

# Management of birds in rice fields

## Recognize the problem

In Sierra Leone, birds, especially the weaver birds and sparrows, are recognised as troublesome animals that cause serious damage to rice plants. Birds damage rice from the time of planting the seeds in the field to maturation. The entire crop field can be spoilt if the population of birds grows.

## Background

Birds belong to the class of animals with backbones. The birds that feed on crops in Sierra Leone are usually found in large groups. The adult male weaver bird has a mixture of brilliant red-yellow and black. The female weaver bird is dull in colour comparison with the male. The beak (mouth of the bird) is short and pointed. The male bird is more destructive than the female bird. Birds learn quickly so their management requires an integrated approach using different methods to scare them, etc.

Weaverbird nests along the side of the road. (Photo by M. Bateman)



## Management

- Use small stones and slings made of raffia, palm leaves or plastic ropes
- Use scarecrows, made of sticks shaped like a human being and covered with worn-out shirts (usually red or white colour). The colour of the cloth should be bright to be clearly seen in the field. Many of such scarecrows should be placed at more than one location in and around the rice field.
- Use bush rope on poles with small pans/tins filled with stones/pebbles and tied to the rope at strategic points. Shaking the rope from one point will make a sound which will drive the birds away.
- Clapping and shouting loudly also drives birds away. This method however requires more than one person.
- The use of bird nets has been successful in trapping birds. Trapped birds are then collected and killed (to eat).
- Use a plant (Hollie-mende, Poran-Mandingo/Koranko) that produces a sticky gum (like rubber or glue). Birds sitting on such plants will be trapped due to the secretion of the sticky gum.
- Regular visits to the farm every two to four days will help prevent birds from feeding on the rice grains.

Scientific name(s) > e.g. Family **Ploceidae**

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Sierra Leone



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