

ABSTRACTS

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES - TERRESTRIAL

UTILIZATION OF NEST TREES AND NEST STANDS BY NORTHERN GOSHAWKS IN SOUTHWESTERN MONTANA^{MAS}

C. Armiger, L. Sterling, J. Kirkley and A. Easter-Pilcher
Western Montana College of the University of Montana, Dillon 59725

In this study, 60 Northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) nest trees, including all known alternative nest sites in the Dillon, Wisdom and Wise River Districts of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest in southwest Montana, were measured for species and diameter at breast height (dbh). Our study assesses whether species composition of the nest stands differs significantly from what is available in the forest districts under study. Within the selected nest stand we also determined if there was a preference for a particular nest tree species and dbh class. Tree species and dbh may be two important and easily identifiable physical characteristics that may prove useful in predicting the nest tree selection by goshawks. Further, if goshawks do exhibit a nest tree preference, these two factors could be considered in regard to formulating management decisions about particular timber stands. From the results of this study, we can infer that species of tree alone is not the most important variable, but rather it is the selection of a sufficiently large dbh that may be the characteristic which more strongly influences the goshawk's choice of a nest tree. Our results also indicate a possible preference by the Northern goshawk toward pure stands of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menezesii*) and pure stands of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in southwest Montana.