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EVIDENCE FOR LEAFY SPURGE
DISSEMINATION BY BIRDS?¹

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Questions are often raised concerning the spread of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*; *E. virgata*; and their complex) by birds, particularly, since this noxious weed is often found in inaccessible places and beneath lines and other apparent perches. In a study in 1936, Bakke reported no viable seed passed through the digestive tract of mourning doves. However, that does not rule other passerine birds or dissemination by regurgitation when feeding young.

A sharptail grouse dropping, weighing 12.4 grams, was collected in September 1979 in western North Dakota in a small stand of little blue stem (*Andropogon* spp.) immediately adjacent to an extensive infestation of leafy spurge.³ Four-hundred-ninety seeds were cleared from the dropping with 200 seeds identified as "probably" spurge. Standard germination tests were run on all seeds. Fifty-one seeds germinated; two were leafy spurge and the remaining 49 were various forbs with no grasses or grasslikes germinating.

(Records are on file at the Rocky Mt. For. & Range Expt. Sta., Forestry Laboratory, School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, S. Dak.)

Literature Cited

Bakke, A. L. 1936. Leafy spurge, *Euphorbia esula* L. Iowa Agr. Expt. Sta. Res. Bull. 198.

¹Noble, Daniel L. 1980. Evidence for leafy spurge dissemination by sharptail grouse. Res. Note in progress.

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