

Abstracts of Oral Presentations

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The Tongass National Forest contains some of the largest remaining tracts of old-growth temperate rainforest in the world. Management of these forest lands includes efforts to conserve and maintain habitats for a variety of wildlife, including goshawks. ADF&G and the US Forest Service began cooperative studies in 1992 to understand the ecology of goshawks in an old-growth temperate forest ecosystem. As part of these efforts, we have been monitoring goshawk nest sites and nest stands with the aid of radiotelemetry. Since 1992, we have captured 135 goshawks, and 51 adults have been fitted with radiotags. We use radiotelemetry to track the inter-year movements of adult goshawks. Between 1992 and 1998, 9 adult female goshawks moved to different nesting territories a 11 times and nested with different mates. These females move a mean of 34km (range 3.2152 km). Of 26 adult male goshawks radiotagged, none have moved to a new nesting territory. Results from our radiotelemetry data suggest that annual monitoring of nest stands and checking old nest sites for occupancy by goshawks can provide misleading information. Depending on how the monitoring is actually designed, one could conclude that a raptor nesting population is declining simply because of inter-year movements by nesting adults to sites that are unknown. This is especially true for studies in dense forests where large, complete censuses of all nesting pairs is impossible. Our radiotelemetry results also indicate that some home ranges are occupied by non-nesting goshawks, and that some pairs move 2-3 km to different nests between years, while maintaining the same home range as previous years. Hence, it would be improper to suggest that these territories are 'unoccupied', but this would be an often-used interpretation in many raptor-monitoring projects.

Monitoring, Territory Reoccupancy, and Inter-year Movements of Adult Northern Goshawks (Accipiter gentilis) on the Tongass National Forest, Alaska: Lessons from a Long-term Radiotelemetry Study

Raptor Research Foundation Annual Meeting



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Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*
Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus*
Cardon cactus *Pachycereus pringlei*

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