

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

HERMIT WARBLER

Dendroica occidentalis

Family: PARULIDAE

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

B438

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A fairly common to common, summer visitor and migrant; rare but regular in winter. Breeds in major mountain ranges from San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mts. northward (Garrett and Dunn 1981), excluding coastal ranges south of Santa Cruz Co. (McCaskie et al. 1979). Common spring and fall migrant in mountains. Uncommon to fairly common in lowlands in spring, rare to uncommon in fall. Breeds in mature ponderosa pine, montane hardwood-conifer, mixed conifer, Douglas-fir, redwood, red fir, and Jeffrey pine habitats. In migration and winter, also occurs in valley foothill hardwood habitat and in stands of planted pines. Rare to fairly common migrant on Farallon and Channel Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Gleans insects and spiders from foliage in middle to upper canopy; occasionally sallies or hovers. Male tends to forage higher than female (Morrison 1982).

Cover: Mature stands of pine and fir provide cover in breeding season. Woodlands of live oak and deciduous trees and planted pines are used in migration.

Reproduction: Builds nest 7.6 to 38 m (25-125 ft) above ground in a conifer; usually 7.6 to 15 m (25-50 ft). Nest often well out on a horizontal branch (Harrison 1978).

Water: No additional information found.

Pattern: Frequents mature stands of conifers with open to dense canopy for breeding. Uses mature conifers, woodlands, and plantations with similar canopy in other seasons.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity; nocturnal migrant.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: A migrant wave passes through in April and May, and again in August and early September. Most fall migrants and local breeders apparently follow major mountain ranges southward (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981). Often a fairly common August-September migrant on Farallon Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980).

Home Range: No data found. On 6 study plots in montane conifer stands in Oregon, Wiens and Nussbaum (1975) found an average of 60, range 31-143, individuals per 40 ha (100 ac). In Sierra Nevada, Beedy (1975) reported an average of 6.5 per 40 ha (100 ac) in mixed conifer habitat.

Territory: No data found.

Reproduction: Breeds from late April into early July with peak activity in June. Lays 3-5 eggs, usually 4.

Niche: Adults and eggs subject to predation by accipiters and small mammals. Occasionally hybridizes with Townsend's warbler. Parasitized by brown-headed cowbird in Sierra Nevada (Verner and Ritter 1983).

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