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

ROCK PIGEON *Columba livia*
Family: COLUMBIDAE Order: COLUMBIFORMES Class: AVES
B250

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A common to abundant, yearlong resident in California. It thrives in and near urban habitats and other human habitations throughout the state except possibly, at high elevations and in very arid regions (Airola 1980). Feeds in annual grassland, perennial grassland, cropland, pasture, and urban habitats. Introduced from Europe.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Eats waste grains, seeds, grasses, forbs, bread and other human food scraps. Feeds mostly from the ground.

Cover: Buildings, bridges, other human-made structures, and occasionally cliffs are used for perching and roosting. Seldom perches in trees.

Reproduction: Nest varies from a thin layer of fine plant stems, roots, twigs, feathers or debris, to a substantial cup. Usually placed in a sheltered location on buildings, bridges, or other human-made structures (Harrison 1978). Sometimes nests on cliffs or in caves.

Water: Drinks regularly.

Pattern: Found near human habitation from small farms to large cities. Requires open ground for foraging.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Not migratory.

Home Range: No data found. Often flies and forages in flocks, and nests in close proximity to foraging areas.

Territory: No data found. Pair defends the immediate vicinity of nest.

Reproduction: Mostly breeds from March to September. Often nests colonially. Lays 2 eggs, incubated by both sexes for 17-19 days. Young tended by both parents for 30-35 days after hatching, including a short time out of the nest after fledging (Harrison 1978). Young fed crop milk by parents initially. Often produces several broods a year.

Niche: Adults are prey for falcons; small mammals occasionally prey on eggs, nestlings, or adults.

REFERENCES

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. California's Wildlife. Vol. I-III. California Depart. of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.