

WILDLIFE OF VICTORIA PARK

By John Serrao

Carolina Wren

There are very few birds in Florida that make their presence known as loudly and persistently as the Carolina Wren. This small, shy bird calls with its clear “tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle” or “cheery, cheery, cheery” songs from nearly every patch of woods, swamp, thicket, brush pile, or residential shrubbery. If you’re quiet and patient you’ll be rewarded with a look at this 5 ½-inch bird : buffy-orange below, darker reddish-brown above, with a conspicuous white “eyebrow” line and a long, slightly curved bill.

The Carolina Wren, like our cardinals and mockingbirds, is a permanent, non-migratory resident of Florida. Decades ago it was considered mainly a bird of the southeastern states but beginning in the 1960s it began expanding its range northward until, today, it is found all the way up to the Canadian border. However, these northern wrens are forced to move out or die during very cold winters.

In Florida, Carolina Wrens may raise 3 broods per year. Their domed, messy nests are often constructed in hanging plants, empty flower pots, and even an old boot in the garage if the door is left open. The babies are fed by both parents with a constant supply of caterpillars, beetles, and other insects as well as spiders, pill bugs, and even small lizards.