

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

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CALIFORNIA THRASHER

*Toxostoma redivivum*

Family: MIMIDAE  
B398

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A common resident of foothills and lowlands in cismontane California. Occupies moderate to dense chaparral habitats and, less commonly, extensive thickets in young or open valley foothill riparian habitat. In southern California, occurs in montane chaparral up to 1500-2000 m (5000-6600 ft). Avoids dense tree canopy. Occurs from Mexican border north to Shasta, Trinity, and southern Humboldt cos., and into the Shasta Valley of Siskiyou Co. Along the coastal fog belt north of San Francisco, occurs only on drier sites (Grinnell and Miller 1944, McCaskie et al. 1979, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Feeds on insects, spiders, and other terrestrial invertebrates; also on fruits, acorns, and forb seeds. Digs, rakes, and probes in litter and loose soil with bill. Feeds primarily on ground. In nonbreeding season may take more plant than animal food; in breeding season feeds almost entirely on animal matter (Bent 1948, Martin et al. 1961). Seldom forages more than a few ft from shrub cover.

**Cover:** Requires dense cover of chaparral or riparian thicket.

**Reproduction:** Builds nest well inside a large shrub or scrubby tree, usually 0.6 to 1.5 m (2-5 ft) above ground.

**Water:** Apparently meets water requirements from food. Dawson (1965) estimated that up to 4.7% of body weight may be lost per day through evaporation.

**Pattern:** Frequents chaparral habitat with dense canopy and openings next to ground. Also uses similar riparian thickets, especially with California blackberry and California wild grape.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

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

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Mostly a sedentary resident; may be some local movement in nonbreeding season.

**Home Range:** Same as territory. Jehl (1978) reported 2 territorial, breeding males on a 20 ha (50 ac) scrub oak-desert chaparral site in Imperial Co. Gaines (1975) found 3 territorial males on 13.7 ha (34.3 ac) of serpentine chaparral in Napa Co.

**Territory:** Four territories in chaparral habitat in Santa Monica Mts. averaged 1.4 ha (3.5 ac) (Kingery 1962). Also in Los Angeles Co., Sargent (1940) reported year-round

defense a territory of 0.3 ha (0.75 ac).

Reproduction: Breeding season lasts from early December into early August with a peak from mid-April to mid-June. Apparently a monogamous, solitary nester. Clutch size 2-4, usually 3. Frequently raises 2 broods each yr. Incubation 14 days, by both parents. Altricial young tended by both parents and leave nest at 12-14 days (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Predators include sharp-shinned hawks and, especially, feral and domestic cats. Nest predators include skunks, cats, lizards, racers, and scrub jays. Competes successfully with northern mockingbirds for nest sites (Sargent 1940).

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