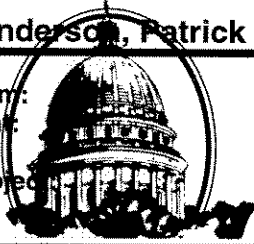


205

Henderson, Patrick

State Senator

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:



Legislative Hotline
Friday, June 02, 2000 10:27 AM
Sen. Baumgart
State Capitol: P. O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • Telephone (608) 266-2056
Legislative Hotline Message
Hotline: 1-888-295-8750 • E-Mail: sen.baumgart@legis.state.wi.us

James R. Baumgart

Senator Baumgart;

You have received a new call from the Legislative Hotline from:

Agnes Punstmann
3022 S 10th St
Sheboygan, WI 53081
(920) 458-2502

Date: 06/02/2000
Time: 10:27:28

NO CALL REQUIRED

opposed to dove hunting. there isnt a lot of meat on a dove

Call Received by erp Senate Page

Henderson, Patrick

From: Clair Wiederholt [cwieder@itis.com]
Sent: Saturday, June 03, 2000 8:49 PM
To: Sen.Baumgart@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Hunting of Mourning Doves

Dear Senator Baumgart:

Please oppose the hunting of mourning doves. We are appalled that our symbol of peace that has minimal food value would be become the target of hunter's bullets. We attended the Conservation Congress, but could not vote against the hunt because they had run out of ballots.

Thank you,

Clair Wiederholt
Tonee Mosher

Henderson, Patrick

From: sisters of st. agnes [csamh@vbe.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 04, 2000 11:36 AM
To: Sen.Baumgart@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Dove legislation

Dear Sen. Baumgart:

I am writing to object to legislation for killing of the mourning doves in the state of Wi. It is of no value to the hunter or the state. Is there a hidden need for violence and killing in promoting the killing of the peace bird? Kindly oppose any such bill for killing and hunting of the mourning dove. Thank you.

Sincerely,

S. Mary Christopher Esler

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 2000

FILE REF: 8300

TO: Tom Hauge – WM/4

FROM: Jim Kurtz – LS/5

SUBJECT: Authority for Administrative Rule On Mourning Dove Season

The Department has authority to “establish and maintain open and closed seasons for fish and game” by administrative rule according to s. 29.014, Stats. “Game” is defined as including “all varieties of wild mammals or birds” including doves, according to s. 29.001(33), Stats.

In 1971 the State Legislature passed SB 422 which designated the mourning dove as the State “symbol of peace”, s. 1.10, Stats., and removed mourning doves from the list of game birds in s. 29.001(39), Stats. No provisions protecting doves from hunting were included in this legislation, and thus it did not affect the Department’s authority to establish a mourning dove season by rule under s. 29.014, Stats.

The 1971 legislation modified the term “game bird” as that term is used in ch. 29, Stats, primarily in the “game bird and animal farm” statute, s. 29.867, Stats. The term “game bird” is not used in any section of ch. 29 that refers to the Department’s authority to establish seasons by administrative rule. However, even if doves were considered a nongame species under s. 29.001(60), Stats., the Department has authority to establish by rule seasons or “limitations relating to the taking, possession, transportation, processing and sale or offer to sale, of nongame species”, according to s. 29.039, Stats.

When the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act went into effect in 1918, migratory birds, including doves, became protected except under the allowable seasons and harvest restrictions established annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Act. A mourning dove season has been continually offered to the States, since 1918, but Wisconsin has not chosen to adopt such a season. The current Wisconsin dove hunting proposal complies with what is allowed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Wisconsin.

In summary, the above state statutes authorize the Department to establish a mourning dove season by administrative rule and the 1971 state symbol of peace legislation does not affect the Department’s authority in that regard. Department attorneys have consulted with attorneys at Legislative Council who are in agreement with this opinion.

CC: George Meyer – AD/5

June 5, 2000
935 10th Ave N #E
Onalaska, WI 54650

Senator James Baumgart
1419 N. 16th St.
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Dear Mr. Baumgart,

"I tremble for my species when I reflect God is just."

When Thomas Jefferson echoed those words in his book, "Notes on the State Of Virginia," he was commenting on the injustice of slavery. I doubt if he would have spared those words if he were to write, "Notes on the State of Wisconsin." It's troubling that Wisconsin's Bird of Peace, the Mourning Dove, is also about to be dealt a grave injustice for the sole purpose, "They taste good," in Duwayne Johnsrud's words.

According to the state administrative code NR10.02, there are only 12 birds that live in this state that are fully protected from being hunted. Yet there are some residents of the state who believe this is 12 too many. How many non-human animals do we have to kill to satisfy our insatiable killing appetite? Even Governor Thompson stated, "We have enough animals already on the hunt list." "We don't need to add the Mourning Dove."

It's disturbing that we have a DNR board and department that is not dedicated to preserving natural resources – among them wildlife – at all. It is a bunch of good old boys resolved in preserving the desires of the Conservation Congress. It's rare when a proposal concerning wildlife isn't about the opportunity to kill them. At no time has there been an attempt to remove a non-endangered animal from the hunt list. The assertion that there is a mad conspiracy to deprive hunters of their killing ways is simply without foundation; unless they are referring to the words of the Biblical prophets, "They will beat their guns into plowshares because they have full knowledge of the Lord."

Rather than letting the Mourning Dove live in peace; George Meyer is more concerned with instituting conservation practices through news headlines that give the illusion of sound biology. In reality they are nothing more than reintroducing or nurturing species until those species begin reproducing and behaving in the ways they behaved before they were hunted to near extinction – in order to give people the chance to kill them.

Sadly, one legislator's assistant told me that the DNR can get away with pretty much with what they want because of the carte blanche entrusted by elected officials to the DNR board. The latest attempts to hunt our Bird of Peace shows just how one sided the DNR board is. Their myopic favoritism was further exemplified when they demanded the Wolf Committee establish a wolf hunt as part of the management plan despite the prematurity of such an idea. But because the Conservation Congress wanted another animal to kill, they were more than willing to oblige.

The proponents of a Mourning Dove hunt are simply on the wrong side. They are on the wrong side of morality. They are on the wrong side of basic human decency. The thought of putting Wisconsin's State Bird of Peace on the hunt list is simply embarrassing not only to non-hunters, but to the vast majority of hunters who stayed away from the spring hearings.

Wisconsin politics can cower to the few or it can exemplify bold progressive leadership. 23,000+ petitioners and another 6,000 who attended the spring meetings and voted against the Dove hunt want you do the right thing. Let's have the headlines read, "Wisconsin Will Not Slaughter It's Bird of Peace." Turning the lives of the state's Bird of Peace over to the hands of a few target practice seekers will hardly be a defense in light of Thomas Jefferson's words.

Thank you for reading my letter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Randy Albert

Blazel, Ted

From: AnimalObsession@aol.com
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2000 8:18 PM
To: undisclosed-recipients
Subject: Attention: Wisconsin Resident Request

Please do not support the Mourning Dove Hunting Season. As a WI resident I find it appalling that people want to shoot this in the supposed name of "sport". Mourning Doves yield approximately 1 ounce of meat. This is hardly a "sport". Hunters already have a wide variety of game animals to hunt it is not necessary to go after this symbol of peace.

Sincerely,

Shannon M. Van
804 S 17th Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220-5006

June 13, 2000

Shannon Van
804 South 17th Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220-5006

Dear Ms. Van:

Thank you for letting me know about your opposition to the hunting of mourning doves in Wisconsin.

As you know, this proposal has now been endorsed overwhelmingly by the Conservation Congress in meetings held in every county throughout Wisconsin and by the Department of Natural Resources Board. A public hearing has been scheduled for June 21st by the Senate Agriculture, Environmental Resources and Campaign Finance Reform Committee regarding administrative rules to begin the hunt in 2001. It is certainly a good time for making your views known.

Sincerely,

JIM BAUMGART
State Senator
9th Senate District

JB:jw

June 13, 2000

The Honorable Jim Baumgart
Fax: 608-267-6796

Dear Senator Baumgart:

This letter is in regard to the proposed dove-hunting season, to which I am strongly opposed.

As you know, the dove is an extremely docile bird and is not a nuisance to anyone, in addition to being our state symbol of peace.

If there were some reason to shoot these birds, other than the evident urge to kill, a hunting season may be in order. Additionally, in this increasingly violent society, what kind of message does a hunting season of these slow, gentle birds send to our youth?

I respectfully request your support in opposing this inhumane proposal for the wholesale slaughter of our peace symbol.

Cordially,



Sue R. Rank
1526 North Rapids Road
Manitowoc, WI 54220

June 13, 2000

Sue Rank
1526 North Rapids Road
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Dear Ms. Rank:

Thank you for letting me know about your opposition to the hunting of mourning doves in Wisconsin.

As you know, this proposal has now been endorsed overwhelmingly by the Conservation Congress in meetings held in every county throughout Wisconsin and by the Department of Natural Resources Board. A public hearing has been scheduled for June 21st by the Senate Agriculture, Environmental Resources and Campaign Finance Reform Committee regarding administrative rules to begin the hunt in 2001. It is certainly a good time for making your views known.

Sincerely,

JIM BAUMGART
State Senator
9th Senate District

JB:jw

3222 2nd St., S
Wisconsin Rapids, WI
54494

June 13, 2000

The Honorable Jim Baumgart
P.O. Box 4882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Sir/Madame:

We have been very closely monitoring the actions of the legislature as concerns the hunting of Mourning Doves in Wisconsin.

We are appalled that such actions would even be contemplated, let alone proceeding to the point that it has. In fact, in discussion with friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, we find no one in favor of this hunt. We wonder where the impetus for it originated. We all think in the background, we can smell the gun lobby. Are we right? Please take our views into consideration when this matter comes to a vote on June 21.

