

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

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER

Dendroica nigrescens

Family: PARULIDAE

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

B436

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon to fairly common, summer resident in dry, open woodlands and brushy understory of forests in foothills and mountains throughout much of California. Absent from Central Valley and deserts. Frequents ponderosa pine, valley foothill hardwood-conifer, montane hardwood, and pinyon-juniper habitats. Widespread transient and migrant in lowlands. Found in middle and higher-elevation conifer forests post-breeding (Gaines 1977b). Occasionally winters in lowland woodlands or pine plantations, e.g., valley foothill riparian habitat in Sacramento Valley. Fairly common as a migrant on Farallon and Channel Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Eats mostly insects (especially caterpillars and other larvae) gleaned from leaves and twigs. Forages at low to middle heights in forests and woodlands, although males may forage higher than females (Morrison 1982). Sometimes hawks insects.

Cover: Frequents brushy understory. Trees and shrubs in dry oak woodlands, oak and pine mixed forests, and pinyon-juniper woodlands supply cover.

Reproduction: Builds a cup nest far out on a forked twig of a shrub, sapling, or low in a tree. Nest height up to 15 m (50 ft) above ground, but usually 0.6 to 4.5 m (2-15 ft).

Water: Individuals drank 6 times and 4 times on single days in a temperate oak woodland (Williams and Koenig 1980).

Pattern: Inhabits open stages of dry, oak and other woodlands and forests with brushy understory.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity. Nocturnal migrant.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Mostly arrives in California March through May from Mexico and South America, and leaves by end of October. Wintering individuals mostly occur rarely but regularly.

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found. May show little interspecific defense of territory when foraging (Morrison 1982).

Reproduction: Breeds from early May to late July with peak activity in June. Lays 3-5

eggs, usually 4. Only the female incubates, but young are tended by both parents (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Subject to predation by accipiters, small mammals, snakes, and jays (Bent 1953). Frequents habitats with oaks.

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