

ABSTRACTS FOR CONDOR 104(1) FEBRUARY 2002 C.E.

COMMENTARY

SNAIL KITE NEST SUCCESS AND WATER LEVELS: A REPLY TO BEISSINGER AND SNYDER

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Abstract. Beissinger and Snyder present a commentary on our recent paper on spatial and temporal variability in nest success of Snail Kites (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) in Florida (Dreitz et al. 2001). Beissinger and Snyder reanalyze a subset of data presented in our original paper to show that water levels have a significant influence on nest success. To make their argument, the authors conduct separate analyses for 5 of the original 11 wetlands; including only those having the most data. We agree with Beissinger and Snyder that water levels can affect nest success in some areas or years, as we stated in Dreitz et al. (2001). However, the purpose of our original paper was to examine the influences of nest success over broad spatial and temporal scales. When viewed in this context, using a meta-analysis, water levels alone explain only a small amount of the observed variation in nest success. One of the advantages of using a meta-analysis is that it uses all of the available data to provide an indication of the overall magnitude of an effect, which can easily be misinterpreted when viewed in a narrower context of individual study sites. We discuss the management implications of these alternative perspectives on water levels in light of their effect on habitat quality and persistence.

Key words: *endangered species, Florida, information criterion, nest success, management implications, Rostrhamus sociabilis, Snail Kite, water levels.*

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