

An unusual Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* nest

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Se reporta por primera vez el uso de la fibra de vidrio en la fabricación de nidos, particularmente en *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*, encontrado en el Cañon de la Huasteca, Santa Catarina, Nuevo León, México.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* typically selects a relatively open site within a bush, small tree, cactus or yucca for its nest. Among more unusual sites in which nests have been found is one that was used, over several seasons, in the hollow cornice of a schoolhouse⁴. Nest-building activity peaks in September–October¹. Unlike most desert bird species, Cactus Wren is reasonably tolerant of human development, occasionally breeding in the vicinity of houses or barns, but it appears doubtful whether the species could persist in areas stripped of native vegetation. Nests are most frequently located in cholla cactus and tree yucca, but may also be positioned in a desert shrub or tree. Typically a pouch-shaped structure, c.2.5 cm across, the nest has an internal chamber reached by a narrow passage, and is constructed of forbs and grass, some of which are green early in the season, and lined with feathers and occasionally grass². One, found in Arizona, was constructed of plants, grass, wild mustard,

Ephedra sp., seeds, and raptor and Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* feathers³. Because of the fragile nature of this material and possibly the great humidity, most nests have collapsed or disintegrated by the end of the breeding season.

During a visit to La Huasteca, Santa Catarina, Nuevo León, on 30 April 1977, we observed 10–12 nests of Cactus Wren constructed of fibreglass (Fig. 1) within *Opuntia imbricata*. The surrounding area was obviously a dumping ground for waste fibreglass. One nest contained two chicks, born probably one week previously; on 5 May the chicks were absent, and had perhaps died due to contact with the fibreglass. This is first case of fibreglass being used to construct a bird's nest known to us. As the study site was subsequently irrevocably altered by the path of Hurricane Gilberto, in 1988, the only evidence of this unique occurrence is the nest depicted in Fig. 1.

References

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Figure 1. Unusual nest of a Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* at Santa Catarina, Nuevo León, Mexico.