

Habitat management for

band-tailed pigeons

BAND-TAILED PIGEONS



In the State of Oregon

Band-tailed pigeons (*Columba fasciata*) are common throughout western Oregon and along the Columbia River to Hood River County during the nesting season. Birds reared in Oregon, as well as those from British Columbia and the state of Washington, migrate south in early fall and furnish excellent hunting in the Willamette Valley, Umpqua Valley, Rogue River Valley, and coastal areas during early September. Band-tails do not winter in Oregon.

HABITAT NEEDS

Food. Band-tails eat a wide assortment of fruits, berries, nuts, buds, and waste grains. These birds sometimes damage cherry crops by heavily feeding on this fruit.

Choice plant foods consist of:

Acorns	Elderberry	Serviceberry
Cascara	Salal	Waxmyrtle
Cherries	Salmonberry	Wheat
Dogwood		

Fair plant foods include:

Barley	Huckleberry	Mountain ash
Blackberry	Madrone	Prunes
Blueberry	Manzanita	Rose
Corn		

Animal foods are rarely eaten by band-tailed pigeons.

Water. Band-tailed pigeons require water daily and prefer water containing mineral salts. Mineral springs and tide flats are concentration areas for resident flocks in the late summer and early fall and also during band-tail migrations. Hunters take advantage of this fact.

Nesting. Band-tailed pigeons choose second or third growth evergreen trees where a flimsy nest of twigs is constructed. The reproductive rate of band-tails is low because usually only one pure white egg is laid. Evidence indicates that these birds may nest two or three times in a season.

Hunting. Hunting is most productive where pigeons are feeding, where birds come to mineral springs or tidal areas for water, and on flight lines where birds pass through on the southward migration. The band-tail's deceptively fast flight makes for difficult and challenging shooting. The birds decoy well.

PLANNING SUGGESTIONS

If you have a mineral spring that attracts band-tails, it is important to leave a few trees standing around the spring so the birds may perch prior to drinking. Clearing heavy brush and excess trees from such an area can also be helpful. A good pigeon "spring" commands a high price from hunters.

Choice food plants such as cascara and blue elderberry should be protected or planted to attract band-tails for hunting or for observation.

Since band-tail pigeons are migratory, the primary responsibility for management is vested in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This responsibility is shared by the state.