

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

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

Dendroica coronata

Family: PARULIDAE

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

B435

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Species includes "Audubon" and "myrtle" races. A common summer resident, transient, and common to abundant winter resident. Breeds from ponderosa pine to subalpine conifer, and in pinyon-juniper, habitats in major mountain ranges throughout the state. Most common as a breeder in Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine habitats. Widespread as a winter resident, occupying woodlands, chaparral, residential areas, even grasslands and agricultural areas where bordered by trees or shrubs. A common migrant and winter resident on Channel Islands (Garrett and Dunn 1981), and a common migrant on Farallon Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Eats mostly insects and spiders; also eats small fruits, seeds, and occasionally nectar. Also occasionally eats sap at sapsucker drillings (Airola 1979). Forages in all canopy levels by hawking insects from air, gleaning from foliage, twigs, and branches, and by searching for food on ground. In mixed conifer habitat in the Sierra Nevada in summer, foraged in white fir foliage and avoided incense cedar (Airola and Barrett 1985).

Cover: Trees, shrubs, and ground layer in middle and high-elevation coniferous forests provide cover in breeding season. Diverse habitats in lowlands provide cover in winter.

Reproduction: Nest is a well-concealed, open cup placed 0.9 to 30 m (3-100 ft) above ground in a conifer; occasionally in deciduous tree or shrub.

Water: Hering (1948) reported bathing in streams.

Pattern: Frequents open forests and edges for breeding and foraging.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity. Nocturnal migrant.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Usually arrives in lower reaches of mountain breeding areas by late April, and departs by mid-October. Numbers increase in lowlands in late September, and wintering individuals depart for breeding grounds by late April the following year. Winter flocks of the breeding "Audubon" race are augmented by "myrtle" race (which breeds in more northern and eastern regions), as well as by more northern-breeding "Audubon" individuals, according to migration patterns on the Farallon Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980).

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found on territory for western, "Audubon" race. For eastern, "myrtle" race, Morse (1976) found territory of about 0.8 ha (2 ac) on an island in Maine; in 40 ha (100 ac) he found 27-39 pairs. Breeding density in other areas, in pairs per 40 ha (100 ac) were: 10 in a Douglas-fir forest in Idaho (Johnston 1949); 6.7-18.3 in coniferous forests in Wyoming (Salt 1957); 13 in coniferous forests in Arizona (Carothers et al. 1973, Haldeman et al. 1973); and 8-10 in mixed conifer subalpine meadows in Oregon (Archie and Hudson 1973).

Reproduction: Breeds from mid-May through July. Pair nests solitarily. Lays 3-5 eggs (usually 4); incubated by female for 12-13 days. Altricial young tended by both parents until fledging at 12-14 days (Harrison 1978). Young breed the following year.

Niche: Subject to predation from small mammals, accipiters, and jays. One of the most generalized and opportunistic insectivorous birds in North America. Often flocks in winter, sometimes with other species. Males tend to forage higher than females. May roost communally in winter (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Commonly parasitized by brown-headed cowbird. In the Sierra Nevada, 14 of 42 nests or family groups contained cowbirds (Verner and Ritter 1983, Airola 1986).

Comments: Recent taxonomic revisions have combined the formerly separate Audubon's warbler and myrtle warbler.

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