

# TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE      WYOMING      SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Biology No. 229

January 1986

Subject: WILSON'S WARBLER\*

## General

Wilson's Warbler (Wilsonia pusilla) is a common migrant, breeder, and summer resident in the mountains of Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. It is found among thickets bordering streams or ponds or around the edges of moist meadows.

## Food Requirements

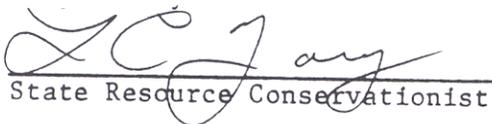
In California, animal matter, such as bugs, wasps, and ants, accounted for over 93 percent of this warbler's diet. The vegetable matter eaten was almost entirely fruit pulp, which was eaten in September and October. Wilson's warbler obtains its food by darting into the air after insects, by leaf-searching and trunk-gleaning. One study found in California that most of the foraging occurred within 6 ft (1.8 m) of the ground and that these birds practically never ascended far into trees, even to sing. They search leaves, twigs, and flowers for tiny insects. Another study reported they usually hunted in low bushes.

## Water Requirements

No information on water requirements was found in the literature.



Prepared by: Richard Rintamaki, State Biologist

  
State Resource Conservationist

\*Information taken from Ecoregion M3113 Handbook and Habitat Suitability Index Models, Wildlife Species Narratives (literature searches), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various dates between 1978-1984.

Cover Requirements

This warbler lives in bushes bordering the woods, in the undergrowth of thin forests, and along cool streams, and is never found in deep woods. One study found that this species was generally found around willow swamps at high elevations, flitting from bush to bush, and seldom perching on trees. According to another study, Wilson's warblers are limited to alder and willow thickets bordering ponds and streams and around the edges of moist meadows.

Reproductive Requirements

Wilson's warblers commonly nest on the ground under matted grass, in heavy undergrowth, or low in crotches of willow thickets of boggy areas. The nests may be found flush to the ground, a few inches high when upon ground vegetation, or up to 5 ft (1.5 m) high when constructed in bushes, willows, or on roots of uprooted trees. Although the nests occur at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 12,000 ft (2,134 to 3,658 m), they are most common at 10,000 ft (3,048 m).

The brood is fed by regurgitation for 4 to 5 days, after which fresh, small insects and green larvae are fed to them.

Special Habitat Requirements

No information was found in the literature.

Interspersion Requirements

One study reported that this warbler "adheres closely to damp situations, either over boggy ground or within a few yards of a stream." Territories average about 2.5 acres (1.0 ha) in size.

Special Considerations

Wilson's warblers are migratory birds which breed throughout western North America from Alaska to western Texas and winter as far south as Central America. Wilson's warblers are believed to be intolerant of habitat change based on their occurrence in subalpine areas which are not usually subject to change.