

Forest fragmentation and rhinocryptid nest predation in central Chile

Vergara, Pablo M.

Simonetti, Javier A.

Fragmentation of forest landscapes can raise the intensity of nest predation by increasing the abundance and richness of generalist or introduced predators. Understory foraging birds, such as rhinocryptids, can be highly vulnerable to nest predation in fragmented landscapes because they often place their nests on the ground. Temperate deciduous forests in Chile have been intensively fragmented in the last centuries, causing changes in nest predator densities. We tested if predation of artificial nests, mimicking those of rhinocryptids, placed on and above ground was higher in the remnant fragments of central Chile due to an increase in predator abundance. The rate of nest predation in forest remnants was larger than in native continuous forest. Small mammals were the main nest predators. Despite high predation rates, the abundance of rhinocryptids is higher in forest remnants, suggesting that fragments might constitute ecological traps. © 2003 Éditions scientifiques et médicales Elsevi