Sincerely,
Dean W. Minnick
Robert L. Minnick

The Honorable Jim Baumgart
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI. 53707

June 13,2000

Dear Senator Baumgart;

I am writing to urge you to oppose the proposed hunting season on Mourning Doves. I am not against hunting by any means, and I do understand it's environmental importance. However, I am opposed and concerned about this new proposal for several reasons.

First, the proposed daily bag limit is 15 birds. I have been all over this great state of ours, and in no area have I ever seen numbers of Doves to justify this bag limit. I believe it would be a mistake to allow this number to be harvested daily! Historical accounts mention that in the 1920's the skies of Wisconsin were black with millions of Passenger Pigeons. An unlimited bag limit was allowed, and by 1936, the Passenger Pigeon was extinct. Sadly, the only place to see a Passenger Pigeon today is in a museum. In no area of Wisconsin have I ever seen the sky black with Mourning Doves! I do not wish to have to show my children or grandchildren Mourning Doves at a museum, and try to recreate their beautiful call for them to hear!

Second, most hunters state they would not hunt them - they are only afraid of losing their hunting rights. How does stopping a **proposed** season that has never existed threaten existing seasons? I do not feel threatened by this, and I do possess licenses for the seasons that interest me.

Third, Dove hunting amounts to merely target practice - each bird only yields an ounce of usable meat. It is sickening to think what we could lose for a few ounces of meat!

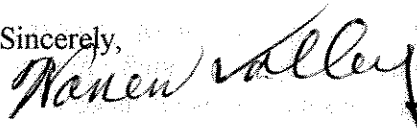
Fourth, Dove hunting is wasteful and inhumane. Nearly 20% of Doves shot by hunters are wounded, and are never retrieved by hunters. Instead, they are left to die slow, agonizing deaths. Nothing but an occasional scavenging animal would benefit from this.

Finally, there are already plenty of other game bird species that are legal to hunt in Wisconsin. Killing the state symbol of peace could not only create a backlash against the state's hunters, but **could severely hurt Wisconsin's tourism industry!**

Therefore, I would strongly urge you to oppose the Dove hunting season. Please let me know your views on this, and how this issue is resolved.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Warren Valley, Box 272, Williams Bay, WI. 53191 (262) 245 -5398

June 13, 2000

The Honorable Baumgart
Fax: 608-267-6796

The Honorable Baumgart:

This letter is in regard to the proposed dove- hunting season, to which I am strongly opposed.

As you know, the dove is an extremely docile bird and is not a nuisance to anyone, in addition to being named our official "state symbol of peace" in 1971.

If there was a purpose to shoot these birds, other than the feeling of power an individual feels when killing, a hunting season may be in order.

I respectfully request your support in opposing this inhumane proposal of the slaughter of our peace symbol.

Kind regards,



Melissa C. Grimm
520 Reed Ave.
Manitowoc, WI 54220
MCG1002@hotmail.com

June 13, 2000

The Honorable Jim Baumgart

Re: Dove Hunting

Dear Mr Baumgart

This letter is in regards to the dove hunting season, being proposed. I am strongly Oppose to such a hunting season.

The dove is our symbol of piece, why would we propose such a hunt. Aren't there enough animals out there that are legal to hunt. The mourning dove is a very docile bird, What sport would there be in hunting such a bird.

If they have to shoot something, why not make It the crow, instead of the beautiful dove.

Please add your support to saving this wonderful bird.

Sincerely,



Susan M Hay
6215 Fetzner Rd
Manitowoc Wi 54220

Wexler, James

From: Bill Young [byoung@excel.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 14, 2000 7:00 PM
To: sen.baumgart@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Dove Hunt

Dear Senator Baumgart,

We are writing to you in response to recent results of the DNR's public vote to allow hunting of the mourning dove in Wisconsin. We feel that the outcome of this vote did not reflect what most of the general public wanted but, rather, what the "hunter" wanted. The public has not spoken, the hunter has. There are currently many species of birds and animals that are legally allowed to be hunted. Do we need to add another to that list? What disadvantage or sacrifice will the hunter have to endure if the mourning dove cannot be hunted?

In a much broader sense what does legalizing the hunting of yet another creature say about what we value and respect? The Children's Defense fund in their annual report of The State of America's Children note that every two hours a youth under the age of 20 is killed by a firearm. A direct correlation between the legalized hunting of the mourning dove and children being killed is not implied. But what is being said is the fact that life in any form is valuable and how are we relaying that message to our children?

Please do what you can right now to support and advocate for all life. Do not wait for everyone to come along. They never will. Someone once said that "the world is held together by the passion, commitment, talent and love of a very few people." What more could we ask then to be a part of them? Decide to make a difference. Please use whatever time and talent you have to make life better.

Oppose a dove hunting season in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

William P. & Rita E. Young
438 Clement Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53083-5042

byoung@excel.net

June 15, 2000

Randy & Nancy Kudirko
9532 Pigeon Lake Road
Valders, WI 54245

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Kudirko:

Thank you for letting me know about your support for the dove hunting proposal approved by the Conservation Congress and the DNR Board.

As you know, the proposed agency rules will be before the appropriate Senate and Assembly committees next week for consideration. It is likely that there will be extensive discussion and debate about this proposal at that time. The vote of the Conservation Congress was overwhelming and it is my intention to support that position.

Sincerely,

JIM BAUMGART
State Senator
9th Senate District

JB:jw

JUN 15 2000



Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

ORGANIZED 1939

INCORPORATED 1942

WEB PAGE <http://wso.uwgb.edu/wso.htm>

The Passenger Pigeon

Official Quarterly Journal

The Badger Birder

Monthly Newsletter

3352 Knollwood
West Bend WI 53095
June 14, 2000

Dear Senator:

Please find enclosed some information on the proposed Mourning Dove hunting season for which you will be taking comments at the June 21 hearing. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) is a 60-year-old statewide organization with approximately 2,000 members. The WSO opposes the proposed hunting season and has been quite active with this issue.

Although I will be unable to attend the hearing, the WSO will provide comments. I hope this additional background information will be helpful to you as you consider this important and emotional issue. The Society urges you and the Committee to oppose the Mourning Dove hunting rule.

Sincerely,

Noel J. Cutright, PhD
WSO Conservation Chair



Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

ORGANIZED 1939

INCORPORATED 1942

The Passenger Pigeon
Official Quarterly Journal
The Badger Birder
Monthly Newsletter

Comments to NRB - May 24, 2000

Good morning. My name is Dr. Noel Cutright. I am speaking as the Conservation Chair for the approximately 2,000-member Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO). The WSO is an educational and scientific organization founded more than 60 years ago to encourage the study of Wisconsin birds. The Society achieves this goal through programs in research, education, conservation, and publication.

The WSO opposes any Mourning Dove hunting season for Wisconsin. However, I want to emphasize that the WSO is not anti-hunting. We have no problem, in general, with already established hunting seasons on variously well-studied and well-censused game birds. We allow hunters to use our property at Honey Creek in Sauk County. The WSO also is on record of supporting lethal and non-lethal bird control, which could involve hunting as a management option in certain instances. Three recent cases include:

- testifying in March at the Congressional public hearing at the Horicon NWR in support of governmental agencies taking a more active role in managing (controlling) our resident Canada Goose population. As a side note, I was the only representative of a NGO having a wildlife conservation, environmental, or hunting interest to testify;
- taking a position supporting greater population control of "white" geese because of the severe damage being done by these geese to fragile Arctic habitat; and
- supporting the control of feral Mute Swans in Wisconsin, reiterated most recently in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on April 23.

So, the WSO is NOT anti-hunting, but the WSO is opposed to hunting Mourning Doves. We have a rich hunting heritage and tradition; we want to see it continued. Wisconsin has NO heritage or tradition of hunting Mourning Doves. What are the compelling reasons for trying to start one now in face of significant opposition?

There are many valid reasons for opposing a Mourning Dove hunting season. Many of these reasons were expressed at the Conservation Congress (CC) hearing, in letters and editorials in our state's newspapers, during radio call-in shows, and I'm sure in correspondence to you. I would like to touch upon just a few points.

Research Data - Essentially, there are NO Mourning Dove studies that have been conducted in Wisconsin. Good information on a whole variety of parameters is critically needed before a hunting season is allowed. The USF&WS has indicated its federal research program to be insufficient, especially in view of the declining population in certain regions. Until the eve of the hearing, the DNR had not addressed this deficiency. Now, apparently, the DNR has committed to monitor dove harvest and participate in nationwide Mourning Dove population ecology research, and that even though Wisconsin doves are adequately monitored, according to DNR statements, if there is hunting, monitoring will increase. I have never heard details about this work or how it will be funded.

Productivity - We do not know the productivity of Wisconsin's dove population. There hasn't even been a recognition that dove populations may be quite different in different regions of the state, and we know dove populations up north are smaller than in the southern part of the state. There has not been an identification of the existing mortality factors, or a definition of the role of bird feeding on Wisconsin's dove population.

Population Estimates - Numbers of doves living and breeding in Wisconsin have been estimated but how confident are we of these numbers? Population estimates have varied widely and wildly, which is unsettling when we are talking about several million doves. We DO know there has been a statistically significant short-term decline in the breeding Mourning Dove population in Wisconsin. Using Call-Count Survey information for 1990-99 in Wisconsin, there has been a 5.9% decline/year, and the Breeding Bird Survey for 1989-98 has shown a 2.8% decline/year. We do not know the reasons for this decline, if it will continue, or if hunting might contribute more to this decline. All of this illustrates how poorly we understand the breeding and migratory populations of doves in the state. We do know that declines in populations are often felt first at the edges of a species' range, and Wisconsin is near the northward edge of its range.

