

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

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TOWNSEND'S WARBLER

*Dendroica townsendi*

Family: PARULIDAE  
B437

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon to fairly common, winter resident of moist, coastal oak woodlands and coniferous forests. Occurs in valley foothill hardwood, closed-cone pine-cypress, redwood, and Douglas-fir habitats, and in stands of planted pines. Casual in the interior at this season. In spring, mostly migrates coastally, but small numbers move north through interior mountain ranges. Most common in California as a fall migrant, when it occurs widely from coastal woodlands up to subalpine conifer habitats. A common migrant on Farallon and Channel Islands (Grinnell and Miller 1944, DeSante and Ainley 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Eats mostly insects and spiders gleaned from foliage and twigs of conifers and oaks; occasionally hawks in air, eats seeds, or plant galls. Feeds in middle and upper levels of canopy (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Cover:** In winter, moist oak woodlands and conifer forests provide cover. In spring and fall, uses conifer and woodland habitats throughout the state.

**Reproduction:** Not known to breed in California. Nests 3 m (10 ft), or more, above ground in a conifer from central Oregon northward (Godfrey 1979).

**Water:** No additional information found.

**Pattern:** Inhabits open to dense, mature stands of deciduous and conifer habitats.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

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

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Wintering groups joined by northbound migrants from Mexico in April. There are few records from mid-June through July. Fall migration peaks in late September. By late October migrants have moved farther south; mostly wintering individuals remain.

**Home Range:** No data found.

**Territory:** No data found. As a migrant, probably does not establish a territory in California. Often found in flocks.

**Reproduction:** Mostly lays eggs in May and June. The 3 to 5 eggs are incubated by female only (Jewett et al. 1953, Harrison 1978, Godfrey 1979).

Niche: Occasionally preyed upon by accipiters. Often flocks with yellow-rumped warblers, chickadees, nuthatches, and other species in migration and in winter (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Little life history information available.

#### REFERENCES

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. *California's Wildlife*. Vol. I-III. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.