

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

---

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER

*Pluvialis fulva*

Family: CHARADRIIDAE  
B629

Order: CHARADRIIFORMES

Class: AVES

Written by: T. Kucera, 1998

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, SEASONALITY

Rare to uncommon winter resident and very rare spring and fall transient the length of the state near the coast (Small 1994). Some records exist from the Farallon and Channel islands, and the Salton sea. Small numbers regularly winter in the northern San Joaquin Valley. Pacific golden-plovers breed in eastern Russia and western Alaska (Johnson and Connors 1996).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Feeds alone or in groups on a wide variety of invertebrates on tidal flats, estuaries, sea beaches, and pastures and other grassy areas (Small 1994, Johnson and Connors 1996).

**Cover:** Tied to open, shoreline marine habitats and short, grassy fields and pastures..

**Reproduction:** Nests in dense vegetation on arctic and subarctic tundra (Johnson and Connors 1996).

**Water:** Water requirements unknown (Johnson and Connors 1996).

**Pattern:** Prefers open, tidal mudflats and short, grassy fields and lawns for winter foraging

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Diurnal.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Make some of the longest migrations in the world. Summer in the arctic and sub-arctic and winter in along the Pacific Coast of California, with smaller numbers in Oregon and Baja California (Wilbur 1987, Johnson and Connors 1996). Most Pacific golden-plovers migrate along the Asian coast, and many winter on islands in the Pacific.

**Home Range:** Not known.

**Territory:** Highly territorial on the breeding grounds. Both sexes defend territory with a variety of displays, chases, and vocalizations (Johnson and Connors 1996). Territory size averages 10-59 ha. May defend feeding territory on winter grounds (Myers et al. 1979).

**Reproduction:** A typical clutch of 4 is laid in April or May.

**Niche:** On the winter ranges, Pacific golden-plovers may be preyed upon by raptors such as peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) and barn owls (*Tyto alba*), and taken by house cats (Johnson and Connors 1996).

**Taxonomic note:** Pacific golden-plover was formerly a subspecies of the American golden-plover (*P. fulva*). Recent field investigations showed no interbreeding, and they were reclassified as full species (Connors et al. 1993, American Ornithologist's Union 1993).

## REFERENCES

- Connors, P. G., B. J. McCaffery, and J. L. Mason. 1993. Speciation in golden-plovers, *Pluvialis dominica* and *P. fulva*: Evidence from the breeding grounds. *Auk* 110:9-20.
- Johnson, O. W. and P. G. Connors. 1996. American golden-plover and Pacific golden-plover. *Birds of North America* 201-202:1-37.
- Myers, J. P., P. G. Connors, and F. A. Pitelka. 1979. Territoriality in non-breeding shorebirds. *Studies in Avian Biology* 2:231-246.
- Small, A. 1994. *California birds: their status and distribution*. Ibis Publishing Co., Vista, CA.
- Wilbur, S. R. 1987. *Birds of Baja California*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

B629

---

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.