Furthermore, on the eve of the CC hearing, I learned for the first time that the DNR population estimate of 4-5 M doves migrating from Wisconsin each fall had been "validated" by the USF&WS, but that the 1.5M Wisconsin breeding dove population estimate from the WCCCD is suspect because the data to calculate this number were used incorrectly. Regardless, at least the WCCCD showed how its number was derived, something the DNR still has never done. And as well, the DNR has never explained how their dove population estimate of 12M in 1997 suddenly dropped to the current 4-5M figure.

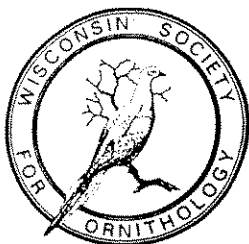
Other Questions - We do not know how rural, suburban, and urban dove populations mix, even though one Ohio study that examined kill of urban vs. rural doves often is used out of context or is used to allay the fears of those feeding doves that "their" doves won't be shot. Attendees at some of the CC hearings erroneously learned that there are actually two different kinds or species of doves; one that is hunted, presumably rural, and one that is not, presumably urban, but that you can't tell them apart using typical field identification marks. How sad this commentary is on the volume of misinformation that's been a hallmark of this debate. The question of how many nontarget species such as American Kestrels and Killdeer will be killed also has not been adequately addressed.

Finally, the WSO has been truly concerned over how this emotional debate will hurt the image of hunters in the public's eye. I feel there is no doubt that thousands of Wisconsin's citizens now view hunters and hunting differently, and that thousands more will think differently if a dove hunting season is actually implemented. Is this what the NRB and DNR want? I think not. The WSO certainly does not want to see this happen. There are too many very serious and critically important environmental and wildlife conservation issues where all groups need to be working together in partnerships, collaborations, and joint ventures for the long-term sustainability of quality wildlife habitat in this state to allow this Mourning Dove hunting proposal to go forward and seriously harm further these relationships.

It is an understatement to say there is serious opposition to this proposal. As the NRB, you have an obligation to do what is best for the natural resources of this state and to consider all viewpoints. The WSO urges you to not go forward with a Mourning Dove hunting season in Wisconsin.

Thank you for listening.

Noel Cutright
WSO Conservation Chair



Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

ORGANIZED 1939

INCORPORATED 1942

The Passenger Pigeon
Official Quarterly Journal
The Badger Birder
Monthly Newsletter

Noel J. Cutright
3352 Knollwood
West Bend WI 53095

March 15, 2000

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) opposes establishing a Mourning Dove hunting season in Wisconsin. Over the past month, 90% of WSO members voting on WSO's Website or through the mail have indicated they oppose such a season. The WSO urges you to take 3 primary courses of action:

1. Ask your members to attend the April 10 hearing and vote NO on the question "Do you support establishing a Mourning Dove hunting season in Wisconsin?"
2. Ask your members to encourage their friends, relatives, and acquaintances to do likewise.
3. Send a letter to each of your local newspapers asking readers to take similar action. Try and target the issue of the paper that will appear just prior to April 10.

APRIL 10 HEARING

The DNR will hold its Spring Fish and Wildlife Rules Hearings at 7 pm on April 10 in 1 location in each county. Information on the locations is available from the DNR and usually appears in your local newspaper. You also can contact me for the information. Following the election of delegates by the Conservation Congress, the question on dove hunting will be the FIRST question on the agenda. The results of this statewide vote will probably be the most important single action in determining if Wisconsin has a dove hunting season in September 2001. Children ARE eligible to vote on this question. Everyone is expecting a huge audience as mailings and newsletters from organizations supporting a dove hunting season are loudly urging a large turnout to support this proposal.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT HUNTERS VS. ANTI-HUNTERS OR ANIMAL VS. HUNTERS RIGHTS; IT IS ABOUT HUNTING DOVES.

Disappointingly, much of the rhetoric in this emotional debate is not focused on the Mourning Dove. The WSO believes that hunting and bird control have a place in Wisconsin's outdoor heritage and in practicing wise wildlife management. At a public hearing at Horicon on Monday (March 13), I, as WSO's Conservation Chair, was the only representative of an organization representing wildlife conservation, environmental, or hunting interests to testify in support of the USF&WS and DNR taking a more active role in managing our resident Canada Goose population, which could include authorization for direct population control strategies. The WSO also has taken a position supporting greater population control of Snow Geese because of the severe damage being done by these geese to fragile Arctic habitat and supporting the control of feral Mute Swans in Wisconsin.

The WSO is NOT anti-hunting, but the WSO is OPPOSED to hunting Mourning Doves!

REASONS FOR OPPOSING A MOURNING DOVE HUNT IN WISCONSIN

There are many valid reasons for opposing a dove hunting season in Wisconsin and these should be considered in the decision making process. Many of these are discussed in the Issue Paper available from WSO's website at <http://wso.uwgb.edu/modopaper.htm>. I also can provide copies of the paper. A few of the major points are discussed below.

Research Data — Essentially, there are NO Mourning Dove studies that have been conducted in Wisconsin. Good information on a whole variety of parameters is critically needed before a hunting season is allowed. Also, the DNR has not addressed this deficiency, and there appear to be no plans to initiate such research. The USF&WS has indicated its federal research program to be insufficient, especially in view of the declining population in certain regions.

Productivity — We do not know the productivity of Wisconsin's dove population. There hasn't even been a recognition that dove production may be quite different in different regions of the state, or an identification of the existing mortality factors, or a definition of the role of bird feeding on Wisconsin's dove population.

Population Estimates — Numbers of doves living and breeding in Wisconsin are unknown. Population estimates have varied widely and wildly, which is unsettling when we are talking about several million doves. We DO know there has been a statistically significant short-term decline in the breeding Mourning Dove population in Wisconsin. Using call-count survey information for 1990-99 in Wisconsin, there has been a 5.9% decline/year and the breeding bird survey for 1989-98 has shown a 2.8% decline/year. We do not know the reasons for this decline, if it will continue, or if hunting might contribute more to this decline. All of this illustrates how poorly we understand the breeding and migratory population of doves in the state.

Many other questions remain that need study and careful deliberation. These include;

- how do rural, suburban, and urban dove populations mix,
- how many nontarget species will be killed,
- will a Mourning Dove hunt actually hurt hunting in the long-term because of how a Sep/Oct dove season when crops are still in the field might damage landowner/hunter relations,
- will the image of hunters be harmed in the public's eye when the Bird of Peace and a common backyard feeder bird is being hunted?

CONCLUSION

The WSO believes a question of this magnitude deserves a statewide public referendum where all citizens of the state can vote in a more familiar setting. However, this option is not available. The results of the Spring Hearing vote will likely determine how the DNR moves on this issue. The WSO urges your attendance at this Hearing. You don't need to speak out at the Hearing, but you DO need to hold your hand high to cast a vote in OPPOSITION to this question.

Please contact me if you have questions about this issue.

Noel J. Cutright, PhD
WSO Conservation Chair
262-675-2443
noel.cutright@wepco.com

Subject:

April 10 Hearing

resisted the impulse yesterday to discuss my feelings after attending the WDNR Spring Fish and Wildlife Rules "HEARINGS" and Annual Conservation Congress meeting in Ozaukee County. I thought it best to have a 24-hour cooling down period, but I never thought I would start this at 3am. When I awoke and started to think about Monday night's FIASCO (action that comes to a ridiculous end) or TRAVESTY (a crude and ridiculous representation; a ludicrous distortion). I also will be mailing this to each Natural Resources Board member.

THE SETTING

The Ozaukee County meeting has traditionally been held at the American Legion Hall near Lake Michigan in downtown Port Washington. It is a smallish building with the meeting room directly tied to an operating, smoke-filled bar on the north end. At the most it holds maybe 150 persons.

One of my brave assumptions going into Monday night was that the WDNR would have a backup meeting location in their backpocket. How could anyone who has been following the dove hunting issue and election of Conservation Congress delegates not believe that hundreds would turn out? Seeing the hundreds of cars parked in the area as I arrived confirmed my prediction and while searching for a parking space, I encountered several people already leaving. My first thought - Ah ha - a new meeting location has been announced. When I inquired, they said that the crowd was huge, rule packets had been distributed but the supply was exhausted, and that their votes simply could be mailed in. I do not know the source of this last bit of information.

I estimated 300 people outside, and folks were continually arriving and leaving. Standing outside in a 30 degree temperature with a brisk east wind off Lake Michigan quickly became a challenge because people weren't dressed for these conditions.

After a considerable wait, it was announced that an alternate site would be sought. After another considerable wait, it was announced that the "last" alternative site was being explored. If this one didn't pan out, everyone inside would be moved outside and the meeting would be conducted outside. After another wait, it was announced that the meeting was being moved to the new fire department building on the west side of Saukville. With no police assistance to help with traffic movement, a massive traffic snail developed along Highway 33, complete with traffic accidents with injuries and police pull-over.

This building provided heat and bathrooms, but because the space is usually used to park the trucks, provided no seats and terrible acoustics.

CONSERVATION CONGRESS MEETING

Since the facility provided little support for the conductance of an orderly meeting, there wasn't a whole of organization. Shouting tended to be the primary mode of communicating. Delegate ballots were distributed with only superficial checks for residency. Nominations finally began. While an attempt was made to close nominations after only one nominee was entered, this tactic did not prevail. The sound system was woefully inadequate to inform the hundreds of standing persons what was being said by whom. Persons, both women, who expressed a different viewpoint than the great majority of attendees (male to female ratio was at least 20:1) were nominated for each of the 2 open positions.

Conduct during the "questioning of candidates" period was rude, disrespectful, discourteous, and a

multitude of other descriptors. What an exhibition with cheering and rooting for one candidate vs. jeering and groaning for the other. After such a display I wondered why anyone of a different ilk would ever enter into such a fray. What a prelude to the "Hearing", which in my mind had already been seriously compromised by the evening's events.

