

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

HOODED ORIOLE

Icterus cucullatus

Family: ICTERIDAE
B530

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Common in summer, rare in winter, in coastal southern California. Less common in southeastern interior breeding north into Inyo Co. Mostly found in California from late March into early September. Generally restricted to lower elevations. Transient on Channel Islands. Primarily inhabits and breeds in palm oasis, valley foothill riparian, desert riparian, urban, and cropland habitats. Northward range expansion in recent decades, notably into Central Valley, and currently as far as Humboldt Co., apparently correlated with planting of fan palm and cultivation of numerous other ornamental and agricultural plants (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Small 1974, McCaskie et al. 1979, 1988, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Eats mostly insects; also some fruits and nectar in summer. Forages through tree and shrub foliage for insects and fruits, and extracts nectar from many native and exotic flowers (Bent 1958).

Cover: Groves of fan palm and dense stands of riparian and other tall trees and shrubs provide cover.

Reproduction: Requires tall trees for nesting. Prefers to nest in fan palm; also uses many species of native and exotic trees (e.g., cottonwood, sycamore, willow, live oak, eucalyptus, pepper) (Grinnell and Miller 1944).

Water: No additional data found.

Pattern: Frequents riparian woodlands, human habitations, and other areas with exotic trees and shrubs. Favors fan palm, willow, cottonwood, sycamore, exotic trees with flowers and nectar.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Primarily a summer resident in southern portion of state; uncommon and local in north, although range expanding. Most individuals arrive about March, and migrate south by mid-September.

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found, but male probably defends a breeding territory.

Reproduction: Breeds from early April through July. Average clutch 4 eggs, range 3-5.

Incubation 12-14 days, by female only. May raise 2 or 3 broods per season. Altricial young tended by both parents. Young fledge at about 14 days (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Preyed upon by crows, ravens, jays, accipiters. Brown-headed cowbird apparently parasitizes nests in California. Friedmann (1963, 1971) noted that where sympatric, brown-headed and bronzed cowbirds parasitize oriole nests simultaneously. As with other orioles and other insectivorous birds, feeding on insects helps reduce probability of outbreaks of insect populations (De Graaf 1978).

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