

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. **English and Scientific names:** Pacific Wren, *Troglodytes pacificus*

2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):**
One, age and sex unknown.

3. **Parish:** Orleans

Specific Locality: Bayou Sauvage NWR, along Lk. Pontchartrain levee at pipeline crossing Lat 30.130942 Long. -89892653

4. **Date(s) when observed:** 10/25/20

5. **Time(s) of day when observed:** I did not note the exact time but it would have been about 1100 h.

6. **Reporting observer and city/state address**

Reporting observer: David P. Muth
City: New Orleans
State: Louisiana

7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):**

Marky Mutchler, Oscar Johnson, Joan Garvey, Mark Meunier, John Nelson, Cathy DiSalvo

8. **Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):** n/a

9. **Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):** Light conditions were good. Temp: 63-68, north 5-7, overcast to clear.

10. **Optical equipment (type, power, condition):** Eagle Optics Platinum 10x50.

11. **Distance to bird(s):** 5-10 meters (guessing)

12. **Duration of observation:** I only saw the bird for brief glimpses as it foraged or moved agitatedly in the thicket. Over a period of a few minutes on and off it probably called for a total of 30-60 seconds, but it may have been longer.

13. **Habitat:** A thin strip of wet scrubby woods between the mowed base of the levee and a canal junction. Willow, tallow, *baccharis*, *rubus* and various grasses and forbs. More extensive woods on spoil banks of pipeline canal inaccessible because of intervening borrow canal along levee limited subsequent searching.



14. **Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):**

We were driving southwest in a Covid Convoy along the track between the levee and the woodline. When we heard chickadees or saw something interesting we would stop and (usually) eventually play the Cornell ESOW mobbing tape with BCCHs calling (I think that was the recording being used but more than one of us had a mobbing recording and a custom made one may have been involved.) When the recording started playing I wandered up onto the levee to look out onto the lake. I don't remember exactly where everyone else was, but when I wandered back down I was standing in a line near Marky and Joan. Oscar had worked his way into the woodline from the ne side. As I approached I heard a vaguely familiar note and even asked "is there a Wilson's Warbler?" The calls stopped and I began looking at the mixed species flock with the usual suspects. At some point the odd call began again and the bird was now right below and around the speaker which was hanging on the edge of the woodline in dense edge weeds and taller grasses. It was

giving an excited two-noted call that I was trying to place in my memory. I don't think I saw the bird during this brief interval, or only saw movement. There may have been quiet conversation about what we thought the calling bird might be.

Oscar, who was inside the woodline called out "Winter Wren". As I mentally tried to reconcile what I was hearing with WIWR Marky said quietly something like "there is a Pacific Wren being reported right now in Michigan." At first, I blankly just thought she was making small talk, but it did quite soon dawn on me what she meant and I began to make sure the whole group was aware of what we were likely hearing and trying to get everyone on the bird.

At some point we began getting glimpses of the bird as it grew seemingly more agitated and engaged with the recording. I was desperately trying to get a look at the bird and a photo—I don't know why (!), but fortunately Marky was already recording the call notes, which I did not have the presence of mind to do. Marky's recording is the only physical evidence we obtained.

Note: We returned and searched later that day and I have been back several times since to search for the bird, playing mobbing recordings, PAWR calls, and standing quietly inside the woods for extended periods. It is frustrating because a much larger area of suitable habitat is out of reach across the canals. We had a large flock that day but I have not seen a flock of that size since then, or been able to lure a comparable flock in to a recording.

63-68, north 5-7, overcast to clear. Drove from South Pt. West to bike path and back to I-10. See a.m. list for South Point. PAWR first state record.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids):

For me quite poorly seen. Had I only had the look I got I might not have seen enough to put WIWR on my checklist unless I had heard it call as well, which they frequently do. But I did see a small brown short-tailed wren moving agitatedly from stem to stem near the ground in the thicket, never perching long enough for me to get my binoculars focused upon it, but others quicker and nimbler than I may have seen it better from different vantage points. What I saw was consistent with Winter or Pacific Wren.

