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Do Mourning Doves Disperse Seed of Tropical Spiderwort? J.R. CARTER\* and  
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The Federal Noxious Weed tropical spiderwort (*Commelina benghalensis* L.) (TSW) was virtually unknown as an agricultural pest in the southeastern United States five years ago. Recently, TSW has rapidly dispersed throughout much of southern Georgia where it now adversely affects peanuts, cotton and other crops. Despite the enormous implications for agriculture in Georgia and other areas of the southeastern United States, little is known about the dispersal of TSW. Birds are known agents of seed dispersal of many species and are suspected to spread seeds of TSW in the southeastern United States. Gut contents from mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*) taken in Grady County, Georgia, from 2003-2005 were examined for the presence of TSW seeds. Gut contents from six birds from 2003 showed a total of 30 TSW seeds. Contents from 3 of 11 birds taken during 2004 were positive for TSW and included a total of 116 TSW seeds ( $M=10.5$  seeds/bird), and contents from 9 of 14 birds taken

during 2005 were positive for TSW and included a total of 90 TSW seeds (M=6.4 seeds/bird). TSW seeds from gut contents were tested for viability with 2,3,5-tetrazolium chloride, and ~2% (N=99) were viable. While these results implicate mourning doves as likely dispersers of TSW seeds, additional research testing regurgitated and defecated seeds from captive birds is needed to gain a better understanding of the actual potential for mourning doves to disperse TSW seeds and the distances, rates, and levels of such dispersal.

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