

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

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GRAY VIREO

*Vireo vicinior*

Family: VIREONIDAE  
B414

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon, local, summer resident in arid pinyon-juniper, juniper, and chamise-redshank chaparral habitats from 600-2000 m (2000-6500 ft) in mountains of Southern California. Formerly more widespread, breeding west to Walker Pass, Kern Co., in northern and western foothills of the San Gabriel Mts., and at many additional localities in San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego cos. (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981). Field work is needed to document the extent and causes of the decline of this species (Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Apparently gleans insects and other invertebrates from shrubs and low trees. Hops about wren-like, flicking drooping tail, usually 0.3-3.6 m (1-12 ft) above ground.

**Cover:** Shrubs and small trees provide cover.

**Reproduction:** Builds an open-cup nest of plant fibers, bits of leaves, spider silk, cocoons; often hung from twigs or forked branch of shrub or small tree, usually 0.6-2.5 m (2-8 ft) above ground.

**Water:** No additional information found.

**Pattern:** Breeders frequent arid, shrub-covered slopes with sparse to moderate cover and scattered small trees. In San Diego Co., usually used oaks; elsewhere commonly junipers, pinyon pines, chamise, other chaparral. Study of habitat requirements needed; nowadays absent from many areas of seemingly suitable habitat.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

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

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Usually arrives from Mexican wintering areas by end of March (San Diego Co.) to early May, and departs by end of August.

**Home Range:** No information found. In San Jacinto Mts., Grinnell and Swarth (1913) reported 1 pair per 16 ha (40 ac).

**Territory:** No information found.

**Reproduction:** Peak of egg laying probably mid-May to mid-June. Monogamous. Clutch usually 4 eggs, range 3-5. Incubation period unknown. Both sexes probably care for altricial

young. Fledging age unknown (Bent 1950).

Niche: Reasons for population decline in recent decades in California unclear. A frequent host to brown-headed cowbirds (Friedmann 1963), which may be a major cause of the decline (Remsen 1978).

Comments: Detailed life history information apparently lacking. Wilbur (1977) prepared a literature review.

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