

Society for Conservation Biology
North America Congress for Conservation Biology
July 13-16, 2014. Missoula, Montana

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Abstract Title: Divergence in sink contributions to population persistence

Population sinks present unique conservation challenges. The loss of animals in sinks can compromise persistence. Conversely, sinks can bolster population sizes, improving viability. To assess the contribution of sinks to regional persistence, we simulated the removal of sink habitats of three endangered species and measured changes in populations. Results suggest that sink contributions vary widely. Sinks can be detrimental, particularly in populations with traps or low inter-annual growth rates (e.g., Albertas Ords kangaroo rat), or benign in robust populations (e.g., black-capped vireos with low parasitism). Sinks, including traps, can be crucial in delaying declines when there are few sources (e.g., vireos with high parasitism). The roles of sinks can also be nuanced, with sinks supporting larger, more variable populations that are subject to greater extinction risk (e.g., northern spotted owls). Actions based on assumptions that sinks are generally harmful, or generally helpful, may risk undermining conservation efforts for declining populations.