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POSTER

Agricultural Significance of Seed Dispersal by Migratory Doves

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Invasive weeds can reduce crop yields in the agricultural industry. For larger seeds, birds can often serve as vectors in the proliferation and expansion in range of plants. In this study, the gut contents of sixty-four doves collected over four different years (2003 – 2006) were studied. Intact, morphologically similar seeds were separated from each gut collection for each dove and photographed by light microscopy and scanning electron microscopy. Preliminary results indicate that of the doves investigated; twenty-four different types of seeds were identified representing 24 different species of plants. In general, multiple different seeds were found in most doves investigated indicating doves are eating a wide variety of seeds. Preliminary seed identification of the different seed types is progressing and further analysis of the numbers and types of seeds found in each dove will be made with regard to the impact doves may have in spreading invasive weeds in the southeastern United States and the potential harm this can have in an agricultural environment.