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Abstracts

FEATURE ARTICLES

PRIOR BREEDING SUCCESS AFFECTS RETURN RATES OF TERRITORIAL MALE OVENBIRDS

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Abstract. I examined the hypothesis that male Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) make breeding dispersal decisions based on prior breeding experience at a site. I determined the reproductive success of color-banded male Ovenbirds at sites in fragmented and unfragmented landscapes in Missouri from 1992–1995. I documented which individuals returned and I recorded their reproductive success upon return as well as the success of birds new to each plot. I obtained similar results in both landscapes. Males with different histories of reproductive success returned at different rates. Only 2 of 22 males that were paired but failed to raise young returned in the following year, whereas the return rates of unpaired males (41%, $n = 37$) and males that successfully raised young (54%, $n = 57$) did not differ significantly ($P = 0.19$). The patterns were more consistent with the hypothesis that return rates were due to decisions about dispersal rather than difference in survival of individuals in these groups.

Key words: breeding dispersal, forest fragmentation, Ovenbirds, reproductive success, return rate, *Seiurus aurocapillus*.