

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

JUNIPER TITMOUSE

Baeolophus ridgewayi

Family: PARIDAE
B552

Order: PASSERIFORMES

Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Former plain titmouse was recently split into the juniper titmouse and the oak titmouse (*B. inornatus*) and placed in the genus *Baeolophus* (Cicero 1996, Slikas et al. 1996, AOU 1997). A common resident in a variety of habitats, but primarily associated with pinyon-juniper, juniper, and desert riparian habitats from northeastern California through the Great Basin to the eastern Mojave (Grinnell and Miller 1944, McCaskie et al. 1979, Garrett and Dunn 1981). A narrow contact zone between the juniper titmouse and the oak titmouse, which inhabits oak and oak-pine habitats in cismontane California, occurs on the Modoc Plateau (Cicero 1996).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Probably similar to the oak titmouse, which eats insects and spiders, berries, and some seeds. Forages on foliage, twigs, branches, trunks, and occasionally on ground. Gleans, hammers hard seeds, chips at bark, and sometimes hovers (Hertz et al. 1976, Wagner 1981).

Cover: Cover provided mostly by juniper and/or pinyon woodlands. Also finds cover in riparian habitats. Roosts in cavity in tree or snag.

Reproduction: Builds nest of grass, moss, mud, hair, feathers, and fur (Harrison 1978) in woodpecker hole, natural cavity, or nest box. Sometimes partially excavates own cavity. Nests up to 10 m (32 ft) above ground, but usually lower (Bent 1946). Often breeds near water.

Water: Little information, but the closely related oak titmouse drank occasionally in summer in a coastal California oak woodland (Williams and Koenig 1980).

Pattern: Prefers open woodlands of pinyon. Sometimes forages and breeds in riparian areas, and ventures into residential areas.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Yearlong resident.

Home Range: Same as territory.

Territory: In a pinyon-juniper-ponderosa pine ecotone in Arizona, territory averaged 1.2 ha (3.0 ac) (Laudenslayer and Balda 1976). Territory occupied year-round.

Reproduction: Breeds from March into July, with peak activity in April and May. Pair nests solitarily. Lays 3-9 eggs, usually 6-8. Incubation 14-16 days, usually by female

only. Altricial young tended by both parents in nest about 20 days, and for another 3-4 wk after leaving the nest hole (Harrison 1978).

Niche: Vulnerable to the usual predators of woodland passerines: small mammals and hawks. Scrub jay apparently a common predator on eggs and nestlings (Bent 1946). May join flocks of mixed species in winter.

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