

# Band-tailed Pigeons and Forestry

Wildlife in Managed Forests:  
Reference Series

Band-tailed pigeons (*Patagioenas fasciata*) are an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife game species, and are also an Oregon Conservation Strategy species. Some mineral springs used by band-tailed pigeons (BTPIs) are protected in Oregon by the Forest Practices Act (FPA). BTPIs are about the size of domestic pigeons. The BTPI is a common summer resident in forested areas west of the Cascades. It typically nests in forested mountain areas, usually at less than 4,000 feet elevation, but does frequent valleys to visit mineral sites and feed.

BTPIs nest primarily in Douglas-fir trees within closed-canopy conifer or mixed conifer forests. Nests are loosely constructed twig platforms and are located from six feet to 120 feet off the ground. BTPIs need closed-canopy forests for nest sites, open-canopy forests for foraging, and mineral sites. Mineral sites such as springs, estuaries, wastewater sites or livestock salting areas, are used more frequently if they have an abundance of nearby perching locations; use is also dependent upon the salt content of the site. These birds are known to travel long distances away from mineral and nest sites for food (more than 30 miles). BTPIs seek salts and minerals because their diets are deficient in them. Access to mineral sites is critical for their life history.

BTPIs eat buds, flowers and fruits of deciduous trees and shrubs, especially oak, madrone, elderberry, cherry, cascara, huckleberry and blackberry. Band-tailed pigeons are also known to frequent bird feeders and prefer corn. BTPIs are migratory and generally begin to arrive in Oregon in March, depending on available food.

## HOW DO I PROTECT THE RESOURCE SITE?

ODF will notify you if there is a protected BTPI resource site near your planned operation when you submit your Notification of Operation form. A conflict may exist if an operation has the potential to modify or destroy the resource site or cause abandonment of the site. Conflicts are solved by working with ODF and may include measures such as:

- Conducting a site inspection with ODF and applicable wildlife agencies
- Implementing timing restrictions for forest operations (outside the use season of June to September)
- Developing a management plan for the resource site
- Revising forest operations to avoid the resource site
- Retaining buffers around mineral springs; retaining trees for perching and staging areas
- Retaining fruiting shrubs and trees for foraging opportunities



Photo by Todd Sanders

## WHAT DOES THE FPA REQUIRE?

Protect the resource site, including the mineral watering places and any identified key components. Key components include buffer trees around the spring to protect the hydrology of the spring as well as staging trees for BTPIs to perch in before they drop to the ground to drink.

### NESTING CHRONOLOGY

Oct-Feb	Non-breeding season
Mar-Sep	Breeding season
Jun - Sep	Mineral spring season

### SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

[Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)

[Oregon Forest Practices Act](#)

[Birds of Oregon: A General Reference \(Marshall Et. al. 2003/2006\)](#)



## ABOUT OFRI

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991 to advance public understanding of forests, forest products and forest management and to encourage sound forestry through landowner education.

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