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Recaptures of Second-year Brown-headed Cowbirds at Fort Hood, Texas

Garrett L. Norman

Richard M. Kostecke

Scott G. Summers

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News, Notes, Comments

Recaptures of Second-year Brown-headed Cowbirds at Fort Hood, Texas

Relatively few data have been collected on dispersal of Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) from their natal sites. However, the available data suggest that cowbirds often do not disperse far from their natal sites. The majority of cowbirds that have been banded during their hatch-year and recaptured during the subsequent breeding season have been recaptured <19 km (11.8 mi) from their natal site (Payne 1976, Elliott 1978, Dolbeer 1982). Recent band-recapture data from Fort Hood Military Reservation, TX, exhibit a similar pattern.

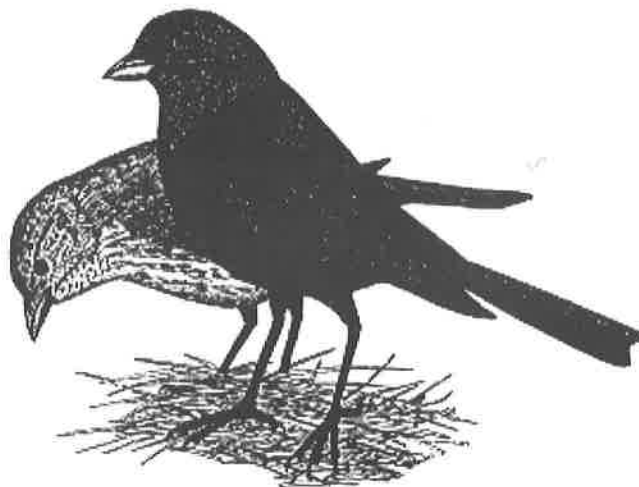
Fort Hood has an intensive cowbird trapping program to protect endangered songbirds (see Kostecke et al. 2005). During the 2005 breeding season, 83 (34 female, 49 male) hatch-year cowbirds were trapped. Currently, federal regulations prohibit the euthanization of hatch-year cowbirds. Therefore, we banded and released all of these cowbirds. Early (29 Mar through 12 Apr) in the 2006 breeding season, 6% (n = 5) of these cowbirds were recaptured as second-year adults. Mean distance between banding and recapture sites was 6.76 km (4 mi) \pm 8.65 SD. Distance between banding and recapture sites ranged from 0.0 to 21.7 km (17.4 mi). Mean distance between banding and recapture sites was 2.60 km (1.6 mi) \pm 3.01 SD for males (n = 3) and 13.00 km (8 mi) \pm 12.30 SD for females (n = 2).

Cowbirds were trapped and banded under Texas state permit SPR-0204-356 and federal permits 22998-H and MB096751-0. Funding was provided by the U.S. Army through cooperative agreement DPW-ENV-02-A-0001 with The Nature Conservancy. The content of this manuscript does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the government and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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**Garrett L. Norman,
Richard M. Kostecke and
Scott G. Summers**
The Nature Conservancy
P.O. Box 5190
Fort Hood, TX 76544-0190



Brown-headed Cowbirds
by George West