

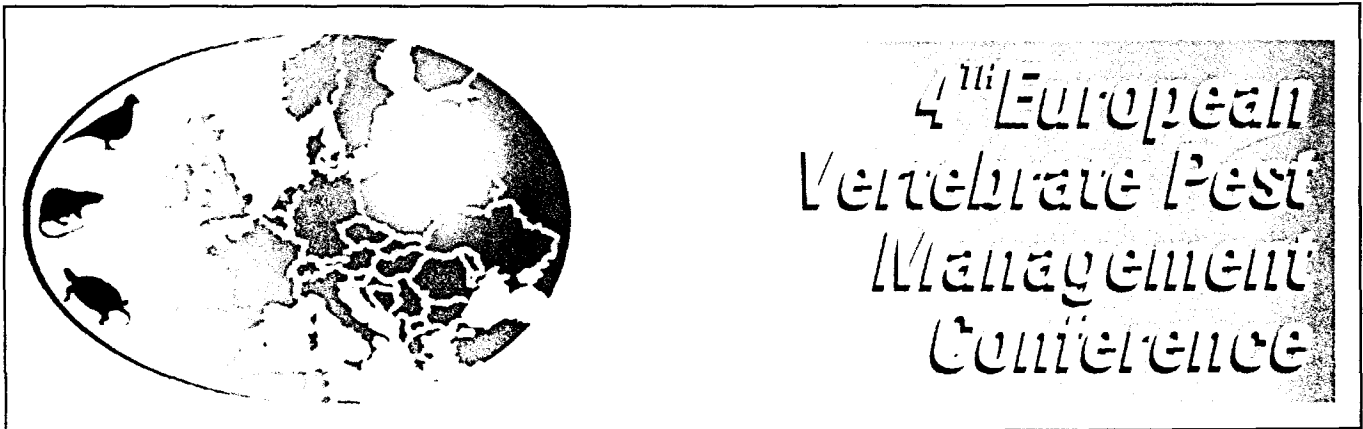
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Scientific Program and Book of Abstracts

Effectiveness of “Helikite” for scaring wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus* L.) from sprouting cereals

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Many kinds of visual tools are used for scaring birds from agricultural crops. Most of them are effective only for short periods and in small areas, since habituation generally occurs after few days due to immobility of this kind of systems.

For these reasons we tested “Helikite”, a combination of a special kite and a disposable helium filled mylar balloon, for scaring Wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus* L.) in sprouting barley fields.

The test was carried out in a farm located within the Migliarino, S.Rossore, Massaciuccoli -Natural Park, Pisa (Italy). Wood pigeons were daily censused in two fields of 24 and 21 hectares each with similar characteristics (woodland and poplars along two continuous sides) and with a distance of about 700 m each other. Fields were daily monitored during and after barley seeding and the average daily bird landing was similar in the two fields and don't statistically differ (268.1 vs 327.6). After 19 days of observations (when barley started to sprout) we put two helikites in one field (treated) and none in the other (control).

In the control field an average daily presence of 500.8 wood pigeons were observed during the following 30 days of observations, while only 2.2 birds were seen in the “helikited” field ($P < 0.0001$).

The results indicate that “Helikite” should be an effective tool to prevent Wood pigeons damage in sprouting cereals in large areas.

Census of Wood pigeons presence (*Columba palumbus* L.) in sprouting barley fields.

| Periods | Days | Helikite field | | Control field | | Two tailed P value |
|----------------|------|----------------|--------|---------------|-------|--------------------|
| | | Avg n | St dev | Avg n | S D | |
| Pre-treatment | 19 | 268.1 | 286.1 | 327.6 | 296.6 | 0.5326 n.s. |
| Post-treatment | 30 | 500.8 | 438.4 | 2.2 | 7.704 | < 0.0001 *** |

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