

**SONG IN A FEMALE PLAIN TITMOUSE**

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Although females of some temperate-zone species sing regularly, in most species females do not sing. There have, however, been numerous reports of singing by females that are normally non-singers (reviewed by G. Ritchison, *Auk* 100:105-116, 1983). In the titmouse family (Paridae), female song is common in some species and absent in others. Males of the three species of North American crested titmice, the Tufted, Plain, and Bridled titmice (*P. bicolor*, *P. inornatus*, *P. wollweberi*), do sing well-developed true songs, but consistent female singing of male-like songs has been reported in only some populations of the Tufted Titmouse (H. Brackbill, *Auk* 87:552-536, 1970; P.K. Gaddis, *Ornis Scand.* 14:16-23; D.J. Schroeder and R.H. Wiley, *Anim. Behav.* 31:1128-1138, 1983). I report here on an occurrence of song in a female Plain Titmouse.

On 20 March 1983, 22 km N of Flagstaff, Arizona, I recaptured a banded female Plain Titmouse on her territory in a drop-door wire mesh Potter-type trap. Prior to release, she appeared abnormally agitated, moving rapidly and often from side to side in the trap even before I approached closely. This was possibly the result of her being trapped for a time much longer than normal, as I was unable to check the trap for approximately 45 min after it was set. Upon release, she flew to a branch 2 m away and sang one song similar to some of the 18 song types I have recorded from males in the same population (L.S. Johnson, *Ornis Scand.* 18:24-32, 1987). This female was paired with a male who sang regularly in the same territory. This incident was the only occurrence of female song I observed, although I trapped females more than 50 times during a 2-year study of Plain Titmice.

This observation suggests that female Plain Titmice have the capacity to sing but do not normally do so. A closer comparison of the natural history of the three North American crested titmice may reveal why females sing regularly in only one of these three congeners.

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