

MATURE FOREST-BREEDING BIRD USE OF EARLY-SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT

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ABSTRACT

Some forest birds shift habitat from forest habitat to early-successional habitat. More information is needed to determine how widespread this shift is for forest birds. The presence of forest birds in early-successional habitat does not mean that it is a requirement during their annual cycle. We used constant effort mist netting to capture birds in regeneration cuts to examine variation in abundance. We radio-tracked daily movements of juvenile Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*), and Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), to determine habitat selection. There was variation in abundance of forest birds among species and ages in early-successional habitat during the post-breeding season. Juvenile Ovenbirds and Worm-eating Warblers remained in the early-successional habitat. Juvenile Red-eyed Vireos used late and early-successional habitat in similar proportions. Our study expands on existing information for juvenile Ovenbird and Worm-eating Warbler post-independence, while contributing new information for independent juvenile Red-eyed Vireo. Our analyses allow us to suggest other forest species that may use early-successional habitat. The clear differences in habitat use between forest birds emphasize the importance of obtaining habitat use information across the whole annual cycle for all species. This information can help guide habitat management decisions to potentially increase bird populations.