

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

WARBLING VIREO

Vireo gilvus

Family: VIREONIDAE
B418

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A fairly common to common, summer resident throughout much of California, but occurs only as a spring and fall migrant in southern interior (Garrett and Dunn 1981) and Central Valley (McCaskie et al. 1979). Breeds in montane and valley foothill riparian, valley foothill hardwood, valley foothill hardwood-conifer, aspen, and less commonly in conifer habitats as high as red fir. Also occurs in desert riparian, orchard-vineyard, and urban habitats in migration. Formerly more common and widespread as a breeder on southern coast (Garrett and Dunn 1981), and formerly bred in the Central Valley.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Mostly eats insects and spiders; occasionally takes fruits and seeds. Gleans foliage and twigs, often hovers, and sometimes hawks flying insects. In a Sierra Nevada mixed conifer forest, foraged mostly in lower canopy foliage. Preferred California black oak strongly over conifers for foraging (Airola and Barrett 1985).

Cover: Commonly uses deciduous trees, also shrubs and conifers, for cover.

Reproduction: Suspends a cup nest by rim from fork of a limb in a deciduous shrub or tree; occasionally in a conifer. In California, nest usually 1.3 to 3.6 m (4-12 ft) above ground; in eastern U.S., nest often much higher (Bent 1950).

Water: Often nests in riparian habitats, but may be more attracted to the trees than to moisture (Grinnell and Miller 1944).

Pattern: Frequents wooded areas with tall trees, open to intermediate canopy, and a substantial shrub understory (Verner and Boss 1980).

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity. Nocturnal migrant.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Some spring migrants arrive in March, but most pass through in April and May. Fall migrants pass through chiefly from late August through early October, but stragglers occur through December. Breeding grounds are occupied from mid-April into September. Rarely winters in the state.

Home Range: In Idaho, home range of a pair was a 37 m (120 ft) radius around the nest (Rust 1920). The following breeding densities, in pairs per 40 ha (100 ac), have been recorded: 42 pairs in fir-pine-aspen forest in Arizona (Haldeman et al. 1973); 5 pairs in a cut-over Douglas-fir forest in Idaho (Johnston 1949); in California, 40 pairs in an oak-California bay mixed forest (Stewart 1973a), 21 pairs in a lodgepole-aspen forest (Winkler

and Dana 1977), and 8 pairs in a broadleaf evergreen forest (Cogswell 1973).

Territory: No data found.

Reproduction: Nests from late April into August with peak activity in June. Pair nests solitary. Female lays 3-5 eggs, usually 4; incubated by both sexes for 12 days. Young tended by both parents until fledging at about 16 days (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Eggs, young, and adults occasionally the prey of accipiters and small mammals. Decrease in numbers throughout much of range apparently results in part from cowbird parasitism (Garrett and Dunn 1981). In the Sierra Nevada, 7 of 11 nests or family groups contained cowbirds (Rothstein et al. 1980, Verner and Ritter 1983, Airola 1986).

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