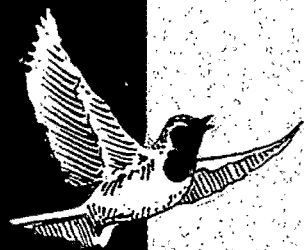


NESTING ECOLOGY OF TULE GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

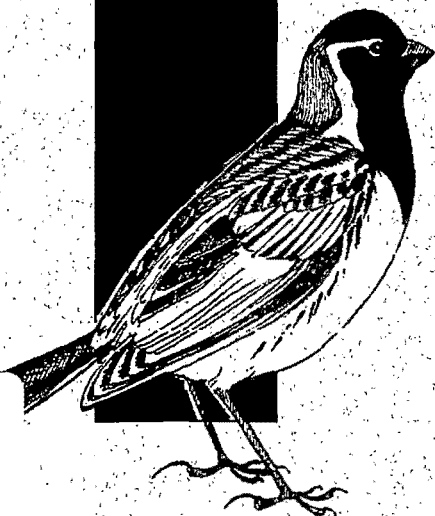
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We studied the nesting ecology of Tule Greater White-fronted Geese at a newly-located nesting area in the Susitna River Valley of Southcentral Alaska from 1994-1995. Little research has been conducted on boreal forest nesting geese and the only previous information on nesting Tule Geese is from the west side of Cook Inlet. We located 18 nests by tracking radio-marked females captured during winter. The entire known breeding range was systematically searched; determination of nesting habitat was not subject to study area location/boundaries. This resulted in an unbiased sample. Nest initiation dates were similar to those previously reported for birds nesting at Redoubt Bay. Clutch size averaged 4.07 eggs/nest. Nesting success was poor both years, likely due to the high density of furbearers and bald eagles in the study area. The area used by nesting geese can generally be described as black spruce and birch boreal forest interspersed with wetlands as compared to the high flood plain coastal wetland reported for Tule Geese nesting at Redoubt Bay. Nest site characteristics varied greatly.

Key words: Geese, Nesting Ecology, Boreal Forest, Waterfowl, Susitna River drainage



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Alaska Bird
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April 8-10, 1996
Fairbanks, Alaska