

Miles Walz-Salvador, Wildlife & Fisheries

University: University of Missouri-Columbia

Year in School: Sophomore

Hometown: St. Louis, MO

Faculty Mentor: Dr. John Faaborg, Biological Sciences

Funding Source: NSF Undergraduate Mentoring in Environmental Biology

What nest condition tells us about predators and nest success for birds

Miles Walz-Salvador and John Faaborg

Since the 1990's scientists have become concerned about the declining population of migratory birds. A reduction in available habitat in wintering grounds and stop-over sites during migration may contribute to the decline in migratory bird populations. Another hypothesis for this decline in population is overwhelming nest predation on breeding grounds. This may be due to forest fragmentation which increases depredation of nests. Even though we understand why landscapes affect the bird population, knowledge of what types of predators are affected by fragmentation would determine how to manage land effectively. In this study, I test the hypothesis that nest condition would predict predator types by the amount of damage caused to the nest. To do this I found and monitored nests in Missouri and took pictures from different angles. I then set up video cameras to monitor the nest continuously. Once a nest failed, I took pictures to compare to the earlier ones. I will be scoring nests based on categories 0-3, which are based on the percentage change in nest condition from original photos.