

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

EURASIAN WIGEON

Anas penelope

Family: ANATIDAE

Order: ANSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

B086

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Regular, but very uncommon winter visitor October through April on lakes, fresh emergent wetlands, slow-moving streams, and nearby grasslands of the Central Valley below 1200 m (3900 ft), and coastal regions of Humboldt Co. and from Marin to San Diego cos. May be regular at Salton Sea.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Feeds in shallow water and fields by grazing, surface gleaning, dabbling and tipping up for algae, and herbage such as pondweeds and eel grass. Prefers stems and leafy parts of plants to seeds, and will graze on leafy parts of upland grasses and clovers. Takes insects, and ingests gravel. Rarely eats mollusks, crustaceans, worms, frogs, and small fish.

Cover: Uses slow-moving, or standing water in emergent wetlands, lakes, ponds, shallow bays and streams with adequate forage and minimal disturbance.

Reproduction: Does not breed in California. Breeds in Europe and Asia between latitudes 48° and 71°, around the Northern Hemisphere. Often nests near shrubs.

Water: No data on water needs found, but usually found on, or near, fresh water.

Pattern: Emergent wetlands, moist grasslands, ponds, and lakes provide suitable habitat.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Individuals found on the eastern coast of North America breed in Iceland. Pacific Coast individuals breed in eastern Siberia.

Home Range: Nests widely dispersed. Little reference to home range in North American literature. Often spends winter on a single small marsh, lake, or pond, but may move if surface water changes.

Territory: Male defends the female, not a specific area. In Scotland, nests were 8-34 m (26-112 ft) apart (Cramp and Simmons 1977). In California, usually found wintering with flocks of American wigeon (Cogswell 1977).

Reproduction: Female lays an average 9 eggs (range 6-12) from April to July. Incubates 22-25 days; male leaves female when incubation starts. Female tends young until fledging at about 43 days. Male and female breed at 1 yr.

Niche: Often takes food from diving ducks. Eggs and young taken by predatory mammals and snakes; adults and young taken by various birds of prey.

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