

CANYON WREN OBSERVATIONS IN
SANDERS COUNTY MONTANA DURING 1999^{TWS}

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Canyon wrens (*Catherpes mexicanus*) have been observed between Weeksville Creek and Munsen Creek, approximately 100 miles northwest of Missoula, during the last 15 years on this northern edge of their known range. Since there is little information on canyon wrens for this area, an effort to gain basic information (local distribution, density, nesting phenology, seasonal occurrence, territory components) was initiated on 20 February. Surveys were conducted along cliff/talus habitat north of the Clark Fork River for approximately 5 miles. Sixty-eight sites were surveyed using playback of recorded canyon wren songs, resulting in observed responses at 16 sites and a total of 206 separate observations during a 12-month period. Canyon wrens were observed in this area during each month. Pairs, nests, first-nest fledglings, and second-nest fledglings were found at 6, 2, 6, and 4 sites, respectively. Fledglings were first found on 6 June at the base of talus in 3 territories. Second nests were found on 27 June with young leaving the nest on 11 July. Four fledglings were found at 1 territory. Territories where fledglings were found ranged in size from 10,000 to 49,000 m² (talus 6,000-38,000 m²/cliff 3,000-11,000 m²). Other territory components include elevation (742-1036 m), slope (30-40°), aspect (170-210°), and mean size of rock at talus base (62-115 cm) and mid-elevation talus (14-46 cm). This observational study has contributed to the limited knowledge for canyon wrens, has documented that they can nest twice each season this far north, and that they are yearlong residents near the northern limit of their range.