

USING AN AUGMENTED FIA STRUCTURE TO EVALUATE WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS IN NORTH IDAHO

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In past efforts to develop wildlife habitat relationships for multiple organisms, issues associated with vegetation measurement variables have occluded actual habitat relationships, and correlations between habitat variables and organisms have often been based on expert opinion rather than statistical models. In North Idaho, the National Vegetation Pilot has collected data on a regular grid of 500 plots, and has augmented these data with high-resolution low-elevation photographs centered on each plot. Starting in 2003 we will be collecting presence/absence and relative abundance data on 350 of these plots. Data will be collected for 3 years, and will include breeding birds, small mammals, and carnivores, with “sign” surveys for ungulates and lagomorphs. Correlations will be developed between species presence and vegetation data collected from the plots and companion air photos, as well as available GIS data, allowing analysis of habitat relationships at multiple scales.