

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

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HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER

*Empidonax hammondii*

Family: TYRANNIDAE  
B317

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A common summer resident in dense coniferous forests at about 1200-2500 m (4000-8000 ft) from Cascade Range south along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada to Kern Co. Preferred nesting habitats include mixed conifer and red fir; also may nest in denser Jeffrey and ponderosa pine habitats. Also breeds in Douglas-fir habitat in mts. of North Coast down to about 600 m (2000 ft). Common spring (mid-April to early May) and uncommon fall (September to early October) transient in all wooded habitats from sea level to timberline throughout interior and southern coastal California. Less common in scrub habitats, and rare along the coast north of Ventura Co. (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Makes short sallies for flying insects from perches beneath the crowns of lofty trees (Beaver and Baldwin 1975).

**Cover:** Frequents large, tall trees, usually conifers, which provide well-shaded nesting and roosting sites, singing posts, and foraging perches.

**Reproduction:** Nest an open cup of plant fibers, strips of bark, feathers, hair, saddled on horizontal branch 2-20 m (6-65 ft) above ground. Usually in a large conifer, but sometimes in a smaller hardwood (Bent 1942, Davis 1954).

**Water:** No information found, but usually nests in moist forest habitats.

**Pattern:** Nesters most numerous in deeply shaded foliage underneath crowns of lofty forest trees. Where woody understory is sparse or lacking, nests and forages high among crowns. Where understory present, forages almost to forest floor (Gaines 1977b).

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

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

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Arrives from Mexico and Central America in late April and May. Departs breeding areas by September.

**Home Range:** No information found, but probably equal to territory.

**Territory:** In western Montana, Manuwal (1970) recorded mean breeding territory of 1.1 ha (2.6 ac), range 0.6 to 1.5 ha (1.5 to 3.8 ac). Breeding density varied from 6.9 to 7 males per 40 ha (100 ac) in Montana (Manuwal 1970) to 5.6 to 18.8 males per 40 ha (100 ac) in Colorado (Beaver and Baldwin 1975).

Reproduction: Breeds from mid-May through July; peak of egg-laying late June (Bent 1942). Monogamous. Clutch averages 2-4 eggs; probably single-brooded. Incubation 12-15 days, by female (Davis 1954). Both sexes care for altricial young. Fledging at 17-18 days (Davis 1954).

Niche: Very difficult to differentiate from dusky flycatcher and gray flycatcher. Most reliable criteria for field identification are song, nesting behavior, and habitat preference (Johnson 1963, Gaines 1977b).

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