

fragmented woodlots may be impeded partially by the reluctance of these animals to navigate the surrounding farmland and clear cuts (Wegner and Merriam 1989).

Additionally, vegetative cover within the fragments was complex (Goodrich et al. unpubl. data), suggesting a greater variety of microhabitats to exploit. Increased resources could support large populations of animals over the season but at the same time may force individuals to exploit alternative resources such as nests (Nour et al 1993).

These results suggest a possible relationship between the small mammal community and songbird breeding success in small forests. All the mammals captured have been identified as potential nest predators (Wilcove 1985, Retisma et al. 1989, Yahner 1992, Nour et al. 1993 Seitz and Zegers 1993) and forests with low Ovenbird breeding success had high small mammal abundance.

Though white-footed mice were

most abundant on all our study areas, we cannot implicate them as a dominant predator of Ovenbird nests on these plots. There is substantial evidence that a number of other species that predate on bird nests, including skunks, opossums, raccoons, jays, crows, and snakes, have the potential to exert severe pressure on songbird breeding attempts in small forests (Ricklefs 1969, Wegner and Mirriam 1979, Angelstam 1986, Martin 1987, and Nour et al. 1993). As the abundances of these species were not investigated, their effects on Ovenbird nesting success on the plots is unknown.

Forest fragmentation can also affect other wildlife. Current timber management philosophy maintains that large acreages of young forests combined with large amounts of forest edge are beneficial to wildlife. This may be true for species such as white tailed deer, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Cardinal, and Brown Thrasher but is clearly not the case for species sensitive to forest frag-

mentation (e.g. Ovenbird and Wood Thrush). Future research should focus on and provide a workable understanding of the complex dynamics of these ecosystems as a whole and utilize this information to implement more inclusive land management practices that involve and provide for wildlife on a more comprehensive level.



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