

Aspects of Predator Ecology and the Predation Process within a Longleaf Pine Forest

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Abstract

Predators are an important natural component of forested ecosystems. However, in the southeastern United States, habitat loss and fragmentation have resulted in the loss of many top carnivores, such as the red wolf and Florida panther. Because large carnivores are largely absent in the southeast, remaining predator communities are

dominated by smaller predators. The role of these smaller predators is poorly understood, and their ecology within longleaf pine-dominated systems has received little research attention. Here, the basic ecology of a variety of predator species is discussed. Finally, the concept that habitat serves as a template for the predation process is introduced as a potential tool for better understanding and managing predation.