

Attempted Nesting of Marsh Wren in Guilford County, N. C.: A Commentary

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Hendrickson and Ferebee (1988) made an understandable mistake claiming the single singing Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) in appropriate breeding habitat from 3-5 July 1987, with a 'dummy' nest discovered on 8 July, constitutes a 'significant inland expansion of breeding range.' 'Dummy' nests attract females, serving as a courtship center from which the male seeks to attract mates (Kale, 1965; Verner, 1965; but see Leonard and Picman, 1987, for an alternative explanation). Multiple nest building is a common feature of wrens, including the closely related Sedge Wren (*C. platensis*). McNair (1983) cited several sources for Sedge Wrens in the southeast USA where males who built 'dummy' nests did not remain to breed and which were not known to be mated. The same breeding criteria explained for the Sedge Wren (McNair, 1983) also applies to the Marsh Wren. Thus, nest building behavior by Marsh Wrens should be considered evidence of possible breeding in the Carolinas where they are not known to breed inland, though they do so at several inland localities in Virginia (Kain, 1987). Nevertheless, Hendrickson and Ferebee's discovery of a Marsh Wren building a 'dummy' nest in Guilford County, N.C., is especially interesting, and should stimulate other observers to search for inland breeding pairs of this species in the Carolinas.

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