

Blackbird Management and Research: Historical Approaches and Current Activities

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Managing Conflicts Involving Blackbirds

- Agricultural Impacts
- Human Health and Safety
- Endangered Species Protection



Agricultural Impacts

- Sweet Corn and Field Corn
- Sunflower (ripening)
- Rice (sprouting and mature)
- Feedlots and Dairies



Human Health and Safety

- Airport hazard management
 - Bird-aircraft collisions
- Disease management
 - Histoplasmosis
 - Bacterial diseases at livestock facilities
 - Commensal birds in industrial settings



Endangered Species Protection

- Localized trapping programs aimed at Brown-headed Cowbirds
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Black-capped Vireo
- Golden-cheeked Warbler



Major Control Efforts / Tools



Major Control Efforts / Tools

- PA-14 Surfactant (1974-1992)
 - Developed in 1960's as a roost spray
 - Mixed blackbird flocks targeted
 - 83 roost treatments over 19 years
 - Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama
 - RUBL <1% of total take (117,625 over 19 years, estimated)



Hicks Station, AR

Rome, GA





Piggott Roost, AR

Walnut Ridge, AR



Major Control Efforts / Tools

- PA-14 Surfactant (1974-1992)
 - Discontinued due to EPA registration expense
 - Effective for reducing local problems, especially near human-inhabited areas
 - No impact on overall regional populations as used.

Major Control Efforts / Tools (PA-14)

- Composition of Mortality in roosts treated with PA-14 where species composition was estimated (n = 47, 1974-1992)

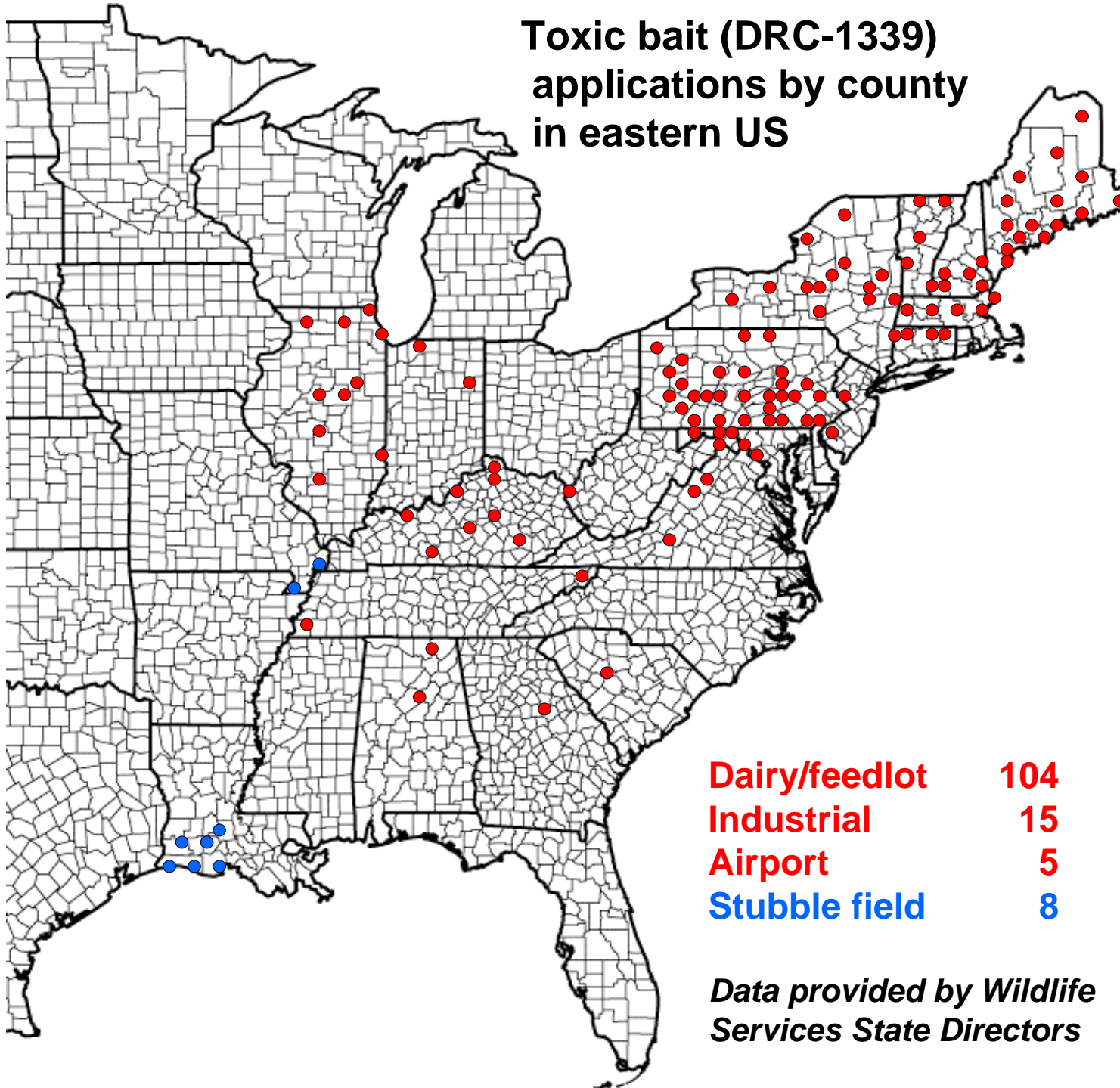
- COGR 48
- EUST 30
- RWBL 13
- BHCB 9
- **RUBL <1**



