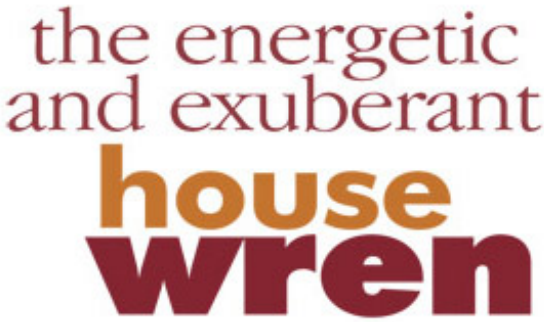
House Wren

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



What this common wren lacks in color and markings, it makes up for in energy and exuberance. This aptly named suburban-loving bird is known to occupy birdhouses and other man-made nest sites near human housing. A single male may try to defend several birdhouses, creating multiple nest foundations in each from which his mate can choose.

The House Wren aggressively defends its small territory with loud song, scolding call and aggressive tactics; one such tactic is that it will visit the nests of other songbirds to peck holes in their eggs with its sharp beak. It's often seen with its tail cocked.

Interesting Facts:

Family: Troglodytidae

Scientific Name: *Troglodytes aedon*

Location: With one of the largest ranges of any songbird in the western hemisphere, the House Wren breeds from Canada to southernmost South America. The tropical forms of this species (Mexico southwards) are sometimes considered a separate species. They nest in semi-open areas and bushes in suburban farmyards, gardens, orchards, and parks.

Migration: House Wrens in the United States migrate to the southern states or Mexico and Central America in winter.

Nesting: The male arrives early and establishes his territory by singing from visible perches and placing stick foundations in several nest cavities. Cavities include man-made birdhouses. Nest cavity height varies from 4 - 30 ft. above ground. After females arrive and pair, she chooses one of the nest sites and completes it by adding a soft lining. She lays 5 - 7 eggs, cream colored with brown-red marks, and

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	incubates the eggs herself for about 14 days. Fledglings leave the nest in 16 - 17 days. House Wrens usually produce two broods each season.
Diet:	The House Wren forages mainly on the ground or low-level foliage for a variety of insects.
Size and Color:	The House Wren is a reddish-brown to gray-brown bird, with few distinguishing marks. Its bill is dark brown above and yellowish below. Its wings and tail are banded, and its under parts are a buff brown. It measures 4-1/2 - 5" in length and has a wingspan of 6 - 7". The male and female are alike. The young are a lighter brown and more barred.
Song:	Its song consists of a 2-3 second composition of whistled notes and trills. When cats, larger birds, or other predators are near, it delivers a sharp "chek" or "churr" scolding call.
Attracting:	They will use man-made birdhouses (predator guards are helpful to keep out larger species). Though shy about using feeders, they occasionally enjoy an offering of sunflower nutmeats or other nuts.

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