

VIVA ZAPATA!

#3 THE ZAPATA WREN



Photo: Dominic Sherony

The Zapata Wren, *Ferminia cerverai*, is a medium sized bird that lives in dense shrubs of the Zapata Swamp, Cuba. It is the only member of the monotypical genus *Ferminia*.

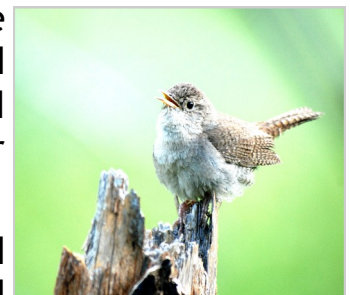
Measuring about 16cm (6.3") in length, it is brown overall, the upperparts are striped with black, and the underparts greyish.

This species is confined and endemic to the Zapata Peninsula of Cuba. It was formally described by American herpetologist Thomas Barbour, who gave

it the specific name "*cerverai*" in honour of Fermín Zanón Cervera, a Spaniard who had stayed on after the Spanish-American War (of 1898) and become a professional naturalist.

The song is similar to that of the New World House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*, in that it is high-pitched and loud, it has been described as a "guttural note followed by a musical warble, given in series of three or four phrases."

The species typical habitat is freshwater marsh and lowland savannah with scattered bushes interspersed with low trees. The diet consists of insects, spiders, small snails, lizards and berries.



HOUSE WREN

Photo: S. King,
US National Park Service

The nest is usually constructed in sawgrass tussocks. The breeding season is thought to be between January and July.



SMALL ASIAN MONGOOSE

The Zapata Wren is threatened by fires, in the dry season, habitat destruction caused by wetland drainage and clearance for agriculture. Predation by introduced rats and the Small Asian Mongoose, *Herpestes javanicus*, is also a serious threat.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia

