



Sympatric raptors from temperate forests of Chile and Canada: site-occupancy, nesting habitat preferences and reliability of cavity-nesting owls as indicators of biological diversity.

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Temperate forests are one of the biomes most impacted by human development. Several forest-specialist species are linked to old-growth forests and apparently declining because of habitat loss. The effects of habitat degradation on owls and associated species are poorly known. We will study the Rufous-legged owl (*Strix rufipes*) and the Austral pygmy owl (*Glaucidium nanum*) for Chile, and the Saw-whet owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) and (*Strix varia*) for Canada, to deepen understanding of the ecology and conservation status of owls in these changing habitats, and to evaluate their role as biodiversity indicators.

For the latter, we will assess the broad co-occurring avian assemblages. As indicators, owls may be an efficient tool for sustainable forest management because of their association with other species: e.g., woodpeckers, tapaculos and other raptors. This project has an important outreach component, informing stakeholders (Environmental Ministry, landholders, BirdLife, IUCN) about conservation issues and appropriate responses in temperate forests. Our owl research may yield information about wildlife communities relevant to landscape-level conservation.

