

FEATURE ARTICLES

**IMPACTS OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ON WOOD THRUSH NESTING  
SUCCESS IN HARDWOOD FOREST FRAGMENTS**

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*Abstract.* We studied the impacts of low density, exurban housing developments on Wood Thrushes (*Hylocichla mustelina*) breeding in small forest fragments in two regions of rural southern Ontario. In both regions, Wood Thrushes breeding in woodlots with embedded houses (housing penetrating the forest border) experienced significantly higher rates of parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) than Wood Thrushes breeding in woodlots with adjacent houses (houses within 100 m of the forest edge), or undeveloped woodlots (no houses within 100m of the forest edge). Wood Thrushes breeding in Peterborough area woodlots with embedded or adjacent houses experienced significantly increased rates of nest predation compared to Wood Thrushes breeding in undeveloped woodlots. This increased nest predation resulted in significant reductions in seasonal productivity in developed woodlots. No increase in nest predation was experienced by Wood Thrushes nesting in developed woodlots in the Ottawa region. The effects of housing developments appear to be region-specific and may depend on other factors influencing the overall abundance of cowbirds.

*Key words:* breeding success, brood parasitism, forest fragmentation, housing development, nest predation, Ontario, Wood Thrush.