

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

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PINE GROSBEAK

*Pinicola enucleator*

Family: FRINGILLIDAE  
B535

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

Written by: D. Dobkin  
Reviewed by: L. Mewaldt  
Edited by: S. Granholm

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon to fairly common resident of high Sierra Nevada from Plumas Co. south to Tulare Co. Breeds primarily in lodgepole pine, red fir, and subalpine conifer habitats, almost always near wet meadows, streams, or lakes. Often forages in montane riparian habitat and edges of wet meadows. Local distribution and abundance fluctuate markedly from year to year. Data on winter distribution in Sierra Nevada very scarce (Orr 1941, Grinnell and Miller 1944, Gaines 1977b, McCaskie et al. 1979).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Eats mostly buds and seeds of conifers and deciduous trees. Also eats berries and other fruits, other seeds, and insects. Picks and gleans food from trees, shrubs, and ground, moving slowly and deliberately when foraging (Bent 1968).

**Cover:** Cover provided primarily by large trees in high-elevation coniferous forests with low to intermediate canopy closure.

**Reproduction:** Nest is a loose structure of twigs with an inner cup of fine roots, grasses, and mosses, located in thick foliage near the end of a horizontal bough in a conifer. Nest usually 4.9 to 10.7 m (16-35 ft) above ground.

**Water:** Usually found near edges of wet meadows, streams, lakes; water apparently required. May bathe in soft snow (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Pattern:** Frequents open coniferous forests with large trees, in vicinity of wet meadows, streams, lakes. Often forages in associated stands of montane hardwoods or on edges of wet meadows.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

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

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Resident within breeding range, but local distribution and abundance fluctuate markedly from year to year. No evidence of regular downslope movement in winter, although recorded occasionally in lower-elevation montane forests.

**Home Range:** No data found.

**Territory:** In a spruce-fir forest in Utah, a single breeding territory covered 10.5 ha (26 ac) (French 1954).

**Reproduction:** Breeding season late May into early August, with a peak from mid-June to

late July. Clutch size usually 4, range 2-5; a single brood raised each year. Incubation 13-14 days, by female only. Altricial young tended by both parents, and leave nest at about 14 days (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Often tame and approachable, especially in winter. May feed in flocks of 5-30, occasionally with waxwings (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

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