

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

PECTORAL SANDPIPER
Family: SCOLOPACIDAE
B649

Calidris melanotos
Order: CHARADRIIFORMES Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, SEASONALITY

The pectoral sandpiper is rare spring (March-May) transient and an uncommon to locally common fall (July-November) transient (Small 1994) in California. Most birds appear from early September to mid-October, and according to Small (1994), are juveniles; the adults pass through earlier, in late July. There are four verified winter records for California. Pectoral sandpipers are found in drier portions of tidal mudflats, and grassy borders of estuaries, pools, ponds, lakes, streams, and alkali flats. It is found widespread the length of the state, mainly along the coast and rarely inland (Small 1994). The pectoral sandpiper breeds along the margins of the Arctic Ocean from Siberia to eastern Canada, and winters in southern South America, Australia, and New Zealand (Pitelka 1959, Myers et al. 1982).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Feeds largely on insects, amphipods, spiders usually on drier areas way from water's edge, often among vegetation (Hayman et al. 1986).

Cover: Open mudflats, shorelines, or shallow water provide cover.

Reproduction: Nests on arctic tundra on dry fringes of wetlands, producing one brood per year (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Water: A shorebird, always associated with water.

Pattern: Transient in a variety of shoreline and mudflat habitats with insects for food.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Active at all times of day; active all year.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Nest in arctic tundra during June and July across Siberia and North America. Winter in southern South America (Hayman et al. 1986, Ehrlich et al. 1988). Appear in California before and mainly after breeding (Small 1994)

Home Range: Not known.

Territory: Males are territorial during nesting and have song flights during which they make a sonorous foghorn-like hoot; during migration, some individuals may defend feeding territories (Hayman et al. 1986, Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Reproduction: Promiscuous; female may visit several male territory holders (Myers 1982). Lay one brood of two to four eggs during June or July in a nest of dry grass and leaves (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Males leave breeding grounds before the eggs hatch .

Niche: Tends to feed relatively high on the shore, often among vegetation.

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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.