

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

WRENTIT

Chamaea fasciata

Family: TIMALIIDAE
B391

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A common, characteristic resident of California chaparral habitat. Also frequents shrub understory of coniferous habitats from the coast to lower regions of mountains throughout cismontane California (Grinnell and Miller 1944). Absent east of the Cascade-Sierra Nevada crest in Great Basin and southeastern deserts, except extends east in small numbers into southwestern Modoc Co. and into eastern Plumas Co. Absent from Channel Islands. Very sedentary, but there is some postbreeding, upslope movement in mountain regions, apparently by young. Has been found postbreeding up to 2500 m (8200 ft) in San Jacinto Mts., Riverside Co. (Garrett and Dunn 1981), and up to 2100 m (7000 ft) in Yosemite area (Gaines 1977b).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Mostly eats insects, spiders, berries and other small fruits. Gleans from foliage, twigs, and bark of shrubs; rarely feeds from ground.

Cover: Chaparral, coastal scrub, and other dense stands of shrubs provide cover.

Reproduction: Nest concealed in a dense stand of shrubs. Usually placed in shrub within 1.3 m (4 ft) of ground, occasionally up to 2.1 m (7 ft).

Water: Drank occasionally in coastal oak woodland in Monterey Co. (Williams and Koenig 1980).

Pattern: Prefers dense stands of chaparral. Sometimes found in sparse or open conifers or other woodlands with a heavy shrub understory.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Resident, but young may move upslope in fall from foothills.

Home Range: Home range probably same as territory (Erickson 1938).

Territory: Erickson (1938) reported territory averaged 0.32 ha (0.8 ac), range 0.2 to 1.1 ha (0.5 to 2.7 ac) in Alameda Co. Mans (1961) reported territory of 0.4 to 0.7 ha (1 to 1.75 ac), and Kingery (1962) reported territory of 1.2 ha (3 ac) in Los Angeles Co. Cogswell (1962) found 361 breeding territories averaged 0.5 ha (1.3 ac), range 0.2 to 1.2 ha (0.5 to 3.0 ac), also in Los Angeles Co. Density of 111 pairs and 30 unmated individuals per 40 ha (100 ac) reported by Erickson (1938).

Reproduction: Breeds from March to mid-September with peak activity in June. Monogamous and solitary; territory small. Lays 3-5 eggs, usually 4. Incubation 15-16 days. Altricial young tended by both parents and leave nest at 15-16 days (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Preyed upon by snakes, small mammals, and accipiters.

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