
****UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES IN NEST SITE CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN JUVENILE AND ADULT TURKEYS (Poster)**

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Wild turkeys are one of the most-actively monitored and regulated bird species in North America. Data from the northern Black Hills, South Dakota indicate that the turkey population is declining. Nest success is an important driver of turkey populations and previous nesting experience could increase the chances of selecting a nest site where at least one egg hatches. As a result, we were curious if nest site characteristics differ between adult and juvenile hens. We monitored 88 nests and recorded nest fate (success/failure) during two field seasons. We also characterized horizontal and vertical vegetation cover around each nest at the actual or projected hatch date. Of the 43 successful nests (≥ 1 egg hatched), 33 belonged to adult hens and 10 to juveniles. Of the 45 failed nests, 30 belonged to adults and 15 to juveniles. Successful nests of juvenile hens were in locations with 20.7% greater horizontal total cover (95% CI= 5.7 to 35.7) and 16.6% greater shrub cover (-3.2 to 36.4) than successful nests of adults. However, we did not detect differences in horizontal total or shrub cover for failed nests of juveniles and adults. We also did not detect a difference in vertical vegetation cover between nests of adults and juveniles, regardless of nest fate. Retaining sufficient vegetation cover might help provide habitat features ideal for nesting juvenile and adult hens.