

NEST PARAMETER ESTIMATES AND DAILY NEST SURVIVAL RATES OF RIO GRANDE WILD TURKEY

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Abstract: The Rio Grande Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*, RGWT) population in the Edwards Plateau region of Texas has been shown to have 2 population trends (stable and declining) since the 1970s. The declining population has been attributed to lower productivity than the stable population. We estimated variations in reproductive parameters for reproductively active radio-tagged females during the 2005 and 2006 nesting season. We found no difference between stable and declining populations attempting to nest during 2005. However, during the 2006 season, 85% (23/27) of monitored hens attempted to nest in the stable population, whereas only 46% (11/24) attempted to nest in the declining population. We also examined nest survival of 173 nest from 2001–2006 to understand the ecological process that influence productivity between the 2 population. Daily nest survival rate was 0.934 (95% CI: 0.919 to 0.947) for the stable population and 0.941 (95% CI: 0.924 to 0.955) for the declining population. RGWT production between areas of stable and declining populations seems to be influenced more by reproductive rates than by nest survival.