

2003 Progress Report
Northwest Ecological Research Institute
Common Nighthawk Project
NERI Report 03-04

Project Leader: Catherine J. Flick

Objectives:

- Develop and test a survey protocol to census common nighthawks.
- Monitor nighthawk nests.

Study area and methods:

- Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in south-central Washington and north-central Oregon were used to compare nighthawk detections in evening versus early morning time periods. Routes were divided into five ten- stop segments, each run by one or two volunteers, all segments starting at 9:00 pm and ending by 10:30 pm. Close coordination with three BBS observers was necessary to ensure that each nighthawk survey was conducted either the evening before or the evening after that BBS route was run as usual in early morning hours.
- Nests were located and monitored in tree orchards and nurseries in the Wind River watershed in Washington. Visits were made every two to five days between June 1 and mid September.

Results:

- Seven volunteers from NERI and elsewhere assisted in surveying for nighthawks along three BBS routes between June 12 and June 29. Evening surveys detected between 2 and 27 nighthawks per route, as compared to 1 to 10 detected during morning surveys. In reviewing two years of survey data, temperature during the BBS surveys appears to be proportional to the number of nighthawk detections.
- Three nighthawk nests were located and two were monitored from egg through post-fledging. The male at one of these nests was suspected to have been banded as a chick last year, but mist nets and playbacks were unsuccessfully employed to capture it. Five chicks hatched and three were banded at between 11 and 16 days old.