

House Wren

Troglodytes aedon

A plain brown bird with an effervescent voice, the House Wren is a common backyard bird over nearly the entire Western Hemisphere. Listen for its rush-and-jumble song in summer and you'll find this species zipping through shrubs and low tree branches, snatching at insects. House Wrens will gladly use nestboxes, or you may find their twig-filled nests in old cans, boots, or boxes lying around in your garage.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

Small and compact, with a flat head and fairly long, curved beak. Short-winged, often keeping its longish tail either cocked above the line of the body or slightly drooped.

Color Pattern

Subdued brown overall with darker barring on the wings and tail. The pale eyebrow that is characteristic of so many wren species is much fainter in House Wrens.

Behavior

Bubbly and energetic, just like their songs. Look for House Wrens hopping quickly through tangles and low branches and, in spring and summer, frequently pausing to deliver cheerful trilling songs.

Habitat

In summer, House Wrens are at home in open forests, forest edges, and areas with scattered grass and trees. Backyards, farmyards, and city parks are perfect for them. In winter they become more secretive, preferring brushy tangles, thickets, and hedgerows.

Cool Facts

- A House Wren weighs about as much as two quarters, but it's a fierce competitor for nest holes. Wrens will harass and peck at much larger birds, sometimes dragging eggs and young out of a nest site they want – even occasionally killing adult birds. In some areas they are the main source of nest failure for bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Prothonotary Warblers, and chickadees.
- The oldest known House Wren was nine years old.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 4.3 - 5.1 inches
- Wingspan - 5.9 inches
- Weight - 0.4 ounces

