

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

MALE-BIASED OFFSPRING SEX RATIO IN THE HOUSE WREN

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Abstract. The sex-ratio adjustment hypothesis predicts that females should modify offspring sex ratios according to the potential reproductive success of their offspring under existing ecological conditions. We tested this hypothesis in the polygynous, sexually size-monomorphic House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*). Typically, nestling House Wrens that hatch in the first half of the three-month breeding season are heavier and have higher rates of survival and recruitment than those that hatch in the second half of the season. Therefore, the sex-ratio adjustment hypothesis predicts that early broods should be more male biased than later broods, because males in good condition have higher reproductive value than females. As conditions deteriorate, broods should become less male biased because female offspring have higher reproductive value than males in poor condition. Contrary to expectation, there was no seasonal decrease in offspring condition, and the sex ratio of broods was consistently male biased throughout the breeding season. We conclude that the results are consistent with the sex-ratio adjustment hypothesis, because in the year of this study female House Wrens were able to produce offspring in similar (and presumably good) condition throughout the breeding season; therefore, they continued to produce broods that were significantly male biased.

Key words: House Wren, offspring sex ratio, season, sex-ratio adjustment, Trivers-Willard Hypothesis, *Troglodytes aedon*.