Habitat Characteristics of Fall Blackbird Roosts

Mark W. Lutman, Department of Zoology, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58105-5517; Mark.Lutman@ndsu.nodak.edu. George M. Linz, National Wildlife Research Center, Great Plains Field Station, Miriam Circle, Bismarck, ND 58501; George.M.Linz@usda.gov. William J. Bleier, Department of Zoology, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58105-5517; Bleier@plains.nodak.edu.

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.
The
62nd
Midwest
Fish and Wildlife Conference

ABSTRACTS

Published jointly by:
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fisheries
Division of Wildlife
Division of Ecological Services

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
North-Central Region

University of Minnesota
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife
Contents

Plenary sessions ........................................... iv

Symposia summaries ...................................... v

Abstracts: papers .......................................... 1

Abstracts: posters .......................................... 257

Conference committees ................................... 311

Past and future conferences ............................. 312