HEARING

Why must the hearing be conducted by law enforcement officers? These are WDNR hearings and they should be run in each county by the best WDNR personnel available. There are employees throughout the organization that have more skills than others to run an organized, polite, and open meeting. Why aren't the best individuals within the WDNR chosen? Tradition in this sense is important only when there is a place for it in the process. Apparently, the meetings in some counties were run quite smoothly. The meeting in Ozaukee County wasn't.

The hearing finally began. What an education for my 2 teenagers! What an introduction for them to the public hearing process! Because my wife is a school board member, a 4-5 hour board meeting precluded her attendance. Another instance where the current process denied her access to the proceeding and an opportunity to vote on critical natural resource issues. I am so glad that my son was able to vote for the first time as an 18-year-old the previous week in the general election instead of this setting being his first adult voting experience. They both care about the dove hunting issue and wanted to exercise their opinion and vote. Because of the behaviors exhibited by the crowd that often took on a mob mentality, I'm not sure how the memories of this meeting will influence and shape their future actions.

Because of the time I've invested in the dove hunting issue, including being the primary author of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's dove hunt issue paper, tallying our members' votes on their feelings on the issue, sending out WSO's position, participating in media interviews, answering questions, taking telephone calls, etc., I had come intending to make a short statement. After seeing the difficulties in "communicating" with the audience and feeling that it was futile to say anything, I chose not to take the "opportunity" to speak. Having said this, because of the setting and conditions, I feel my right to express my opinions were compromised and my rights were suppressed.

I did manage to hear a couple of things during the comment period. I learned that the WDNR would, in fact, monitor dove harvest and participate in nationwide Mourning Dove population ecology research and that even though Wisconsin doves are adequately monitored, if there is hunting, monitoring will increase. (I FIRST heard about this intent expressed by the WDNR on Friday evening, April 7.) (I also learned for the first time on April 7 that the WDNR population estimate of 4-5M doves migrating from Wisconsin each fall had been "validated" by the USF&WS, but that the 1.5M Wisconsin breeding dove population estimate from the WCCCD is suspect because the data to calculate this number were used incorrectly. Regardless, at least the WCCCD showed how its number was derived, something the WDNR still has never done. And as well, the WDNR has never explained how their 12M number in 1997 dropped to the current 4-5M figure.)

I also learned that there are 2 kinds of Mourning Doves, one that will be hunted and one that comes to your bird feeder. Apparently, Senator Johnsrud would like for us to think there is a third kind - Wisconsin's Bird of Peace, which is really the white dove seen on Christmas cards.

Even though I'm not uncomfortable in most settings, I did find it intimidating to stand with my hand held high to oppose the hunt while being scrutinized by dozens of hunt supporters in the boisterous crowd. The final tally as I heard it was 359 to support, 49 opposed.

AFTERMATH, OTHER PONDERINGS, AND QUESTIONS

I left after the dove hunt and arrived home at 10:20pm. Remaining were many other important issues to be "discussed" and voted upon, but Tuesday was a school day. I feel again my rights and my children's rights to participate were compromised by the process.

What did I witness Monday night? I'm not sure, but I do know that I will be less critical in the future of the political scene in Washington, and maybe even in Madison. We are failures on the local scene

Why should I expect more from Madison and Washington when I can't help deliver at home?
There has to be a better way!

Was the dove hunting issue about dove hunting? My answer is an emphatic NO. It was about hunter's rights and protecting them against threats from "the other side". Am I surprised by the dove vote outcome? No. When I repeatedly read pleas in letters and outdoor newspaper columns to turn out the vote to protect hunting from the "animal activist nuts", I am not surprised. Do I think that the public has spoken or even the hunter? Again, a resounding NO! How could this ever be accomplished using the present process. There has to be a better way!

One of my major fears of the dove fracas was how relationships among various interests could be damaged. I think this already has occurred. There are so many other bird conservation issues of greater importance and environmental topics worthy of our time, talent, and treasury than dove hunting. If we could only muster this energy to support and help pass the CARA legislation, to participate in a meaningful dialogue to prepare excellent master plans for our state forests, and to help protect the Lion's Den natural area along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Ozaukee County. However because of the harm done at confrontations such as this, partnering and collaboration on significant issues are made much more difficult or even impossible. There has to be a better way!

Lastly, I will never again have the conscious to encourage anyone to attend one of these spring hearings. The system is a failure. A new, more open, more equitable process is urgently needed. I hope the WDNR accepts the challenge to do what is needed for the citizens of Wisconsin who the Department serves. There has to be a better way!

The dove hunt controversy will continue, and I'll be in Shawano at the May NRB meeting to discuss the concerns of what I feel the majority of Wisconsin's citizens share. A Mourning Dove Hunting season should not go forward in the state. But probably even more importantly, future meetings, hearings, forums, referenda or other vehicle chosen to solicit the opinions of our citizenry on hunting, fishing, trapping, and other natural resource issues must treat everyone fairly and provide an opportunity for all sectors of society to be heard.

THERE HAS GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY!

Noel Cutright
3352 Knollwood
West Bend WI 53095



Birding
News

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

MOURNING DOVE HUNT ISSUE PAPER

by Noel J. Cutright, WSO Conservation Chair

The WSO Board has not taken a pro or anti position at this point on the Wisconsin dove hunt issue. The WSO WILL TAKE AN OFFICIAL POSITION prior to the April 10 Spring Hearing. The Mourning Dove question will be the first item on the evening's agenda.

If the vote at this Hearing supports the establishment of a Mourning Dove hunting season in the state, the WSO definitely believes the WDNR will pursue establishing a season in 2001. If the Natural Resources Board agrees with the WDNR proposal, Assembly and Senate legislative committees then have a 30-day review period.

This Issue Paper has been developed by the WSO to provide information to its members and others. It will be updated periodically as the issue evolves. The WSO urges its members and others having an interest in this issue to voice their concerns and express their opinions as opportunities arise. WSO members can vote on this issue on WSO's website or by using the ballot in the "Badger Birder". This Issue Paper attempts to be factual although the WSO realizes that the issue has and will evoke considerable emotion. Please check back to this web site periodically for updates and a report on the status of this issue.

Wisconsin web sites that offer information:

- Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Cranes and Doves
- Wisconsin Dove Hunters
- Wisconsin DNR Wildlife Management
- Wisconsin DNR EEK
- WSO & WBBA

The following are major points made in this paper:

- Mourning Doves in Wisconsin breed from March into September. Nesting cycles are short (about 32 days), and with only 2 eggs/clutch, repeated nestings are necessary to maintain population levels. Life span is short (1-1.5 yr) and annual mortality is high (60-70%). Doves feed on mostly seeds (99% of diet).
- Research data on Mourning Doves in Wisconsin are sorely lacking. Good information on a variety of parameters is needed before a hunting season for any species is allowed.
- WSO believes that more reliable estimates of Wisconsin's Mourning Dove population are needed to inform the debate over hunting, especially in light of a decreasing dove population trend in the state over the past decade.
- Whatever the biological evidence may suggest regarding the advisability of a Wisconsin dove hunt, WSO recognizes that aesthetic, emotional, and other concerns are valid elements of the debate over this issue and should be considered in the decision making process.

DOVE BIOLOGY

Mourning Doves (*Zenaid macroura*) breed in all 48 contiguous states and have the longest breeding season of all North American birds. Birds returning from wintering areas, migrating at night and during day, are faithful to specific nesting locations. From a study in Minnesota, 80% of the nest sites of returning adults were located within 200 ft of sites used the previous year and nearly 50% were within 50 ft.

The nesting season in Wisconsin may start in April and extend into September. Nest construction takes 7-10 hours and may be spread over 2-4 days. Mourning Doves are almost invariably monogamous. They demonstrate high parental involvement, mate guarding, well-defined male and female roles, and retention of pair bonds. Two white eggs are laid in a nest constructed with small twigs. Eggs are constantly incubated and both parents incubate and brood. Males usually attend the nest from mid-morning until late afternoon.

Incubation lasts 14-15 days and fledging occurs in 11-15 days. Fledglings are dependent for another 5-9 days. The average length for the nesting cycle is 32 days. In some instances, new clutches are started in the nest before fledging occurs. Contributing to the shortened nesting cycle are crop milk, diverse granivorous diet, small nests, reuse of old nests, small clutch size, constant incubation, fast nestling growth, and early fledging. Nesting cycles are short and repeated nestings are necessary to maintain population levels.

In southern Wisconsin, 3 broods are usual; 2 broods are more typical for northern Wisconsin. Nationally, an average of 3.6 young fledge annually per breeding pair. There are no production estimates for Wisconsin. Average life span is 1.0 yr for immatures and 1.5 yr for adults. Mortality rates are high - 58%/yr for adults and 69%/yr for immatures in eastern United States. Females weigh an average of 4.3 oz; males weigh 4.6 oz.

Mourning Doves take mostly seeds (99% of diet). Principal food items vary by region and immediate locale. The seeds of grasses are particularly important. Seeds from plants often considered to be weed species growing in early successional sites are especially important in many instances. Mourning Doves are seldom a problem to agricultural crops.

Doves leaving Wisconsin in late summer/fall move through the Mississippi River Valley to the Gulf Coast and then move east as far as Florida and west into Texas and Mexico. Based on band recovery data in 1966-71, Wisconsin Mourning Doves contributed 5.8% of the dove harvest in Louisiana, 1.4% in Mississippi, 4.1% in Alabama, 1.8% in Georgia, 8.4 % in Florida, 0.7% in the Carolinas, and 1-2% in Texas. These data provide some insight into how Wisconsin doves are distributed across the Gulf states. Immature doves either migrate earlier or are more likely to migrate than adults. Although the dove population that overwinters in Wisconsin is probably comprised of a mixture of birds raised in the state and migrants from neighboring areas, there is insufficient banding information to describe this wintering population.

