

The Condor
Volume 105, No. 2
May 2003 C.E.
Abstracts

FEATURE ARTICLES

USING VIDEO TO MONITOR PREDATION AT BLACK-CAPPED VIREO NESTS

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Manuscript received 27 August 2002; accepted 6 January 2003.

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Abstract. We monitored 142 Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapillus*) nests at Fort Hood, Texas, from 1998 to 2001 using time-lapse infrared videocameras to identify nest predators. We recorded 59 predator visits (where at least some of the nest contents were removed or destroyed), resulting in 48 depredated nests. Snakes and fire ants (*Solenopsis* spp.) were the leading predators, accounting for 18 (38%) and 15 (31%), respectively, of all depredated nests. We also identified a variety of avian (19% of depredated nests) and mammalian predators (11% of depredated nests). Despite intensive Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) removal at Fort Hood, we recorded nine predator visits by females of this species, but only one resulted in nest failure. Although predator visits occurred at all hours, most (58%) took place at night. The daily predation rate was higher during the nestling stage than during incubation, partly due to the apparent inability of fire ants to prey upon vireo eggs. We monitored 435 nests without video; field assistants checked the contents of these every 4–5 days. The daily survival rate of these nests was not higher than the rate of nests monitored with video, evidence that video monitoring does not increase nest predation relative to monitoring by human visits to nests.

Key words: Black-capped Vireo, fire ants, nest predators, rat snake, videocamera, *Vireo atricapillus*.