



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS

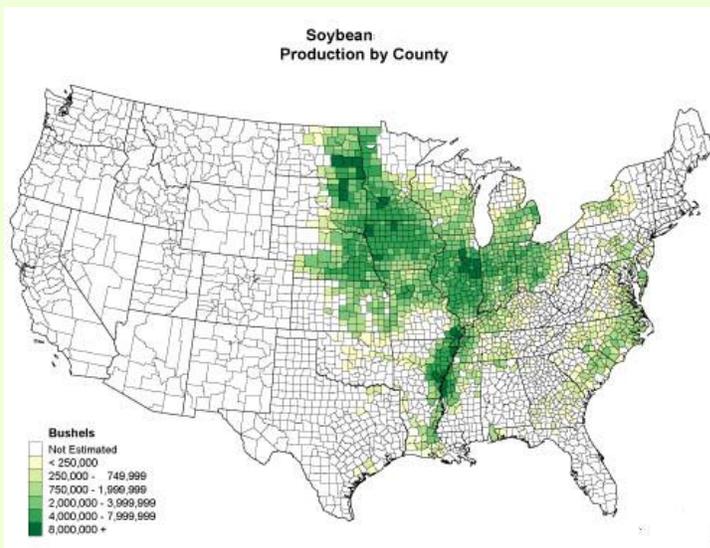


n approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing

1 April 2014

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Bird-compatible Soy Developed *New strain being released in US*



Early today, 1 April 2014, the American Soybean Growers Association (ASGA) released news of two new related strains of soy that will be "bird-habitat compatible" according to soy agronomists at the association's research center.

Previously, the crop has been criticized as "a virtual wasteland for birds," but the new release indicated that experimental fields in parts of South Dakota and North Carolina - two very different area - have produced remarkable results for native birdlife.

Some of these soy plantings - depending on soil types - will require a bit more water, but at the same time, they produce beans at a level that is at least 12.6% larger than regular soybeans. There are two types of new-style soy: Type 666A, which is "moister" than the second experimental strain, Type 666B.

Type 666A, tested in northern sections of South Dakota, sustained breeding numbers of Willet, Upland Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Grasshopper Sparrow, and a few species of waterfowl, including Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail. The drier Type 666B, tested in the East, favored Prairie Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and, at times and at edges, surprising Yellow-breasted Chat.

Both types are harvested in the late fall, with Type 666A often providing shorebird habitat in the interim. Astounding flocks of migrating Bobolinks in Type 666B fields in North Carolina can be viewed [here](#).

Curiously, both soy types provide excellent nesting cover for numerous bird species, but it is a late-season odor from the soy fields that seem to have an attraction to migrating field-oriented songbirds. This phenomenon has yet to be fully explained by the researchers.

Clearly, the birds are not consuming the soybeans, but they use the fields for cover and for "play."

According to Dr. Byron Fong, one of the lead researchers for the ASGA, "our model fields have been for many birds like catnip is for cats." (Obviously, Dr. Fong missed the irony of his analogy.)

Still, considering the "range" (see map above) of soybean production in the US - from the Northern Great Plains, to the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, to the Southeast Coastal Plain - the impact on birdlife could be remarkable, using either Type 666A or Type 666B soy plantings.

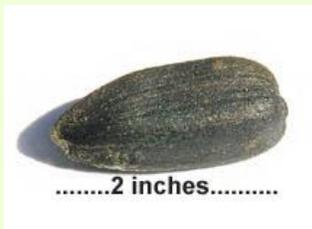
ASGA soy-spokespersons boasted that American rice would be "left in the dust" in its "boastful claims" of bird-compatibility .

Meanwhile, the American Rice Federation, based in the Central Valley of California had little comment, but Dr. Paul Butler, the ARF sustainability chief, stated, "Well, if these folk can provide a 'bird-friendly' soy, more power to them."

The winter-wheat lobby, which had been touting their crop as compatible for a number of nesting birds (e.g., some important ducks, Ring-necked Pheasant, Willet, and Long-billed Curlew), could not be reached for comment.

New Sunflower Seed to Arrive

May revolutionize backyard bird feeding



Last week, word spread from bird-seed importers dealing with Russia (mostly out of Krasnodor), that a new and robust sunflower seed will soon be available in the U.S and Canada. The "giant black" variety may constitute the most significant change in bird feeding since the spread of black-oil sunflower on this side of the Atlantic at the start of the 1970s.

Giant black sunflower is a two-inch-sized seed, packed with protein, almost irresistible to feeder visitors in sample tests. Still, its use may require re-design of popular tube feeders, currently with insufficiently sized openings.

The seed is reportedly enough to satisfy the appetite of three chickadees at one feeder-visit. Such small birds are, however, unable to fly off with these large seeds. (They must remain at the feeder to consume the seed-meat, making the use of the seed particularly attractive to feeder-watchers.) In some respect, the giant blacks are better suited for jays and, perhaps, some grosbeaks, with these birds being able to fly off with the large seeds.

The giant blacks may be grown in North Dakota next. This has raised new concerns that this breakthrough sunflower may replace corn as the new crop of choice to usurp native prairie. Experimentation is also now being conducted over the sunflower-ethanol qualities of the new seed.

Bird photography produces amazing results

The spread of digital photography has revolutionized the way wildlife and bird photographers approach the outdoors.

The mere satisfaction-level of the pastime is hard to measure, but the degree to which photos are shared - almost instantaneously- is remarkable.

While you may have received many astounding nature photographs over the years, a recent photo of a Falcon perched in a tree is probably the most amazing nature shot that you will ever see. Perhaps you've already seen this Falcon [photo](#), but you will surely appreciate it once again.

Seasonal Notes

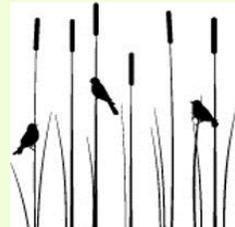
ABC - The fine folks at the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) regularly produce an excellent "Bird of the Week" profile, focusing on a species that deserves some concern in the Americas. A few of the recent North American birds profiled have been Whooping Crane, American Woodcock, Harlequin Duck, and Hermit Thrush. Another species profiled at this time last year certainly deserves additional attention at this season. It can be found [here](#).

PLJV - The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is one of the 18 Migratory Bird Habitat Joint Ventures doing exemplary work to save birds and bird habitat. Their most recent *Playa Post* was released this morning, with a special emphasis on human dimensions aspects of Burrowing Owl conservation. You may want to consider this particular [breakthrough approach](#).

Words to Consider:

"The conservation movement is a breeding ground of communists and other subversives. We intend to clean them out, even if it means rounding up every bird watcher in the country."

- John N. Mitchell, U.S. Attorney General, 1969 - 1972



For More Information:

If you wish, you can contact GBP concerning your avitourism interests, site and trail/byway evaluations, psychic channeling sessions for extinct bird species, and group presentations. More details [here](#).