See my entry in Ebird, along with Marky's sonograms:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S75397573>

Details: While an owl mobbing recording was playing we began hearing the bird-- at first single notes that sounded vaguely like Wilson's Warbler, but then a not immediately familiar (to me) double-noted call that I might render as "tsimp-tsimp" sharper than Winter Wren. Oscar Johnson, who had crept into the thicket called out "Winter Wren" and thereafter I got glimpses of a tiny, short-tailed brown wren hidden in dense stems. As I sat there trying to reconcile the call I was hearing as a WIWR call, I heard Marky Mutchler remark that there was a Pacific Wren being reported in Michigan. While I slowly began to cogitate the significance of that intelligence, Marky had the presence of mind to record the calling bird. Once all of us caught up with her conclusion, the bird had stopped calling, and while we got a few more glimpses, it never cooperated thereafter, nor 30 minutes later when we stopped by again. In woodline immediately west of pipeline crossing. More details to follow. First state record. The pipeline is

along the lake levee of Bayou Sauvage NWR 1.3 miles sw of South Point. South Point is a 1.3 mile walk from the Crabbing Bridge over Irish Bayou Lagoon, the closest parking. So the walk is about 2.6 miles.

16. Voice: A single-noted “tsimp” at first, vaguely reminiscent to me of a Wilson’s Warbler, which to my ear has a very distinctive somewhat hoarse but sharp note. Eventually the bird started doubling the note “tsimp-tsimp” in a rhythm not unlike the double-noted Winter Wren call.

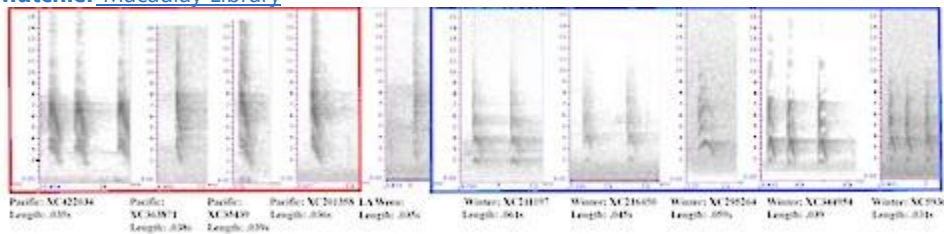
From Ebird list:

Media:

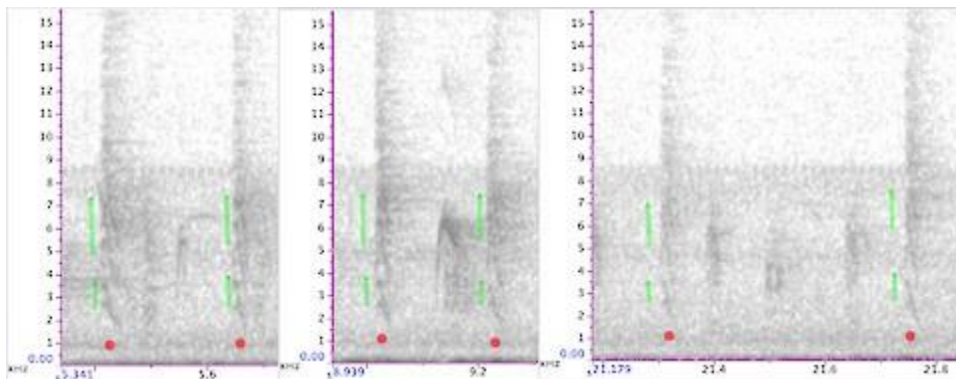


© Marky

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17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Obviously on a well seen but silent bird, the challenge is Winter Wren. Here the opposite obtains for me—a poorly seen, un-photographed bird that I heard call numerous times. I have no memory of having heard

those notes before in Louisiana, and never encountered a WIWR by appearance giving them. The call differed appreciably from the call of WIWR. As I wrote, the rhythm was similar but the notes more reminiscent of WIWA, The notes of WIWR are lower and hoarser, recalling more a Song Sparrow. When WIWR give single notes, I listen to make sure it was not a SOSp, not to distinguish it from WIWA.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): See sonograms of recordings by Marky Mutchler.

19. Previous experience with this species: Before they were split I had the odd encounter over the decades on those rare occasions I was on the West Coast but I don't have much memory of the specific calls. Since the split I have listened to them in Oregon and noted the distinctiveness compared to WIWR, but the calls were certainly not resident in my conscious audial memory.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: At some point after the bird went silent (?—details are vague) someone played PAWR calls from an App both to confirm we'd heard it and to try to pull it back out.

b. after observation: You name it.

21. This description is written from: This description is written from the Ebird entry which began in the field and was completed that afternoon, and from memory.

<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: I am fully cognizant that this record rests upon the quality of the recording and the opinions of experts who analyze it. To my ear it was not a WIWR and sounds consistent with recordings and descriptions of PAWR. I understand there is a narrow hybrid zone and I don't know if hybrids give some kind of intermittent call or if they give the call of one of the parent species. I am not going to tax my brain worrying about hybrids unless there is some evidence in the recording.

23. Date: 2/14/21

Time: 1715 h.

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page? Oui.

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Oui.