

Quarterly Report: Monitoring Potential Cadmium Levels in Avian Tissues Associated with the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project – March 2014

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The initial quarter of the project was largely organizational, acquiring needed equipment and supplies, and permits in advance of the upcoming sampling period. A bird handling protocol relative to this project was submitted to and approved by the University of Georgia's IACUC (AUP# A2013 12-018-Y1-A0). Modifications of existing scientific collecting permits have also been applied for: USFWS Scientific Collecting (SREL's existing permit MB65214A-0) and South Carolina Scientific Collecting (SREL's existing permit #04-214).

On March 10, 2014, project personnel toured the DMCA's with Ellie Covington (USACE Biologist) in advance of the proposed April bird sampling period, observing a mixture of late winter and early spring sentinel species including Mottled Duck, Northern Shoveler, Red-winged Blackbird, Mourning Dove, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Northern Mockingbird, Song Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow. Recent rainfall resulted in only limited standing water in DMCA's 14a and 14b and thus most of the waterfowl were observed in other nearby impoundments (12 & 13). On-site habitats were also explored for potential bird capture sites and avian prey base. Afterward, project personnel met with USACE personnel in Savannah for introductions and to discuss project status and operational procedures (e.g.; property access).



Figure 1. Red-winged blackbirds are a sentinel species that occurs on the DMCA's throughout the year.