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¹GOLLOP J. B. 1971. *Summer records of Hudsonian Godwits near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*. Blue Jay 29(3):132-134.

²HARRIS W. C. and V. J. LIEFFERS. 1972. *Foam Lake — natural history notes and species lists*. Canadian Wildlife Service Unpublished Report. 21 pp.

³VINCENT J. 1966. *Red Data Book, Volume 1. The Aves*. International Union For Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

ROCK WREN AT SPRAGUE, MANITOBA

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On the morning of October 11, 1972, a Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature field party consisting of Dr. Robert Wrigley, Jack Dubois, Calvin Cuthbert and the authors identified a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) at the farmhouse of Dr. George Lammers, 9 miles north of Sprague, Manitoba. The junior author's attention was attracted by the melodious song, which was unfamiliar to him, however he did not locate the bird. Approximately one hour later Cuthbert observed the bird and called the authors. The bird was wary but reluctant to leave the immediate locale of the farm buildings. Cuthbert and the authors, using binoculars and a telescope obtained excellent observations of the wren and the following details were noted. The bird was the size of a White-breasted Nuthatch. The tail, which was finely barred with grey and brown throughout its length, had a broad terminal band of black, bordered on the

outside by orange buff. Besides the key distinguishing feature, the rump was rusty, the breast finely streaked, the crown and back grey-brown and the bill about 1/2 inch long and curved slightly downward.

The bird kept returning to a pile of scrap lumber; however, it also frequented a derelict binder and two deserted buildings. All five observers had the bird under observation and were able to verify details. The senior author was previously familiar with the species having observed Rock Wrens in Saskatchewan and the western United States. The bird, being seen so far east of its normal range and at such a late date, was collected to substantiate the presence of the species in the province and is specimen NMMN 3236 in the study skin collection of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. It proved to be an adult male. Godfrey in listing the extralimital records for this species in Canada gave Churchill as the most easterly record.³ Since this publication, there have been two C

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tario reports. One of which was at Ear Falls and, like the most recent Manitoba record, the specimen was obtained in October, 1972, (Laura Howe, pers. comm.). The other was of a specimen collected at Port Weller on Dec. 7, 1964.

There are three additional records of Rock Wrens in Manitoba. One was initially seen on June 29, 1956, at Churchill, Manitoba, by Dr. David Sergeant and John Crosby.¹ Crosby saw the bird subsequently on July 4 and July 7 and Eva Beckett saw and heard the bird daily between July 5 and July 23. On July 18, two Rock Wrens were seen by Beckett. She observed one of the birds carrying food on August 1 and August 2. "On August 3 the bird appeared to be in a state of great anxiety at Beckett's approach, but no young were found. No wrens were seen in the area on August 4 or thereafter."¹ Although no actual nest was found, there is every indication the birds were nesting (pers. corres. Crosby and Beckett, 1972).

Rock Wrens were again recorded at Churchill when a "pair returned to Churchill on 23 May, 1957, but were seen only once. This disappearance may have resulted from a severe snowstorm a few days later."⁴ This observation was originally made by Mike Stefishyn and confirmed by Mrs. Eva Beckett. Mrs. Beckett's records show the date was May 24, and not May 23 as reported by Jehl and Smith Beckett, pers. corres. 1973).⁴

On May 7, 1970, Mr. and Mrs. Angus H. Shortt saw a Rock Wren in their houseyard at 101 Morier Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Shortt wrote: "it was busily engaged in probing openings and crevices in a pile of lumber stacked against our garage. Movements were typically wren-like with at times, the agility of a nuthatch . . . The outstanding feature was the bold terminal bands of buff (almost an orange-buff) and black on the tail."³ This bird was observed for ap-

proximately 8 minutes through 8X binoculars at distances of 20 to 50 feet.

The Rock Wren is a western species which normally frequents hot, dry, rocky habitat; however, the Manitoba records are all from areas atypical of the bird's normal habitat requirements. The species has now been recorded four times in Manitoba (Fig. 1) and on the basis of the above records must be considered an occasional wanderer to the province.

¹CROSBY, J., and E. BECKETT. 1957. *Rock Wren at Churchill, Manitoba*. Can. Field-Nat. 71:82-83.

²GARDNER, K. 1970. *Wild Wings*. Winnipeg Tribune. May 30, 1970.

³GODFREY, W. E. 1966. *The birds of Canada*. National Museum of Canada. Bull. 203, Biol. Series No. 73, Ottawa, 428 pp., 69 colour plates.

⁴JEHL, J. R. Jr. and B. A. SMITH. 1970. *Birds of the Churchill region*. Special Publication No. 1, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Western Canada Violet

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