

SEPTEMBER 7th, 2011

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

RESPONSE TO LARRY BARNETT

SONOMA VALLEY SUN

SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

Myth–Busting DDT and Birds

Barnett is INCORRECT about a multitude of issues, but we decided to focus principally upon his ALLEGATION that « *pesticide DDT was killing bird populations* ».

This is NOT TRUE !

Quotations

According to author and scientist Michael Crichton in 2003 —

« *I can tell you that DDT [...] did not cause birds to die, and should never have been banned. [...] Banning DDT is one of the most disgraceful episodes in the Twentieth Century history of America.* »

According to a statement from Administrative Judge of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1972 —

« *DDT [...] does NOT have a deleterious effect on freshwater fish, estuarine organisms, wild birds, or other wildlife.* »

Allegations Concerning DDT

The public must be reminded that birds WERE NOT routinely killed by the use of DDT.

This is a MYTH !

Allegedly, DDT harmed bird reproduction by thinning their egg–shells.

This seemingly led to the decline of the Bald Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon.

No doubt, the placement of these birds on endangered lists was a strong factor leading to the U.S. removal of DDT in 1972, despite the statement from an Administrative Judge of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Alleged Effect of DDT on Birds

Beginning in the 1950s, DDT was used on a massive scale to control the insect vectors of the Dutch Elm Disease, as well as the larvae of the Gypsy Moth and the Spruce Budworm.

Wherever DDT was used, some consequences were observed — this usually involved a noticeable reduction in bird activity, or a change in their habits.

Some people have commented that a reduction in bird activity after an application of DDT could mean several things.

Using DDT would remove a food source from the birds.

This would lead to the birds flying elsewhere for food.

It would not necessarily mean that DDT was killing birds.

The Disgraceful and Misleading Wurster Article

In 1965, an article was repeated in each of the magazines « Ecology » and « Science » regarding the alleged death of certain bird species following DDT applications for Dutch Elm Disease in Hanover, New Hampshire.

The author was Charles Frederick Wurster Junior.

Wurster ALLEGED that —

« Severe mortality of both resident and migrant birds occurred in Hanover during spring 1963, and the evidence IMPLICATES DDT as its cause. » (Emphasis our own.)

This was not necessarily an exhaustive study — it was merely a visual comparison between Hanover, Vermont, as well as Norwich, Vermont, which itself was never sprayed with DDT.

A mere 151 dead birds were found in Hanover, 10 in Norwich, and the feeding habits of some birds APPEARED changed.

Incredibly, the dead birds were not always analyzed for traces of DDT.

Not surprisingly, DDT was held accountable !

Who was Charles Frederick Wurster Junior ?

The DISGRACEFUL AND MISLEADING ARTICLE discussed in the preceding segment was co-written by Enviro-Maniac Charles Frederick Wurster Junior.

Wurster eventually became a co-founder and « *volunteer scientist* » for the « *Environmental Defense Fund* » (E.D.F.) beginning in 1967.

E.D.F. was the Anti-Pesticide Organization that instigated a major campaign against DDT.

However, the intentions of this organization may not have been pure-at-heart.

Damning Statement from Wurster

On October 5th, 1969, Anti-Pesticide Activist Charles Frederick Wurster Junior made the following damning statement in the « *Seattle Times* » —

« If the environmentalists win on DDT, they will achieve, and probably retain in other environmental issues, a level of authority they have never had before. In a sense, then, much more is at stake than DDT. »

Clearly, Anti-Pesticide Organizations used DDT as a means to increase their power.

There may never have been a bird issue !

Where Were the Dead Birds ?

In fact, there appear to be NO valid scientific reports of « *bird carcasses littering the countryside* » following the application of DDT.

Let's not forget that during the « *DDT years* » (1941–1972), approximately 1,350,000,000 pounds of DDT was used domestically in the United States.

If the Anti–Pesticide Movement was correct about DDT and its effect on birds, where were the thousands of dead bodies ?

Where were the bodies !?!?

We are not the only people that have noticed this !

So did Michael Crichton.

The Wisdom of Michael Crichton

Michael Crichton was the famous author who wrote books like « *State of Fear* » and « *Jurassic Park* ».

Crichton was also a scientist and researcher.

In 2003, Crichton made following remarks —

« I can tell you that DDT [...] did not cause birds to die, and should never have been banned. [...] Banning DDT is one of the most disgraceful episodes in the Twentieth Century history of America. »

The ALLEGED Effect of DDT on Bald Eagles

And what about the effect of DDT on Bald Eagles ?

During the sixteen–year period (1961–1977) representing much of the end of the « *DDT years* », a mere TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY–SIX Bald Eagles were found dead by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

The biologists who analyzed the dead eagles reported NO adverse effects caused by DDT or its metabolites.

The Anti–Pesticide Movement has often given the public the FALSE AND FRAUDULENT IMPRESSION that thousands of Bald Eagles died while DDT was in use.

This is NOT TRUE !

DDT killing Bald Eagles is a MYTH !

As a matter of fact, early in the Twentieth Century, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of these birds were destroyed, but not because of DDT.

A WHOPPING ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN THOUSAND were calculatedly slaughtered by the State of Alaska between 1917 and 1942.

Government-sponsored exterminations seem to have killed more Bald Eagles than DDT allegedly did.

Everyone should maintain some perspective on this matter.

The allegations concerning DDT are NOT TRUE !

For more information, please go to the Pesticide Truths web-site ...

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William H. Gathercole and Norah G

National Organization Responding Against HUJE that seek to harm the Green Space Industry (NORAHG)

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