

O18-5 Nest site selection in native and exotic trees by Black-chinned Hummingbirds

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We studied nest site selection and nesting success in Black-chinned Hummingbirds (*Archilochus alexandri*) along the middle Rio Grande, New Mexico. The study was conducted in association with an exotic woody plant removal program to determine whether the removal of exotic plants would affect wildlife populations and nesting success, either positively or negatively. Point counts and nest searches were conducted for all bird species at sixteen 50-acre sites in four counties along the middle Rio Grande in 2000 and 2001. Over 100 nests of Black-chinned Hummingbirds were found during the pre-treatment phase, and nest characteristics measured. **In this paper, we report on patterns of nest site selection and nesting success in the hummingbirds in relation to presence and use of exotic and native plant species.** The hummingbirds placed nests in exotic woody plants, specifically Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) and tamarisks (*Tamarix* spp.), in disproportion to their availability and with greater frequency than in native plants. Nesting success was moderately high at the majority of sites but varied with nest site characteristics. Our study suggests that Black-chinned Hummingbirds have adapted to the spread of exotic plants in the riparian zones of the southwestern United States, and that total removal of invasive exotics may have a negative effect of their populations.