DOVE POPULATIONS

The Mourning Dove call-count survey (C-CS) was developed to provide an annual index to population size. In the U.S., the survey currently includes more than 1,000 randomly selected routes, stratified by physiographic region. Each route consists of 20 stations spaced at 1-mile intervals. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey data compliment the call-count survey information. These data can be used to determine population trends either by state or dove management unit. The Eastern Management Unit (EMU) includes 27 states.

Area	Survey	Short-term	%Change/Year	Long-term	%Change/Year
WI	C-CS	1990-99	- 5.9	1966-99	0.0
EMU	C-CS	1990-99	- 1.5	1966-99	- 0.4
WI	BBS	1989-98	- 2.8	1966-98	1.0
EMU	BBS	1989-98	- 0.6	1966-98	0.3

These data from Dolton indicate a STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DECLINE in Wisconsin

breeding dove populations during the most recent decade using either survey technique. A smaller rate of decline has been noted in the EMU during this same time period. General trends in the eastern portion of the Central Management Unit and in the Western Management Unit also exhibit a long-term decline.

Project Feeder Watch data for the winter of 1998-99 noted that the Mourning Dove is on the top-10 list of species in 10 different regions of the United States, but its numbers are declining in 7 of these regions, both East and West. As with all population surveys, care must be used in analyzing year-to-year fluctuations.

The average fall population in the United States has been estimated to be about 470 million by Tomlinson. Others have estimated the fall population at between 350 and 600 million birds. Tomlinson also estimated the relative abundance of Mourning Dove breeding population in Wisconsin using 1967-75 data as 1.2% of the U.S. total.

The WDNR's estimate in 1997 of Wisconsin's annual fall flight of Mourning Doves was in excess of 12 million doves. The Wisconsin Dove Hunter's group also is using this estimate. The Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Cranes and Doves offers an estimate of less than 1.5 million doves. The current WDNR estimate for doves migrating from Wisconsin in the fall is 4-5 million. This illustrates how poorly we understand the breeding and migratory population of Mourning Doves in the state.

DOVE HUNTING

The Mourning Dove provided over 10 million days of hunting recreation in 1989, 9.5 million days in 1991, and 8.1 million days in 1996. Numbers of persons harvesting birds also declined during this period from 2.3 million to 1.9 million to 1.6 million.

Dove harvest increased from the '40s through the mid-'70s. The harvest in 1942 was 11 million doves, 15 million in 1949, 19 million in 1955, 41 million in 1965, and 49.4 million in 1976. The most recently available harvest data are from 1989 when the harvest was estimated at 41.3 million doves, with 26.4 million harvested in the EMU. In the EMU, 18 states permit dove hunting. Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine do not permit dove hunting. Minnesota and Iowa, located in the CMU, are the only other states that do not permit dove hunting.

Crippling loss often is assumed to be 30% of the harvest. Doves are fast, erratic fliers and "winging" is reported to be common. Continentwide, hunting mortality is estimated at 10-15% of the fall population annually. All available evidence indicates that nonhunting mortality (weather, predation, accidents, disease, parasites) is several times that attributable to hunting. Of 577 dove bands recovered where predation was indicated as the cause of death, 70% were from domestic cats.

During Ohio's recent debate, the question of the impact that hunting would have on urban dove populations and subsequent viewing opportunities was raised. Harvest rates of banded hatching year doves from urban and rural areas in Ohio were compared (suburban and rural areas at periphery of urban areas were avoided). Harvest rates for urban and rural doves were significantly different. Most recoveries of the banded doves were within a 1-county radius of the banding station. The question of how suburban doves might fare during a hunting season remains unanswered.

Concern has been expressed over the impact of hunting on late nesting doves. In a national study of 6,950 active nests, 4.5% of nests were active in September and October, and 10.3% of all fledging occurred in these fall months. Geissler concluded that dove hunting under current hunting regulations had no substantial effect on recruitment of fledglings into the dove population. Other studies in local area have shown differing results of hunting on survival of Mourning Dove nests. Even though the impact of September hunting on annual recruitment may be small, some nest abandonment and nestling mortality undoubtedly occur. Research in Kansas noted that the opening of autumn hunting

seasons discouraged further nesting attempts by doves. It is unknown how Wisconsin nesting doves would fare if a September hunting season was to occur.

It is estimated that 5-8 shotshells are expended/bird taken, further evidence of the difficulty doves present as a target. Lead shot densities of greater than 860,000 pellets/hectare have been reported from heavily hunted dove fields. At a recent workshop, participants concluded that, of the upland game birds, Mourning Doves are particularly likely to ingest spent lead shot. Research on lead exposure continues at the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison. Because of this concern, the Natural Resources Board has decided that any dove hunt in Wisconsin would require the use of non-toxic shot.

Concern has been expressed over the conduct of dove hunters, such as shooting at birds perched on wires or misidentifying flying doves and shooting at protected bird species. The WSO believes that Killdeer, American Kestrel, and other protected species will undoubtedly be mistaken for doves and thus shot. Observations of hunters at 2 public Mourning Dove hunting areas in Virginia in the early '80s revealed an unsettling amount of unsafe behavior, a modest amount of illegal behavior, and a substantial amount of unethical or discourteous behavior. The WSO believes additional observational studies of this sort are needed.

Wisconsin citizens can currently hunt the Rock Dove (*Columba livia*) or Pigeon. This introduced species is unprotected with no season and no bag limit. They are abundant, do not garner the same public value as Mourning Doves, are larger, and provide more meat for the table.

HUNTING REGULATIONS

Hunting seasons typically open September 1 in Midwestern states and run into November. Recent daily limits have been 15 birds with a possession limit of 30.

At the present time, there is debate concerning the WDNR's interpretation of certain State Statutes regarding definitions that may be relevant to dove hunting. Please refer to the Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Cranes and Doves website for a discussion of this topic.

BIRD OF PEACE

Wisconsin Governor Lucey signed Senate Bill 422 into law 10 November 1971. This law designates the Mourning Dove as the State Symbol of Peace and was a symbol of hope for many Vietnam veterans returning from the war. The law also removed Mourning Doves from the list of game birds in sec 29.001, Stats. See the web site at www.geobop.com/Eco/WI6.htm for more information.

REACTIONS TO PROPOSED DOVE HUNT IN OTHER STATES

Indiana - Williams provides a detailed account of the dove hunting proposal in Indiana in the mid-'80s. He concluded in his article that there ought to be a hunt "because lots of people enjoy hunting them, because there is nothing wrong with hunting them, and because hunting does not affect dove numbers." The response was rapid, vigorous, and even rancorous and letters to the magazine continued for 3 issues. The following is one response. "Is the Mourning Dove just another gamebird? Not in suburbia! Doves are family to many people. One man cannot hunt another man's family and expect acceptance."

Iowa - A dove-hunting bill passed in the Iowa Senate last session and recently became the focus in the House. The Speaker of the Iowa House, Brent Siegrist, conducted a dove-hunting poll on his web site at brentsiegrist.com. The bill failed to make it out of committee for a full House vote.

Michigan - The Mourning Dove hunting issue was hot in 1985. In the end, the Michigan House balked at authorizing a Senate-approved dove hunting bill. Representative Middaugh who allowed the bill to die in committee stated, "many interest groups have been involved in lobbying the legislature, but the people of Michigan, who overwhelmingly said no to dove hunting, are the ones who influenced the final decision."

New Hampshire - A dove season was declared in 1983 after a hearing indicated widespread public demand. Shortly thereafter, the biggest controversy to hit the state in many years erupted. The ruling was rescinded.

Ohio - In 1994, the Ohio legislature passed a bill allowing the state to manage Mourning Doves as game birds. An initiative was placed on the 1998 ballot to remove the Mourning Dove from the state game bird list and ban hunting for this bird. The initiative failed.

Hunters in some northern states have decided that going ahead with a dove hunt would actually harm the entire sport of hunting. It is not a tradition to hunt doves in these areas of the country, and they reasoned that proposing a dove hunt might trigger negative reactions in citizens who are neutral to hunting. Because of how fall dove hunting overlaps with fall crop harvesting throughout northern latitudes, they also felt that pushing for a dove season might severely hurt landowner-hunter relations, harm the image of hunters, and impact hunting of other upland game species.

RESEARCH

Because the Mourning Dove has not been hunted in the state, dove research data are meager for Wisconsin. The WSO believes that research is critically needed prior to the initiation of any hunting. The WDNR should commit to a robust, dedicated, long-term research program. Areas of investigation should include an assessment of breeding population status, assessment of mortality, relationships with habitat, and harvest management. Specific research areas should focus on evaluating land-use practices relative to Mourning Doves, determining effects of biocides on Mourning Dove populations, examining relationship of hunting regulations on Mourning Dove harvest and population trends, and determining productivity and recruitment. Questions such as can northern Wisconsin support any kind of dove hunt must be answered.

Nationally, Baskett has called for a uniform nationwide framework for collecting and analyzing harvest Data. There is no longer a comprehensive banding program that enables a check on mortality/survival rates or changes thereof with the precision needed to adjust harvest regulations at a time when there's clear evidence of population declines in parts of the Mourning Dove's range. He also points out that we lack definitive knowledge about quantitative effects of ongoing, readily discernible environmental changes on both the production and survival of Mourning Doves.

CONCLUSION

This is a difficult issue. This Issue Paper tries to elucidate many of the more technical points. There are many others centered on how we value a species and its importance to us as a citizen of Wisconsin. If you care about this issue, please become involved and share your opinions. The WSO believes that all citizens should have an equal voice in this issue.

