

TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WYOMING

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Biology No. 219

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Subject: RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET*

General

The ruby-crowned kinglet (Regulus calendula) is commonly found in the coniferous forests of this region at elevations up to 11,500 ft (3,450 m).

Food Requirements

The ruby-crowned kinglet's diet consists primarily of animal matter, including wasps, ants, bugs, flies, beetles, and plant lice. Miscellaneous fruit and seeds, such as poison oak, leaf galls, and elderberries are eaten less frequently. Kinglets forage singly, searching pine needle clusters and picking insects from the bark of the limbs and trunk or from the ground amidst leaves and small herbaceous plants. Kinglets may also hover and dart out at their prey.

In the spring and summer, they are completely insectivorous.

Water Requirements

No specific water requirements were found in the literature.

Cover Requirements

Coniferous forests provide the main foraging and reproductive cover for the ruby-crowned kinglet. If available, they will utilize several species of bushes and trees in which to forage. Nests are almost always built in conifers and are concealed by twigs and needles.



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*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.

Reproductive Requirements

Nests are built near the trunks of coniferous trees, usually 15 to 30 ft (4.5 to 9.1 m) from the ground. Nests are usually pensive and are attached to twigs beneath a branch. They are rarely placed on the top of a branch. The nests are well-concealed, deep, cuplike structures usually lined with feathers. A variety of other materials such as green mosses, tree mosses, and lichens are also used.

Special Habitat Requirements

No special habitat requirements were found in the literature.

Interspersion Requirements

Ruby-crowned kinglets favor coniferous forests, but will also inhabit mixed woodlands and thickets.

Special Considerations

Ruby-crowned kinglets are common migrants and breed throughout this region. A few winter in lowland areas within the region. They also occur around clearcuts and burns in the Colorado mountains.