

COMPARISON OF NORTHERN GOSHAWK NESTING HABITAT IN APPALACHIAN OAK AND NORTHERN HARDWOOD FORESTS OF PENNSYLVANIA

J. Timothy Kimmel and Richard H. Yahner¹

Abstract: The Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is a rare to uncommon woodland raptor in Pennsylvania. Although it is primarily a boreal species, the goshawk nests in Northern Hardwoods and Appalachian oak forests along the southern margin of its range in Pennsylvania. This study compared the nesting habitat of goshawks in Appalachian oak and Northern Hardwoods forests in Pennsylvania during the 1989-90 field seasons.

Vegetative and physiographic habitat variables were quantified at both the nest site (microhabitat) and landscape (macrohabitat) levels. Preliminary results indicate that conifers may be more important for goshawks nesting in Appalachian oak forests. We suggest that microclimatic factors associated with conifer stands in oak forests may create a more favorable nesting environment for this northern raptor. Results of this study will be important in developing management strategies for maintaining critical nesting habitat for the goshawk in Pennsylvania.

¹School of Forest Resources, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802