The April 10 Hearing is a critical date and the vote on a proposed Mourning Dove hunting season at this Hearing may well decide the fate of this issue. The WDNR and State Legislature need to view the Mourning Dove as a species of outstanding importance for a very broad constituency that includes both hunters and dove watchers. Certain traditional symbolism of doves makes hunting of Mourning Doves especially vulnerable to emotions or moralistic challenges by non-hunters. The WSO encourages everyone to raise and voice their viewpoints and concerns on natural resource

issues. However, let's strive to listen to other viewpoints. The WSO believes that all parties, pro and con, wish the Mourning Dove to have a bright future.

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Jennifer Davis, Web Site Coordinator
wbaa@uwgb.edu

Last edit date: *February 18, 2000*

Blazel, Ted

From: WBBA [wbba@uwgb.edu]
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2000 11:35 AM
To: 'sen.clausing@legis.state.wi.us'; 'sen.baumgart@legis.state.wi.us';
'sen.wirch@legis.state.wi.us'; 'sen.schultz@legis.state.wi.us';
'sen.lasee@legis.state.wi.us'
Subject: Mourning Dove Hunt proposal

Dear Senator:

On the morning of June 21 will be a hearing regarding the WDNR proposal to allow hunting of Mourning Doves in the state of Wisconsin. I am writing you to urge you to vote against the proposal.

Although the WDNR biologist who has worked with the proposal believes the Wisconsin population of doves is sufficient to support a hunt, I am not convinced that is the case. There have been no formal studies of Mourning Doves in our state to determine if their population is abundant enough to support a hunt. Although the Mourning Dove does often lay up to four clutches a breeding season, they lay only two eggs per clutch and rarely do these two eggs both make it to adult doves. The Mourning Dove nest is flimsy and dove eggs/nestlings are a favorite meal for a number of other birds and mammals. Furthermore, if you look at a distribution map of where Mourning Doves have been confirmed breeding (<http://wso.uwgb.edu/wbba/species/modo.htm>), you will see that over the five years the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas has been collecting data on Wisconsin birds, Mourning Doves have been confirmed breeding in only approximately half of the state - in contrast to the distribution of American Robins (<http://wso.uwgb.edu/wbba/species/amro.htm>).

Jennifer Davis, Data Manager
Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Dept. of Natural & Applied Sciences
Green Bay, WI 54311
920-465-2545 / wbba@uwgb.edu
<http://wso.uwgb.edu/wbba/>

Wexler, James

From: Diane R. Lau [dlau@excel.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2000 9:36 PM
To: Sen.Baumgart@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Mourning Doves

Dear Sen. Baumgart,

Since 1971 the Mourning Dove has been protected as the "symbol of peace" here in Wisconsin. Now the hunting organizations want to legalize the shooting of these gentle, inoffensive birds that feed and coo in my front yard each morning.

Mourning doves are not overpopulated and are not a nuisance. As ground feeding birds, they do not harm crops or other agricultural products. Instead, they feed on weed seeds, do not bother people or animals, and are renowned for their gentle cooing sound. As prey for our sportsmen, an adult mourning dove will provide only 1 oz. of meat, if shot properly. Dove hunting is not about sustenance: 1) it is about killing, and 2) it is about fear of reducing gun privileges. It is a national embarrassment to dethrone and hunt our official symbol of peace.

I eat meat, wear leather, and am not anti-hunting but opposed to the mourning dove season. Many people want this bird protected, and we don't want special interest hunting organizations to change our laws. Keep the laws on the books that have protected these birds. I urge you to defeat any attempt to open a season on these birds.

Diane Lau (dlau@excel.net)
847 Oak Ridge Drive
Plymouth, WI 53073-4040

Hudson, Wisconsin
St. Croix County
June 16, 2000

Senator Jim Baumgart
State Capitol, Madison Wis.

Dear Sir,

We are writing to implore you to vote against the proposed mourning dove hunt, already approved by the DNR Board, at the June 21st meeting. The mourning dove is already hunted in 37 states, which we can't comprehend. Why should there be a 2 month season with a daily bag limit of 15? The thought of up to 200,000 birds killed each year is unthinkable. They are beautiful, gentle birds admired and loved by us, and it would be like shooting "setting ducks."

Jim Weif, President of Wisconsin Dove Hunter's Association, says "this is not about dove hunting, it is about all hunting." He is dead wrong!! We do not oppose sensible hunting, this is not sensible or sportsmanlike!

The "majority vote" - so-called - in April, of 21,067 people for hunting doves is a very small part of the population of Wisconsin, which in Blue Book is 5,234,350 people. And I think had the meeting been properly publicized ahead of time, it might have been a lot different number. It was neatly slipped through while the rest of us knew nothing about it. We had to find out from a letter to the editor in Hudson Star Observer just before the DNR Board voted 5-2 for it.

(Continued on 2nd page)

These are the signatures:

Jim & Barb Schmidt

Margery Gustafson

Lois Kuel

Bob & Boba

Dale & Delores Willi

Virgil & Mafine Muckenhirn

June 14 - 2000

Sen Jim Baumgart;

The morning Dove that comes to our bird feeders are a pretty bird to see or watch in our yard. We enjoy to hear them both morning and evening.

They do no harm or damage to anyone.

Let's not kill them and call it a "spot"

Let's keep the "morning Dove" as one of our favorite song "Birds"

Charles Gourd
Reedsburg, Wis.
53959

June 17, 2000

Senator Jim Baumgart
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, Wi 53707

Dear Senator Baumgart:

In 1971, the Wisconsin State Legislature designated the mourning dove as the Wisconsin State "Bird of Peace". Now the hunting organizations in the state want to legalize shooting these gentle, inoffensive birds.

The people of this state want these birds protected. Mourning doves are not overpopulated and they are not a nuisance. They are ground feeding birds and do no harm to crops or any agricultural product. Therefore, mourning doves should be handled in a peaceable manner.

We don't want special interest hunting organizations to change our laws. PLEASE keep the laws we have that protect these birds. We urge you to defeat any attempt to open a season on these creatures.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Arcelia Crupi-Keller
1900 E. Melrose Avenue
Appleton, WI 54911

Senator James Baumgart
Room 3 North
State Capitol P.O. Box 8952
Madison, Wisconsin 53708

Dear Senator Baumgart:

Thank you for chairing the Senate Environmental Resource Committee on March 22nd. Since there will be a great number of old and young people that can not attend the hearing, I have put together newspaper articles and letters written by Wisconsinites pertaining to the hunting of mourning doves. I hope that by reading them, you will understand that the issue is killing doves—not taking away hunters' rights.

There really isn't any good reason to kill doves. We don't need them for food. Hunters already has 43 species to legally shoot. Mourning doves are peaceful little birds and actually help us by eating weedseeds. They are part of a natural step in the food chain as I have lost many doves to the protected hawks. They do not need management like our deer and bear population. Shooting mourning doves is a lack of respect for life in general as they provide enjoyment and beauty for all the people—hunters and nonhunters, old and young, city or country dwellers. Besides they are Wisconsin's symbol of peace and protected by our state laws.

The DNR, hunters and politicians will have a difficult time to persuade Wisconsin voters to vote for the Right to hunt amendment if the dove hunt goes through. More and more people are becoming afraid of the DNR's power and more and more people are becoming anti-hunting because of the dove issue. I hope that you will consider all sides (and not just the hunters) at next week's meeting. State officials have an obligation to protect our natural resources on behalf of all the people—not just one group such as the DNR did concerning this issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gaulke

Eradicate DNR, not doves,

EDITOR: A recent article appeared in the Wausau Daily Herald stating the DNR planned to cut the mute swan population in the Lake Superior area last week.

First they want to open the season on doves — and now they want to “eradicate” the mute swans

Letters because these birds are attacking people using paddle boats. Maybe the occupants of the paddle boats are getting too close to the nesting areas of the mute swans.

If the DNR continues its current trend to rid our lovely state of doves and mute swans, it won't be long before they are promoting the killing of any creature with wings and two legs.

I propose the eradication of the DNR on the grounds they are dangerous to the health and well-being of Wisconsin's wildlife!

Sue Barr, Wausau

DNR Game Warden Mark Burmacek says that there aren't that many mourning doves in Marathon County

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MOURNING DOVE DEBATE

Mourning dove most abundant, widespread

Ranging from Mexico to Canada, and from coast to coast, the mourning dove is the most popular, abundant and widespread game bird in North America, and is hunted in 38 states.

Its adaptable lifestyle and high reproductive rate have allowed its population to flourish in both agricultural and urban areas.

Abundance: estimated fall flight of more than 400 million nationwide; more than 8 million in Wisconsin (according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Wisconsin distribution: found statewide but are most numerous south of a line from Green Bay to Eau Claire.

Weight: 4.2 ounces, average.

Length including tail: 12 inches.

Flight speed: 45-55 mph, maximum.

Habitat: forests, residential, agricultural.

Foods: weed seeds, including pigweed, foxtails, wild sunflower and ragweed, and waste grains, including corn, sorghum, sunflower and millets. Insects make up less than 1

percent of the dove's diet.

Life expectancy: one year; maximum, 1.5 years.

Mating: monogamous.

Nesting period: 12-14 days.

Clutch size: two to five.

Number broods: one to five.

DOVE: Hunters among the opposition's ranks

From A-1

Backlash if they target a species designated the state bird of peace" by the Legislature in 1971. And still others simply think it's a bad idea.

"I'm 76 years old, and my dad bought my first BB gun for me when I was 11 and I've hunted all my life until recently," said Nick Andrews, Plover. "I owned eight guns at one time. But I want to tell you — if this dove hunt goes through, I'm going to find the most avid anti-hunting group I can find, and I'm going to join them because I'm absolutely against a hunt."

Of 15 callers to the "It's Your Call" line this past week, only two favored a dove hunt.

If the proposed rule change to allow a hunt receives appropriate support among voters on Monday, it would go to the Natural Resources Board (oversight board for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources) for approval.

If the board approved, it would be recommended to the state Legislature, where the change could be approved or rejected under a variety of scenarios. The earliest that a dove season could take place would be in fall 2001.

