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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

NEST PREDATION IN A NEOTROPICAL FOREST OCCURS DURING DAYTIME

MICHAEL M. LIBSCH[1], CHELINA BATISTA[2], DEBORAH BUEHLER[2], ISIS OCHOA[2], JEFFREY BRAWN[1,3], AND ROBERT E. RICKLEFS[4,5]
[1]*Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Shelford Vivarium, 606 East Healey St., Champaign, IL 61820*
[2]*Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, P.O. Box 2072, Balboa, Republic of Panama*
[3]*Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61820*
[4]*Department of Biology, University of Missouri–St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121*
Manuscript received 31 May 2007; accepted 18 January 2008.
[5] E-mail: ricklefs@umsl.edu

Abstract. Alexander Skutch suggested that the threat of nest predation on tropical birds favors reduced activity near their nests. This hypothesis assumes that nest predation occurs during the day when adult birds are active, but few studies of tropical species have reported distributions of nest losses during the day-night cycle. We used thermistors placed in nests to record the time of nest predation events for species of understory rainforest birds during the incubation period. In our study, 14 of 21 nest-predation events (67%) occurred between 11:00 and 18:00 (EST), and none took place at night, between 19:00 and 06:00. Clearly, nest predation during incubation was primarily diurnal. Although a major premise of Skutch's hypothesis is supported, further research is needed to determine whether diurnal predators are attracted to nests by the movements of parent birds, begging of offspring, or other cues.

Key words: nest activity, nest attentiveness, nest predation, parental investment, Skutch hypothesis, understory rainforest birds.