

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

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CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD

*Stellula calliope*

Family: TROCHILIDAE

Order: APODIFORMES

Class: AVES

B289

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

This smallest bird north of Mexico is a fairly common to common summer resident of California, breeding in mountain ranges throughout the state. Occurs more locally in the south than in central and northern California, where more continuous breeding habitat exists (McCaskie et al. 1979, Garrett and Dunn 1981). In spring migration, seen rarely on the coast and in the interior in lowland shrub and woodland habitats. There are very few fall records. Breeds in wooded habitats from ponderosa pine and montane hardwood-conifer up through lodgepole pine, favoring montane riparian, aspen, and other open forests near streams. Commonly feeds in montane chaparral and wet meadow habitats. A rare spring migrant on the Channel Islands, and extremely rare on the Farallon Islands in spring (DeSante and Ainley 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Takes nectar from many woody and herbaceous plants. Gleans small insects and spiders from flowers and foliage, hawks insects, and feeds on tree sap. Hovers while taking nectar and gleaning.

**Cover:** Trees and shrubs provide cover. Uses an emergent twig or branch on the top of a shrub or small tree for territorial display.

**Reproduction:** Nest usually in woodlands or forests; often located in pine or in montane riparian tree. Nest is an open cup 0.6 to 20 m (2-70 ft) above ground, but usually 3-9 m (10-30 ft). Often concealed among small pine cones, or placed on dead twigs beneath the lowest live branches; may be built on an old nest.

**Water:** May drink while hovering (Orr and Moffitt 1971), but nectar is a major water source.

**Pattern:** Forages in open meadows and stands of shrubs, often near riparian areas. Nests in nearby forests and woodlands. Distribution highly dependent on sources of nectar.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Yearlong, diurnal activity.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Arrives in small numbers in March, and coastal and interior lowland sightings continue through May. Migrates northward through California along the foothills of the Pacific slope, breeds in the higher mountains, then follows the high mountains south again (Grant and Grant 1968). Breeding areas occupied from late April through August; numbers often reduced greatly in these areas by early July. There are few fall records in California (McCaskie et al. 1988). Apparently no winter records in the U.S.

(Johnsgard 1983).

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found on individual territory size, but Grinnell et al. (1930) reported 4 males maintaining territories on 2.4 ha (6 ac) in Lassen Co.

Reproduction: Breeds from early May to early August. Has a promiscuous mating system, with pair bond lasting only a few hr. Nesting is solitary. Usually 2 eggs laid, and 1 brood per season. Incubation lasts 15-16 days. Young altricial, and fledge in 21-23 days. Female performs all nesting duties (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Apparently few predators. Sudden, prolonged cold spells, which diminish nectar and insect supplies, probably pose the greatest danger. An important pollinator of specially adapted flowers.

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