Attempts to establish a mourning dove season in Wisconsin failed in 1972 and in 1989, when the Natural Resources Board denied the petition for a season.

This time, proponents are better organized. Conservation groups have forged an alliance, including Wisconsin Dove Hunters, Safari Club International Wisconsin Chapter, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and A Wisconsin Alliance for Resources and the Environment.

"Instead of getting into a fight with anti-hunters, we're simply laying out the facts, and citizens are responding," said Jim Weix, Mukwanago, co-founder of Wisconsin Dove Hunters.

Meanwhile, the Humane Society of the United States is backing opponents of the hunt. On its web page, the society urges Wisconsin residents to write letters to the editors of newspapers and to attend the hearings in force.

"You could even become a delegate to the



Conservation vote ignored

Editor, News-Herald: A news story on Wisconsin Public Radio has me thinking that Rep. DuWayne Johnsrud and Gov. Thompson are seriously out of touch with conservation voters in the state.

Thompson changed his mind on the dove hunting issue given the strong support for it at the recent statewide Conservation Congress meetings. Thompson is now recommending that the DNR Board follow the public vote and approve the dove hunt.

The reporter then noted that the vote totals on restoring the public intervenor's office and returning the DNR secretary to an appointed position also passed, and by far wider margins — one was 20:1. It was here that Rebecca Katers of Green Bay's Clean Water Action Council said that the governor should change his mind and follow the wishes of the conservation community on these more broadly supported issues, too.

Katers is also on the steering committee of the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, a coalition of Wisconsin environmental and conservation groups that was formed specifically to work toward DNR independence and public intervenor restoration.

(The votes on these issues, by the way, were as follows:

Question 58: Appointment of DNR Secretary, 8,474 yes, 436 no.

Question 59: Public Intervenor's Office; 6,591 yes, 981 no.)

Finally, the report interviewed State Rep. DuWayne Johnsrud, who said the governor would not recommend the DNR Board follow the public's wishes on these two issues, despite the overwhelming support for them. Johnsrud dismissed this broad support by saying he doesn't think the public understands what the public intervenor's office did in the past.

Thumbs up Becky Katers on helping to point out this contradiction. And thumbs down to Rep. Johnsrud and Gov. Thompson for having the nerve to dismiss "all them thar conservation voters as jest too thick-headed" to come to an accurate opinion on the public intervenor and DNR independence questions like they could the dove hunting question.

TODD HANSON

"Wisconsin Trout" Editor, Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, Appleton

Dirty politics!

Why did they run with the dove issue and ignored Question 58 + 59?

Dove debate was irrelevant

Editor, News-Herald: Neither hunters nor anti-hunting, we attended the April 10 Department of Natural Resources Spring Rules Hearing in Marathon County. We wanted to learn more about the consideration of a mourning dove hunt in Wisconsin and, admittedly, to cast our "no" votes. What we expected was a debate on the pros and cons of having a mourning dove hunt in Wisconsin. What we witnessed was disturbing.

The discussion started with an already angry anti-hunter firing the first shot, then a series of hunters fired back. Here are the most outrageous comments we heard.

From the one side: "You people need to stand up on two feet and stop dragging your knuckles on the ground" — unfairly attacking the hunters. A similar assault from the other side labeled all opponents as "vegetarians and fruitarians," "anti-everything including farming," and hypocrites because they have windows in their house and windows kill birds. How discouraging.

Although the DNR leadership stated before the start of the discussion that they would keep the debate focused on the issue, they declined to do so. We listened as one hunter explained how the deer hunt reduces car-deer collisions (true, but irrelevant). A second complained that mountain lions are not hunted in California — he repeatedly referred to them as "kitty cats" (entertaining, but irrelevant). A third hunter expressed his concern about not knowing the "humane way" to harvest vegetables from his vegetable garden (confusing and certainly irrelevant). The few

meaningful, respectful comments actually relating to the issue at hand were lost in the rhetoric. How disappointing.

What did we learn from this meeting? Hunted or not, the mourning dove will remain one of Wisconsin's most noble species, truly a symbol of peace. And we humans continue to be the state's least noble of species; anything but a symbol of peace. Will we ever learn?

DAVE MARKSTEINER
M.A. DEBEVEC-MARKSTEINER
D2896 Day Ave.

DNR: Dove vote stands, flaws and all

MADISON (AP) — Department of Natural Resources officials admitted Wednesday there were flaws in the process that allowed residents to weigh in on a proposed mourning dove hunt, but said they would not invalidate the final result.

Members of the Natural Resources Board, which makes policy decisions for the department, heard testimony from about a dozen residents critical of the statewide hearings held two weeks ago by the DNR and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, an advisory group to the board.

The annual meeting drew a record turnout as attendees voted about 21,000 to 6,000 in favor of hunting the dove.

Not residents
Only hunters!



THROUGH A DECOY'S EYE

By Chuck Kolar

I, like you, thought that when over 30,000 people showed up at a statewide hearing held in every county at the same time, and over 21,000 of those voted in favor of a dove hunt, there wouldn't be an issue. Guess I just don't understand the principle of majority rule in our democratic republic form of government. I guess the whims and wishes of the minority opinion should cause the process to become skewed in favor of the anti-hunters.

Why do I say this?

Well, take for example the special hearing on the issue to be held on May 24 in Shawano. This hearing will take place during the normal workday, not in the evening. The majority of hunters in this state and every other in the nation hold jobs, raise families, and obey the laws. They also take those responsibilities seriously. That means providing for their families and using available leave time from work to best benefit their family, takes priorities over hearings on issues that they already took a fair amount of their time voting on.

Who's being unfair and unreasonable in this matter?

The Natural Resource Board, that's who. If they weren't, then explain why the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources felt it necessary to stand before the

Conservation Congress last week and literally plead with them to make their voices known to the Natural Resource Board, their state representative, and their Senator. I'll add one more to the list: Governor Thompson.

Tell me why groups that condone people who break into other's property and vandalize the structure releasing thousands of mink or pheasant, condone the illegal harassment of hunters, and break the previously set forth rules of conduct at state hearings, are given a second chance to tilt the table in their direction? The anti's lost; the process was followed. That should be the end of the chapter.

Anti's stated that some of their like-minded individuals were turned away because of space consideration. Well, let's see. The vote was 21,067 in favor of dove hunting and 6,036 opposed. Who really thinks that 15,032 people were turned away and that every one would have voted against dove hunting? Obviously the Natural Resource Board.

You don't need to live in Clark, Taylor, or Marathon County to know what this smells like.

Meyer equated the vote of the governor-appointed Natural Resource Board on the dove issue to a vote on the future of hunting in Wisconsin in general. If the process can be

circumvented to this extent, insulting 21,067 hardworking responsible citizens, who gave up an entire evening, by simply wasting their time, maybe just maybe we need to rethink the value and necessity of the Natural Resources Board.

Anti's have stated since the spring hearing that they felt intimidated by all the hunters and that only hunters knew about the hearings. What a crock. If they want to talk about intimidation, why don't they talk about the elderly deer hunter with a severe heart condition that they surrounded? A front page of the then *Milwaukee Journal Sunday* edition memorialized that event almost ten years ago. Instead of allowing him to sit on his bucket and enjoy one last day afield, they called this gentleman names, insulting his manhood, his family lineage, and denied him his right to pursue happiness.

I'm sure the diatribe of anti's in that picture felt intimidated at the Spring Hearings. I think maybe they mistake their feelings of intimidation for feelings of shame. Shame from seeking to deny law-abiding citizens rights afforded them in the Constitution. The last time I read that fine document, I found nothing affording doves or any other form of wildlife anything, especially a right not to be hunted. If I'm wrong, someone please get a

From a paranoid hunter's viewpoint
(Only two groups exist in this world.
Hunters and anti-hunters)

dispatch out to all the goshawks and great horned owls.

Doves are the most plentiful gamebird in North America. Some 400 million strong and at best Wisconsin hunters will harvest only 15,000 doves - not even 1/2 of one percent of the total fall flight of doves in North America. Essentially that amounts to pretty much of a non-event in Wisconsin. But the upcoming vote by the Natural Resource Board and our elected politicians represents anything but a non-event for the future of hunting. Secretary Meyer is correct. For all practical purposes, it is a referendum on the future of hunting in Wisconsin.

Apparently the behavior that the Conservation Warden complimented the hunters at the spring hearing in Marathon County doesn't earn hunters the right of the benefit of the doubt. Apparently the illegal behavior of anti hunting groups does earn them the right to have the process tilted in their favor.

I say this then. Do exactly what Secretary Meyer asked for. Write, call, e-mail, and fax the Natural Resource Board, the state politicians, and the governor until they fear us and our 21,067 votes more than the pittance of 6,036 that they kow-tow to now.

...
YOUR VIEWS

Dove hunt mere target practice

Editor, News-Herald: Named the official state symbol of peace in 1971, the mourning dove has been beloved and protected for more than 80 years in Wisconsin. These gentle birds are recognized as frequent visitors to backyard bird feeders and are classified as songbirds.

In April of this year, hunters succeeded, through their sheer numbers, to swing the vote in favor of opening a dove season that was then approved by the Department of Natural Resources Board last month. The Board was comprised mostly of hunters.

Certain legislative committees will now make the next decision on a dove hunting season. If they take no action on the plan, a season will automatically be implemented. If, however, committee members hear enough public opposition to a dove hunting season, they can object to the plan.

Dove hunting amounts to no more than mere target practice. Each bird yields only an ounce of meat. There are plenty of other game bird species that are legal to shoot in Wisconsin. Hunters don't need to kill our state's symbol of peace. This could create a backlash against

hunters.

I urge all citizens who are opposed to dove hunting and killing of this type to contact their local assemblyperson to discuss their views on the matter.

