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WATER BIRDS AND RICE CULTIVATION IN WEST AFRICA

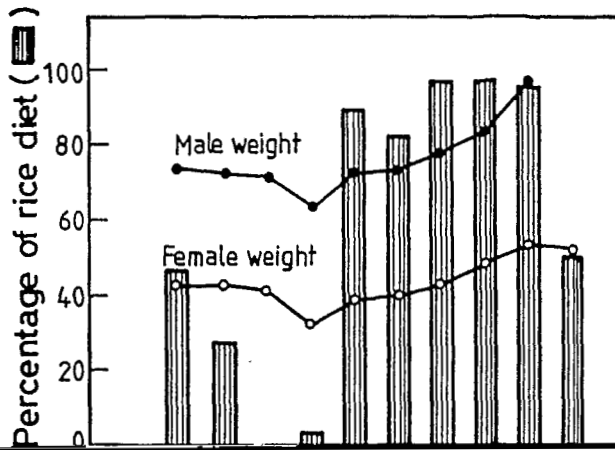
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SUMMARY

Tréca, B. 1992. Water birds and rice cultivation in West Africa. *Proc. VII Pan-Afr. Orn. Congr.* 297-301.

Studies carried out in Senegal and Mali showed that complaints by farmers of losses of rice due to feeding by water birds may be justified. Losses can amount to as much as 10 or 15% of the crop but are usually less than this. The amount of loss varies enormously from one year, from one region, and from one field to another. Data are provided on how losses occur and on the bird species responsible. Methods for reducing losses are discussed.



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CONCLUSIONS

These studies on water birds and the losses that they cause have allowed the best methods of reducing losses to be identified. These include preventing birds from coming to feed at fields by proper cultural methods which ensure that rice fields are as clean as possible. The Sahelian countries aim to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. While larger cultivated areas cannot be created in all regions, increased yields can be achieved from the original fields. In the particular case of rice it would be far better to improve productivity in existing irrigated areas than to attempt to create new ones.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was financed mainly by ORSTOM and by the FAO under project PNUD/FAO-RAF/81/022. Thanks are also due to the various projects which allowed the research to be undertaken in their areas (SAED, Rice Development Project Mopti, Rice Development Project Segou, Office du Niger and Action Riz-Sorgho). The Departments of Water and Forests in Senegal and in Mali gave the necessary permission to carry out this work. OCLALAV and the Plant Protection Services of both countries provided information on the complaints of farmers. Gratitude is expressed to all the farmers and extension agents who were always willing to provide me with assistance in my field work. Trevor Wilson translated the original French version of this text into English.