

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

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER

Myiarchus tyrannulus

Family: TYRANNIDAE

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

B328

Written by: D. Gaines

Reviewed by: L. Mewaldt

Edited by: R. Duke

DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A fairly common summer resident (May to July) in desert riparian habitat along the Colorado River. A few nest at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. May nest very locally at other desert oases and riparian habitats northwest to Mojave River near Victorville, San Bernardino Co. Vagrants have been recorded west to the South Fork Kern River near Weldon, Kern Co., north to Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, Inyo Co., and on the Farallon Islands (Gaines 1977b, Garrett and Dunn 1981, McCaskie et al. 1988).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Sallies for flying insects, especially beetles (Bent 1942). Occasionally eats small fruits. May eat hummingbirds rarely (Snider 1971, Gamboa 1977).

Cover: Requires riparian thickets, trees, snags, and shrubs for foraging perches, cavities, and other cover.

Reproduction: Requires woodpecker-excavated cavities for nesting; hence, secondarily dependent on snags, trees with rotten heart-wood, utility poles, fence posts, in which ladder-backed and Gila woodpeckers, and other primary excavators, dig nesting cavities. Builds nest of hair, fur, feathers, bark, shed snake skins, in cavity 1.5 to 9 m (5-30 ft) above ground (Bent 1942).

Water: No data found, but frequents riparian habitats.

Pattern: Most numerous in riparian groves of cottonwood, mesquite, willow, which afford suitable nest sites, but often forages in adjacent desert scrub or plantings of saltcedar (Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Arrives from Mexican wintering areas by May, and usually departs by early August (Garrett and Dunn 1981).

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found.

Reproduction: Peak of egg-laying in Arizona mid-May to mid-June. Monogamous; clutch averages 5 eggs, range 3-6. Incubation probably 13-15 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Both sexes apparently care for altricial young. Fledging age unknown (Bent 1942).

Niche: Numbers have declined in recent decades, apparently in response to destruction of desert riparian habitat, and to competition for nest cavities from European starlings (Remsen 1978).

Comments: No detailed life history studies found. Formerly called Weid's crested flycatcher.

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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 Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.