DRC 1339 Baiting

- Toxicant used to relieve local damage
 - Rice: TX, LA, AR, MO
 - Sunflowers: ND, SD
 - Feedlots: throughout Eastern US
 - Dairies: throughout Eastern US
- Extensive studies of non-target impacts, no mention of RUBL
- Crop settings applied on rice
- Dairies/feedlots applied on commercial feed

Toxic bait (DRC-1339) applications by county in eastern US



Dairy/feedlot	104
Industrial	15
Airport	5
Stubble field	8

*Data provided by Wildlife
Services State Directors*

Habitat Management

- Perch and roost removal and thinning (Airport applications)
- Cattail Management to remove RWBL roosts



Trapping (Decoy Traps)

- Blackbird strikes
 - Blackbirds/starlings involved in 1704 Bird Strikes 1990-2001.
 - About half involved starlings
 - Dense-bodied, flocking birds
- Trapping
 - Usually aimed at EUST
 - Peak strikes occur July to September
 - Nationwide



Current Blackbird Research and Management

Evaluation of Wildlife Food Plots, Repellents, and DRC 1339 Models for the Management of Blackbirds and Starlings in Sunflower Fields, Feedlots, and Dairies

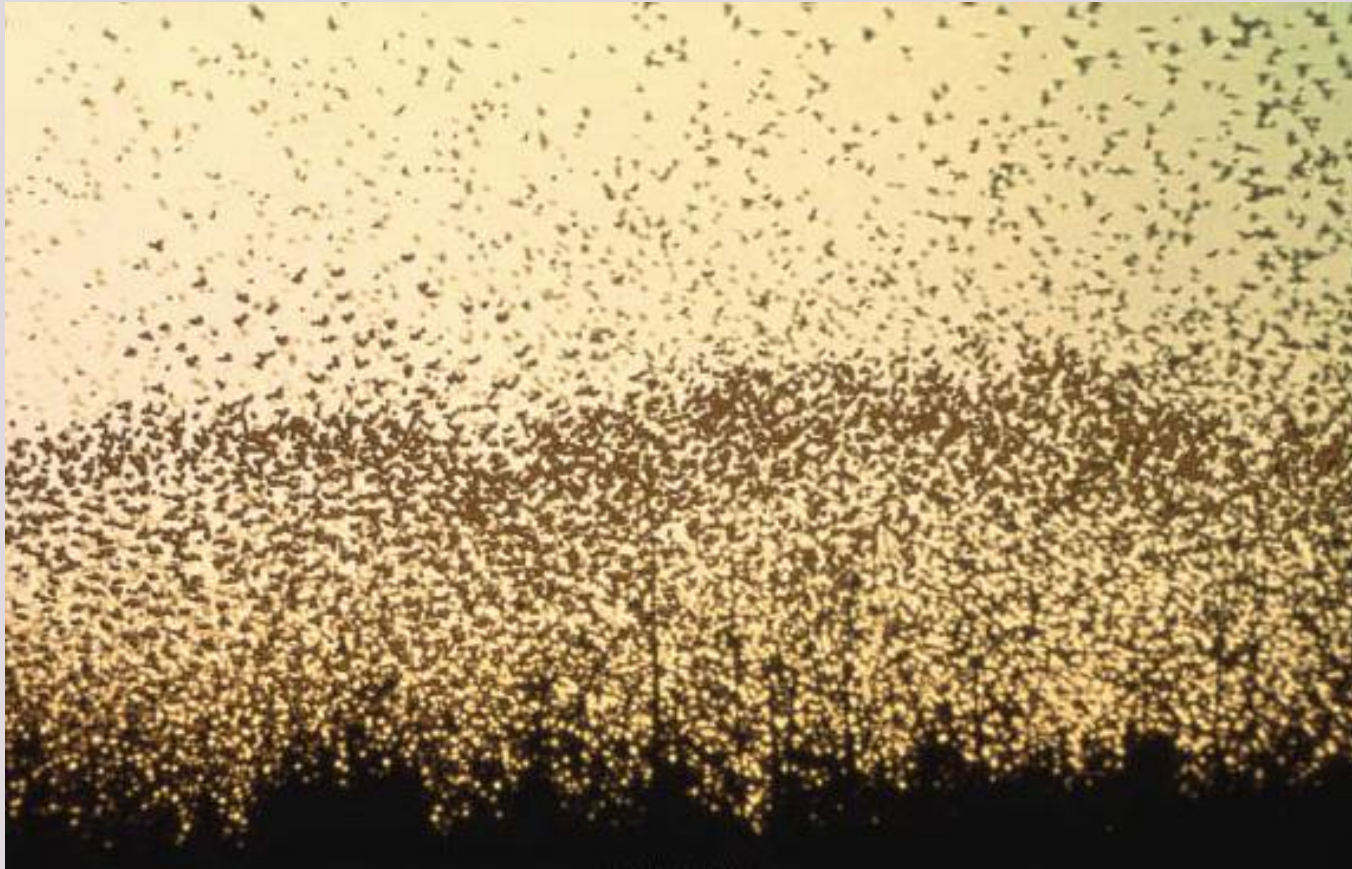
- Evaluate effectiveness of sunflower plots (Lure Crop) to reduce damage to nearby ripening sunflowers
- Identify chemical and tactile repellents for reducing blackbird and starling damage to sunflowers, feedlots, and dairies
- Determine effects of population density on reproduction and population status of Red-winged Blackbirds



Evaluation of Wildlife Food Plots, Repellents, and DRC 1339 Models for the Management of Blackbirds and Starlings in Sunflower Fields, Feedlots, and Dairies

- Determine criteria for selecting cattail habitats for management
- Develop models for predicting DRC-1339 take for blackbirds and starlings at feedlots and dairies
- Develop new DRC-1339 baits for specialized situations
- Determine effectiveness of potential wetting agents





Questions?