

Starlings will every replace the extroverted and vociferous Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos), but they are none-the-less accomplished mimics in their own right.

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HOUSE WRENS, TROGLODYTES AEDON, ATTEMPT  
NESTING IN JACKSONVILLE

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While running one of my training routes through Jacksonville in May, 1981, my attention was drawn to a musical babbling which immediately struck me as "different" from the familiar background of bird song in the Jacksonville area. A quick investigation confirmed my suspicion that it was a House Wren, Troglodytes aedon, which I found perched atop a bluebird house loudly and energetically proclaiming his occupancy and claim on the territory.

This discovery initiated a methodical census of Jacksonville which turned up two more singing males on territory, all in the southwest, or mill section, of town.

All three birds sang incessantly throughout the summer, from May through August, and all constructed dummy nests. Two chose birdhouses for their nests, which they defended actively and aggressively against bluebirds (Sialia sialis) and House Sparrows (Passer domesticus), and the other used the open end of an old clothes line pipe.

Despite their success in establishing territories and securing dummy nest sites, none of the birds was

successful in attracting mates and subsequently all of the nesting attempts ended in failure. by the end of August all singing had ceased and the birds were not seen again. None of them returned to their territories in the spring of 1982 and no other males were heard singing in the area.

The habitat favored by the wrens was essentially the same weedy, unkept, areas used by Song Sparrows (Melospiza melodia). One of the males chose a new, manicured subdivision, but its territory included a weedy lot which it often frequented.

Imhof (1976) lists two other unsuccessful nesting attempts in Alabama, one at Auburn in 1971 reported by s. H. Adams, and one in 1973 of an unmated female reported by E. L. Grimley at Mountain Brook (photograph by K. W. Grimley). Helen Kittinger also recorded a singing male in Birmingham on July 7, 1971.

I found House Wrens nesting under the hood of an old junk car just seven miles across the Alabama line in Tennessee in 1959 and successful nesting has been reported at least as far south in Georgia as Athens. These records plus the increasing reports of nesting attempts, indicate that House Wrens are in all probability breeding successfully somewhere in north Alabama. Thus far, however, all known nesting efforts have not been successful.

#### LITERATURE CITED

Imhof, T. A. 1976. Alabama Birds. Montgomery, Alabama, State of Alabama, Department of Conservation.

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