nearby alder clumps. Another bird that one would scarcely expect to find here is the Savannah Sparrow. It is one of the common bog birds but adheres more closely to the level and seemingly meadow-like surface of the more open bog.

Such birds as the Junco, White-throated and Lincoln's Sparrow, and Yellow-Palm Warbler are usually found where there is less free water, amongst the bush-capped mounds and small spruce shrubs that gradually merge into the forest growth. Of these birds the White-throated Sparrow and Junco also occur commonly within the forest.

I have never seen the Long-billed Marsh Wren in these sphagnum bog haunts of the 'Short-bill'; in fact I know only of one inland locality in which it occurs—a wet grassy area encircling a pond and encircled by willow growth, situated near St. Hubert, about three miles from the St. Lawrence River.

The 'Long-bill,' however, is a rather uncommon summer resident in a few river marshes near Montreal. I have no doubt that further investigation will disclose the Short-billed Marsh Wren in other bogs in this portion of Quebec Province.—L. MCL. TERRILL, 44 Stanley Ave., St. Lambert, Que.

**The Short-billed Marsh Wren in Amherst, Massachusetts.**—A pair of Short-billed Marsh Wrens (*Cistothorus stellaris*) were seen by us in a South Amherst marsh on July 16, July 27 and August 3, 1921. This bird does not seem to have been previously reported from Amherst. On both dates in July the male Wren sang and in August three birds were seen. They were in a wet meadow with a large brook at one side; the vegetation being a swamp grass. In a neighboring swamp on July 27, a Henslow's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus henslowi henslowi*) was watched at close range for some minutes while he treated us to his odd excuse for a song.—L. B. NICE AND MARGARET M. NICE, Norman, Oklahoma.

**The Determination of the Type of the Genus *Cistothorus* Cabanis.**—The third edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' gives monotypy as the means of arriving at *Troglodytes stellaris* Naumann as the type of the genus *Cistothorus* Cabanis (Mus. Hein th. 1, 1851 p. 77 note). It so happens, however, that the foot-note in which *Cistothorus* is erected by reference to *Troglodytes stellaris* Naumann, is continued on the succeeding page where a second species, *Cistothorus interscapularis* Nordmann (& *Thryothorus polygottus* Vieillot, Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat. 34, 1918, p. 59), is mentioned. This, of course, removes monotypy as the reason for assigning *T. stellaris* as the type of *Cistothorus*. The earliest designation for the type that I have been able to find is by Baird, 'Report of the Pacific Railroad Survey, Birds' 1858, p. 364, who designates *Troglodytes stellaris*.

The next edition of the 'Check-List' should, therefore, correct the present statement of type under *Cistothorus*, substituting "Type, by subsequent designation, *Troglodytes stellaris* Naumann (Baird 1858)." —J. L. PETERS, *Mus. Camp. Zool., Cambridge, Mass.*

**Mockingbird in Maine.**—I was much interested in the article on the Mockingbird in the July 'Auk.' I can add one more record for the state of Maine. Mrs. E. Josephine Runnels of Brunswick, Maine, writes thus: "We first heard the bird singing February 8, 1921, and thought it a Catbird. The next day we saw the white markings and called it a Mockingbird although we could not believe it was one so far north and in February.