

The Audubon Society of Missouri Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2007 ASM Graduate Research Scholarship. The \$2000 scholarship, made possible with the generosity of ASM members **Paul and Frances Bauer**, is awarded to a graduate student at a Missouri university or college doing research or field work in ornithology, or in an area of study that will directly benefit birds or bird habitat. The research/field work must be done in Missouri.

The 2007 ASM Graduate Research Scholarship is awarded to **W. Andrew Cox**, a PhD candidate in Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Andrew's graduate advisor is Dr. John Faaborg. Andrew's dissertation topic is entitled: "Identification of important nest predators and the factors that influence their contribution to overall predation rates in a Midwestern landscape."

Andrew's research will focus on how habitat fragmentation affects avian predator communities. Research will be conducted for three field seasons at six sites in central and south Missouri. The field sites include two sites in a largely contiguous forested area and four sites with moderate to low forest cover in a 10 km radius surrounding the study site. Twenty four constant surveillance video cameras will be used to:

1. Describe which species are the dominant nest predators for forest songbirds in a Midwestern landscape.
2. Determine whether the dominant predators in heavily forested areas remain important as the landscape becomes increasingly fragmented
3. Determine whether factors that influence nest predation rates also influence which predators are the most important contributors to overall predation rates.

The focal species are *Empidonax virescens* (Acadian Flycatcher) and *Passerina cyanea* (Indigo Bunting). Acadian Flycatcher is considered a conservation priority by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the data that Andrew proposes to collect relates directly to the stated strategies and desired outcomes listed in the Region 3 Fish and Wildlife Resource Conservation Priorities document. Other conservation priority species for which the patterns detected by this study will be relevant are *Hylocichla mustelina* (Wood Thrush) and *Helmitheros vermivorus* (Worm-eating Warbler), both of which have been observed nesting and/or singing at the proposed study sites. Andrew's research will provide a mechanistic understanding of observed population declines that will assist land managers in making decisions that will improve the way forests are managed for optimum breeding bird reproductive success.

The ASM Scholarship Committee: Sue Gustafson, Susan Hazelwood, and Brad Jacobs