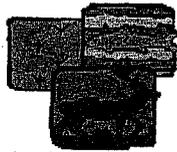


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Habitat Characteristics of Fall Blackbird Roosts

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In the Northern Great Plains, fall migrating blackbirds (*Icteridae*) often roost in cattail-dominated marshes. These blackbirds can cause more than \$10 million in damage to ripening sunflower fields. To help reduce the sunflower damage caused by blackbirds, wildlife managers use Rodeo, an aquatic herbicide, to decrease the amount of available roosting habitat and to disperse large blackbird roosts. During August and September of 1998 and 1999, we examined the physical characteristics of fall blackbird roosts in a portion of the sunflower growing region of North Dakota. Characteristics measured were size, water depth, cattail density, and cattail height. In 1998, a total of 20 marshes were observed including 11 active roosts (> 10,000 blackbirds) and 9 potential roosts (< 10,000 blackbirds). A MANOVA was used to test for a difference between the physical characteristics at active roosts and potential roosts. Water depth was the only measured characteristic for which a difference was detected ($P = 0.002$). When the same 20 marshes were analyzed in 1999, we were unable to detect any difference in the physical characteristics between these two types of roosts.



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