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SPATIO-TEMPORAL RESPONSE OF CHESTNUT-CAPPED BLACKBIRDS TO A RICE-WETLAND LANDSCAPE.

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We studied Chestnut-capped Blackbirds (Agelaius ruficapillus) movements in a rice-wetland landscape in Argentina. Farmers consider this species detrimental for crop production and justify unreasonable pesticide applications, compromising rich biodiversity in surrounding wetlands. We determined habitat-use patterns, the importance of rice plots for breeding, roosting and foraging activities, and the effect of crop variety and crop management. Cultivated rice is a type of habitat intensively used for foraging and roosting, however, no economic damage was demonstrated. Marshes were used more frequently for breeding than other habitat types. Rice plot frequency use was not related to rice variety or maturation. Evidences suggests that birds may choose fields based on landscape features (e.g. proximity to breeding colonies).