

Research Note

BIRDS DEPREDATING ON RICE FIELDS IN PUERTO RICO

According to Vélez¹ and Pérez-Rivera and Vélez² there are about 40 species of exotic birds that have recently become wild in Puerto Rico. Among these are the Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*), the Canary-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus*), the Java Sparrow (*Padda orizivora*), the Spotted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) and the Tri-colored Mannikin (*Lonchura malacca*), all considered crop pests in their places of origin as well as in those places where they have been introduced.

Many of these exotics, as well as resident species are opportunists, and have taken advantage of the establishment of experimental rice fields on the island, consuming seed either in the rice fields or in the surroundings of the mill.

Table 1 shows a list of the bird species feeding upon rice. Of the 17 species listed 9 are exotic birds that may have escaped from pet shops or from homes. Of these, the Red Bishop (*Euplectes orix*) has been observed in groups of as many as 500 birds feeding on the experimental rice fields of Vega Baja. Flocks of 200 Tri-coloured Mannikin and the Hooded Weaver (*Lonchura cucullata*) have also been observed in the experimental rice fields in Gurabo.

Apparently, crop pest species such as the Java Sparrow and the Spotted Munia or Rice Bird have not reached all the experimental rice fields on the north coast. Nevertheless, they will reach them eventually, for they are expanding their range.

If these exotic birds are not soon properly controlled they may constitute a big problem for rice production in Puerto Rico.

Raúl A. Pérez-Rivera
Department of Biology
Humacao University College
University of Puerto Rico

¹ Vélez, M.J., 1977. Catálogo general de los nombres vulgares y científicos de la fauna puertorriqueña. Parte Primera: Los vertebrados. Science-Ciencia. 5.1:12-33.

² Pérez-Rivera, R., and Vélez, M.J., 1980. The proliferation of Psittaciformes in Puerto Rico and the problem they represent. VII Symposium of the Dep. Nat. Res. P.R. (In Press).

TABLE 1.—List of birds feeding upon rice fields in Puerto Rico

Scientific name	Common name	Status	Location of the sighting
<i>Zenaida aurita zenaida</i>	Zenaida Dove	Native	Gurabo ¹
<i>Columbina passerina portoricensis</i>	P. R. Ground Dove	Endemic	Gurabo ¹
<i>Amandava amandava</i>	Red Amandavat	Introduced	Gurabo and Lajas
<i>Lonchura cucullata cucullata</i>	Hooded Weaver Finch	Introduced	Gurabo and Lajas
<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	Common Indian Silverbill	Introduced	Vega Baja
<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	Tri-colored Mannikin	Introduced	Gurabo
<i>Padda orizivora</i>	Java Sparrow	Introduced	²
<i>Estrilda m. melpoda</i>	Orange-cheeked Waxbill	Introduced	Gurabo
<i>Estrilda troglodytes</i>	Red-eared Waxbill	Introduced	Gurabo
<i>Euplectes orix</i>	Red Bishop	Introduced	Vega Baja
<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Pin-tailed Whydah	Introduced	Gurabo
<i>Dolichonyx orizyvorus</i>	Bobolink	Migrant	Gurabo
<i>Quiscalus niger brachypterus</i>	Puerto Rican Grackle	Endemic	Gurabo and Vega Baja
<i>Molothrus bonariensis minimus</i>	Shiny Cowbird	Recent colonizer	Gurabo
<i>Tiaris bicolor omissa</i>	Black-faced Grassquit	Native	Gurabo
<i>Tiaris olivacea bryanti</i>	P. Rican Yellow-faced Grass- quit	Endemic	Gurabo
<i>Ammodramus savannarum borinquensis</i>	P.R. Grasshopper Sparrow	Endemic	Gurabo and Vega Baja

¹ Mainly eating spilled grain at rice mill.² Crop analysis of a bird collected in Santurce, P.R.

Errata

The *Journal of Agriculture of the University of Puerto Rico*, Vol. 65, No. 3, July 1981.

The title "**Use of Dairy Culls for Rearing Dairy Replacement for Beef**", page 282, should read "Use of Dairy Culls for Rearing Dairy Replacement or Beef."

"**Potential of Stylosanthes guianensis as a Forage Crop in the Humid Mountain Region of Puerto Rico**", page 289, second paragraph, line 2, should read "la producción media más alta"; line 6 should read "del 12 de abril al 29 de julio."

