

ASSOCIATION OF BIRDS WITH FALLEN TIMBER IN BOX-IRONBARK FOREST OF CENTRAL VICTORIA

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The potential role of fallen timber in influencing avian microhabitat use was examined in box-ironbark forests in the Dunolly forest block in central Victoria, Australia. Six sites with relatively high levels of fallen timber across each site were selected. Within each site, areas with ('debris' areas) and without ('empty' areas) piles of fallen timber were delineated. In another six sites with virtually no fallen timber, comparable areas without fallen timber also were selected. We found that birds occurred more frequently and in greater diversity in areas with fallen timber than in areas without fallen timber, irrespective of whether the latter were in sites where the overall availability of timber was high or low. Thus, the occurrence of piles of fallen timber appears to influence the spatial location of birds in the forests. We consider two explanations for this pattern, namely, food availability and shelter.