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Conservation Notes

Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our North Dakota.

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Insecticides Pose Threats-part 2

Last month (CN#64) we reported environmental concerns on the widespread use of Neonicotinoids or neonics to combat insect pests. Additional data and studies further define the problem. A 2019 study in Minnesota found 61 percent of nearly 800 deer sampled contained neonics in their spleens. A 2020 University of Illinois study correlated increasing usage of neonics to 4 percent and 3 percent declines, respectively, in grassland and insectivorous birds. In Japan, neonic treatment of rice fields caused plankton populations in an adjacent lake to plummet, and the dependent smelt and eel populations collapsed. A Pennsylvania State University study demonstrated that as little as 2 percent of the neonic pesticide applied to seed remain with the plant; the rest, being water soluble, is absorbed in the soil and washes or leaches into the ground water, streams, and lakes.

Insect pollinators contribute \$34 billion annually to the US economy. Likewise, declining bird populations allow insect pest numbers to increase. Wildlife and water quality are critical indicators of the safety of our environment. The widespread occurrence of neonic in the environment should be a red flag and requires our immediate attention and resolution.

Ag chemicals are useful for a variety of crop purposes. Neonic are one class of ag chemicals that are widely used by ag producers. But their widespread contamination in the environment beyond their crop treatment is particularly toxic for fish, wildlife, and pollinators. Therefore, they should be phased out.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation(memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (www.ndctws.wordpress.com)-articles.