

FIELD NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

Carolina Wren in Winter. The wintering success of Carolina Wrens in southeastern Massachusetts is, in part, linked to the severity of the winter. Though the winter of 1982-83 was not excessively cold, it was marked by several severe snowfalls and the usual array of winter surprises. On the South Shore, there were several Carolina Wrens seen in usual spots throughout the winter. Ferry Hill Thicket and the banks of Cove Creek in Marshfield produced a bird every now and then through the coldest weather.

There was a wintering bird in Scituate that few people saw. It wintered in a garage and fed in the adjoining yard. A window, left open about three inches, provided access for the wren and the bird was still present after five months. The wren roosted in the garage each night and many of the coldest days. It would exit whenever the garage was in use and return when his barracks had been made secure.

The most pleasant part of this relationship was with the human observer who was favored throughout the winter with occasional bursts of song. The wren is as mentioned, still present and, following the nature of its kind, will probably nest* in a flower pot on the back porch.

David E. Clapp, Sanctuary Director
Marshfield, Massachusetts
April 15, 1983

[*Ed. note: The bird did not, but the householder reports that he has accommodated a Carolina Wren in his garage for the last few winters and the bird disappears towards the end of April.]

A Flushed Woodcock. While birding in the evening at Horn Pond in Woburn, I walked into a small aspen/willow swamp with the intention of finding a woodcock. Halfway through the swamp, one flushed straight up in front of me. However, rather than exploding out of the swamp, it fluttered straight up before me and sailed toward and past me much like a milkweed seed. Its wings were fluttering and legs dangling and it sailed about forty feet from me and landed. Upon landing, it fanned its wings and walked/ran toward me on a zigzag path, all the while uttering a low, nasal sound lasting about one second each time. It continued to do this until it got within ten to fifteen feet of me and then turned and started off in the direction from which it came still fanning its wings and walking/running. Occasionally it would stop, probe into the ground once, and then continue its strange perambulation. When it got to the place it had originally landed, it fluttered up and flew farther away, about forty feet, where it landed out of sight. All this had taken perhaps three to four minutes. This occurred less than an hour before sunset. Perhaps the bird was getting ready for its evening courtship display or perhaps I had set it off the nest.

George W. Gove, BOEM staff
April 28, 1983