

Occasional Papers of the Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University

Volume 1 | Number 24

Article 1

12-20-1963

A new Carolina wren (Aves: Troglodytidae) from southern Mexico

George H. Lowery Jr.

Delwyn G. Berrett

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/opmns>



Part of the [Genetics and Genomics Commons](#), and the [Population Biology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lowery, George H. Jr. and Berrett, Delwyn G. (1963) "A new Carolina wren (Aves: Troglodytidae) from southern Mexico," *Occasional Papers of the Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University*: No. 24, Article 1.

DOI: 10.31390/opmns.024

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/opmns/vol1/iss24/1>

OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE MUSEUM OF
ZOOLOGY

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

A NEW CAROLINA WREN (AVES: TROGLODYTIDAE)
FROM SOUTHERN MEXICOBy GEORGE H. LOWERY, JR., AND DELWYN G. BERRETT¹

THE so-called White-browed Wren *Thryothorus albinucha* (Cabot) of the Yucatán Peninsula and of a few disjunct locations in Guatemala and Nicaragua now appears to be conspecific with the Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus* (Latham) of Canada, the United States, and eastern Mexico. Miller and Griscom, as early as 1925, and later Griscom in 1932, pointed out the similarities between *T. albinucha* and *T. ludovicianus*. However, Paynter (1955 and 1960) was apparently the first author actually to combine the two under one specific name. In both behavior and song patterns *albinucha* in Yucatán is, superficially at least, indistinguishable from Carolina Wrens in the southern United States. Morphologically *albinucha* is perhaps no more than an extremely well-marked geographical variant of *ludovicianus*. Until recently a wide geographical and ecological hiatus seemed to exist between the southernmost population of *T. ludovicianus*, in the humid lowlands of eastern San Luis Potosí, and the closest population of *albinucha*, on the arid Yucatán Peninsula. The recent discovery, however, of a race of the Carolina Wren in the rain forests of eastern Tabasco narrows the geographical gap to some extent and provides a clearer morphological bridge between the two. This previously undescribed subspecies from Tabasco may be named and characterized as follows:

THRYOTHORUS LUDOVICIANUS TABASCENSIS new subspecies

Type.—Adult male; no. 27239, Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology; 8 mi. SE Tenosique, Tabasco, México; 10 November 1961; D. G. Berrett; original no. DGB 884.

¹The junior author is now in the Department of Biological Sciences, Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho.

Characters.—Resembles *T. l. albinucha* (Cabot)² but differs as follows: lower throat, breast, and abdomen washed with Light Ochraceous-Buff,³ hence less whitish; flanks darker, being washed with Cinnamon Brown or Drab instead of Sayal Brown, and with dusky barring fairly distinct (instead of entirely absent or else only barely discernible in an occasional specimen); back Carob Brown to Chestnut-Brown instead of Prout's Brown to Bister; light bars on primaries and secondaries reduced or even obsolete, and much darker in color (Sudan Brown or Brussels Brown instead of yellowish or even whitish); light interspaces in central rectrices darker, tending toward Raw Umber instead of Verona Brown or Snuff Brown; remainder of tail much darker with barring greatly reduced or obsolete. Differs in much the same manner from *T. l. subfulvus* Miller and Griscom⁴ but similar to that race in possessing to a slight degree the same buffy wash on the under parts. Differs from *T. l. tropicalis*⁵ (and even to a greater extent from the other more northern races of *T. ludovicianus*) in being much darker above (Carob Brown to Chestnut-Brown instead of Vandyke Brown) and in having the barring on the primaries and secondaries and the barring both above and below on tail greatly reduced; under parts not nearly so buffy (Light Ochraceous-Buff instead of Clay Color to Ochraceous Tawny).

Measurements in millimeters and gram weights (those of the type marked with an asterisk).—Adult male (2 specimens): wing, 54.9*, 54.1; tail, 50.0*, 46.0; exposed culmen, 16.5*, —; tarsus, 21.8*, 21.6; weight, 18.4*, 16.5. Adult female (1 specimen): wing, 52.5; tail, 42.5; exposed culmen, —; tarsus, 20.0; weight, 16.3.

Distribution.—Known only from the type locality.

Remarks.—All three paratypes of *tabascensis* show a fine but very noticeable dusky flecking or spotting on the under parts that occurs on both the upper breast and abdomen as well as on the sides and flanks. One specimen is particularly well marked in this regard. Among other Carolina Wrens examined, including a large series from the United States and eastern Mexico, none was found to be similarly marked. However, since the three examples

²*Troglodytes albinucha* Cabot, Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., 2, 1847: 258 (Yalahau, Yucatán [= Quintana Roo], México).

³Capitalized color names are those of Ridgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912.

⁴*Thryothorus albinucha subfulvus* Miller and Griscom, Amer. Mus. Novit., no. 159, 1925: 8 (Calabazas, five miles south of Metapa [= Ciudad Darío], Nicaragua).

⁵*Thryothorus ludovicianus tropicalis* Lowery and Newman, Occas. Papers Mus. Zool., La. State Univ., 22, 1949: 4 (0.5 mi. E. Naranjos, San Luis Potosí, México).

of *tabascensis* vary considerably in the extent and amount of this spotting, this diagnostic character may not prove to be infallibly present.

Specimens examined.—Three, all from the type locality.

We express our appreciation to the following individuals and institutions for the loan of comparative material of *T. l. albinucha* and *T. l. subfulvus*: Dr. Robert W. Storer and the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Dr. Dean Amadon and the American Museum of Natural History, and Dr. Philip S. Humphrey and the U. S. National Museum. The field work that led to the discovery of *T. l. tabascensis* was financed in part by Mr. Edward McIlhenny Simmons and the Louisiana Research Foundation.

LITERATURE CITED

GRISCOM, LUDLOW

1932. The distribution of bird-life in Guatemala. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 64, 439 p.

MILLER, W. DEW., and LUDLOW GRISCOM

1925. Descriptions of new birds from Nicaragua. Amer. Mus. Novit., no. 159, 9 p.

PAYNTER, RAYMOND A., JR.

1955. The ornithogeography of the Yucatán Peninsula. Bull. Peabody Mus. Nat. Hist., Yale Univ., 9, 347 p.
1960. Family Troglodytidae [except Old World Troglodytes, by Charles Vaurie], pp. 379-440. In E. Mayr and J. C. Greenway, Jr., [ed.], Check-list of birds of the world. Vol. 9. Mus. Comp. Zool., Cambridge. xiii + 506 p.