

Granivorous birds



Fig 1. Village weaver bird *Ploceus cucullatus* di Truus & Zoo

Introduction

- Birds are found in the bush, grasslands, and savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa.
- Different species of granivorous birds have different longevities.
- Flocks of young birds are often extremely mobile, moving distances of more than 50 km from their breeding area.

Geographical Distribution

- Birds are important as pests in all rice growing areas of the East Africa region.

Damage on rice crop

- During planting, the birds dig up and eat seeds. Significant damage inflicted by birds is feeding on grains from the 'milky' stage to harvest time.
- The birds cause extensive grain loss in rice.



Fig 2. Empty panicles from bird damage at milky stages (RiceMAPP)

Management Strategies

Cultural control

- Use human scarer's, scarecrows and scaring devices to keep birds off the rice crop.
- Use of different kinds of nets to cover rice to deter the birds.
- Plant trap crops early, close to trees and near power lines to minimize bird damage to the main crop.
- IRRI-Tape Bird Deterrent to keep unwanted bird pests. The tape has a reptilian sheen that scares away birds.



Fig 3. Bird scaring at Mwea (RiceMAPP)