ALLEN L. POPE
Waupaca

News-Herald of
Marshfield
June 14, 00

YOUR VIEWS

Dove hunt blunder by DNR

Editor, News-Herald: I am a former hunter and an advocate of hunting in Wisconsin, but there are some issues about this mourning dove proposed hunt that just don't make sense.

I have talked to many hunters that tell me that they voted for hunting mourning doves but are against hunting them. When I questioned them further, it seems that the hunters are very afraid of a so-called anti-hunter individual that was voted in as a member of Madison's Congressional Congress.

No one can tell me how one member has so much power that the hunting privileges of all Wisconsin hunters would be taken away if dove hunting didn't go through.

Folks, the battle isn't the dove hunting issue. It's making sure that other anti-hunters aren't voted in at future spring hearings.

It seems that the hunters that moved in from other states were the most vocal in getting a dove hunt in Wisconsin.

I believe that the majority of Wisconsin hunters have paid taxes and hunting fees all their lives and should be more "knowing" about a Wisconsin dove issue than past out-of-staters who

are only interested in adding Wisconsin to the list of states that hunt doves.

If dove hunting comes into existence in Wisconsin, let's be pro-active.

Dove hunting should take place in counties with a high dove population — similar with the turkey regulations.

I am also suggesting that there should be a special permit/license/stamp to hunt mourning doves, a reasonable fee would be \$20 for Wisconsin hunters with non-residential fees charged by the day.

This money should be set aside to rebuild the dove population in later years.

The DNR estimates that 130,000 to 200,000 birds will be killed in one year making a loss of 2 million mourning doves in 10 years.

Don't think that the DNR won't be back asking for money to "manage" the dove population.

I would hate to see the regular hunting licenses go up just to cover the DNR's 2000 year blunder. It is only right that the dove hunters bear this cost.

JERRY THOMPSON
Colby

Are station owners pocketing big profits?

Editor, News-Herald: I thought I had seen everything until last Friday. While driving around looking at gas prices, I noticed that one station was low at \$1.79 per gallon for regular. Everyone else was at \$1.84.

After filling up at 3:30 p.m., I mentioned this to my daughter in law. At 5:30 p.m., she went to fill up and lo and behold that station was at \$1.84.

We aren't as dumb as we appear, station owners and operators. I, for one, will purposely avoid using Marshfield gas, even if it means a little inconvenience.

Did you ever wonder how much extra profit is made when gas goes up even before the station refills its tanks?

Thanks for going the public. And do hurry to get the extra profit when you can't even wait until the next day. Gas users, maybe we should form our own station.

DON RIEDEL
100 N. Hinman Ave.

No 'right' to hunt mourning doves

The drive to expand hunting in Wisconsin took a big step forward this week when the state Natural Resources Board voted 5-2 to establish a hunting season for mourning doves. Fortunately, legislators still have an opportunity to shoot down the season. They should take it.

Hunters say that *not* granting the expansion would limit their rights because it would boost the momentum of those who seek to ban all hunting. That's paranoia. This is about addition, not subtraction. Adding a species to the list expands what hunters can do; keeping the list the same does not add a restriction.

Furthermore, a ban on hunting is simply not in the cards — nor should it be. Hunt-

ing is a legitimate recreational activity enjoyed by millions, and hunters provide a valuable service by keeping certain species in check.

But hunting is no more a right than is driving. Both require licenses from the state; both are privileges that the people of Wisconsin grant to each other.

State officials have an obligation to protect Wisconsin's natural resources on behalf of all its people, not just one group. The Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Board have failed in that responsibility. The Legislature, which can rescind the board's action, can still meet it.

The dove issue demonstrates that the DNR & the Natural Resource Board caters to just one group — hunters!

Don't kill the icon of peace

Editor, News-Herald: I have always wondered what really motivates humans. Why do we do what we do? The treasured thing we are close to destroying (i.e. the hunting of mourning doves) furthers my confusion.

The power icon of peace, represented by the mourning dove, will become a visage of the past if we permit the hunting of doves.

Rarely has one animal had such strong ties to our senses and our symbols. The dove's early morning coo is as strong a symbol of nature's wonder as is the cry of the loon. Few of us have not marveled at the feelings of peace and quiet melancholy brought on by the dove's quivering, resonant and timely paced call heard at the break of day.

We are going too far with our predatory craving to hunt. We should be more tolerant to the wishes of the majority (nonhunting) populace. I have no doubt that we are in the majority in not wanting dove hunting. Our problem is that nature has become too far removed from our consciousness. Please consider the image of not hearing the dove's early mournful cry. What a tragic loss. Wisconsin's hunters have more than enough prey they can kill; let's leave the dove alone.

The loss of this symbol of peace is just not worth the resounding cries of foul play from animal rights advocates. Why antagonize those

whose perspective on animal rights has grown these past years. Really! What are we to gain? And we must consider what we will lose.

We all need to experience pastoral living. For those who rarely enjoy rural conditions, the loss from missing the dove's resonant and soul-piercing call is quite too much. The dove's call is part of our heritage. On camping and summer camps for our children the dove's mournful tune epitomizes outdoor existence. If I would waken to gunshots rather than the dove's coo, then the meaning of rural pleasures would die.

Please! Think and feel about what we would all lose from a dove hunting season. Surely, our loss would be monumental to the pittance gained from dove hunting.

I mourn as much for our hurting ourselves as I mourn the hunting of doves.

PAUL WEATHERFORD
Pittsville

Don't kill those peaceful doves

Editor: News-Herald: There is thought of hunting the mourning dove in Wisconsin. What earthly reason can one find to hunt such a peaceful looking bird which doesn't harm anyone or anything? I have been feeding doves. They're such a sweet, timid bird. They're beautiful, cooing, is so mournful that it's heart rending. How can anyone even consider shooting it? The dove in the Bible is the symbol of peace and love.

We have doves on our Christmas cards and Easter cards. Should we add drops of blood from his chest? Many are being shot already in other states; what a disgrace. Is this the kind of world we want? I pray not. Think about it with all your heart.

Do we want a birdless world? All these things God gave is to enjoy, not to kill. Don't let it happen in Wisconsin, the beautiful state, not one to kill the symbol of peace (the Mourning Dove). There is no sportsmanship for those who would kill a timid little dove, only cowardliness. It's a very dark day on this earth when people are wanting to shoot doves.

We need food for the spirit as well as food for the body. To kill something for sport is terrible. We are very fortunate, as there is food aplenty. Please be thankful for what we have and leave the little doves alone. When I look out my window and see the little doves and hear them cooing, birds singing, it makes me feel good about the world. For surely, there's enough darkness in it. To me, the dove is a song bird like the rest, as he does

have a most beautiful song for all doves who can not speak for themselves. To show my love and appreciation for them, along with a prayer to God to speak to people's hearts and keep these little doves from all harm, I write this letter.

HELEN ERDMAN
Ladysmith

Students are becoming involved

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I realize that I'm just a 12 year old but about the mourning dove hunting season. I'm against it. Some of my major reasons are: around my house (in the country) they are really nice to see around. There really aren't that many that you see around, and they seem like pets to me. Once I got about three yards away from one. Another time when I was waiting for the school bus, the power line that was directly above my head had a mourning dove on top of it (these were all untamed mourning doves).

I hope that this season hasn't been passed, but if it already has been passed I hope there is a low bag limit.

If someone reading this totally disagrees with me, please write to this address:

Amanda DeCaire
N12766 Robin Ave.
Owen, WI 54460

issue on closing the Un
Unity Elementary is
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Dear Editor,

I think if you were
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in Colby. I thought it
classes already. That
Unity. So please do r
Colby.

Dear Editor,

I am a fourth grade student at Unity Elementary. I am concerned about this

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OUR VIEW

Don't kill the doves

DNR considering open season on bird of peace

Y

ou can always tell that spring has arrived when the pair of mourning doves gather underneath our bird feeder.

They, or their parents, have been coming to our yard for several years. They seem majestic in their own way as they strut across the yard looking for feed.

And there is something special when they take flight. You can hear the verbal and the wing sounds which are a special song from this dusty beige bird.

Mourning doves are called the bird of peace. To a lot of people they are unique, special.

To some they are prey.

Under a plan being considered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources a hunting season for the doves could begin in the state by the fall of 2001. The DNR will consider the plan at a meeting on Jan. 26. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress will review the proposed season.

We have to ask: Why?

Those pushing the hunt say the mourning doves are a renewable resource and they compare this new hunt to deer, geese and other things that have a legal season. And they point out that 39 other states permit dove hunting.

Hunters maintain the doves are elusive and delicious. Bird watchers see a far different view.

It is proposed that the season, if approved, would run from early September to late October. Each hunter could bag between a dozen and 15 birds.

Let's put the brakes on this one. Why do we want to slaughter these gentle birds of peace?

Protect mourning doves

Editor, News-Herald: The Wisconsin DNR, along with the D Hunters Association, is trying to sneak a mourning dove hunting season past us. Last April, an "advisory question" was presented at spring hearings held across the state, concerning interest in a mourning dove hunt in Wisconsin. A total of 3,382 people, out of a population of nearly five million, voted; the hunters came out ahead 2,360 to 1,022. The issue was not reported on, and if it was mentioned in newspapers, it was quickly forgotten.

This year will be different. A small but inspired group, calling ourselves "Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Cranes and Doves" (WCCCD), is trying to get as much truthful information to the public as possible. The DNR will have a vote on April 10 at this year's spring hearings, which are held in every county, to decide if there will be a mourning dove season or not in Wisconsin.

The mourning dove is currently protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty and State Bill 422, which declares the mourning dove to be "State bird of peace." It is hunted in 37 out of 48 states. The states which do not have a dove season are the states between Minnesota and Maine. These states do not have a dove season because the numbers are too low to support a season without endangering the doves. The Wisconsin dove hunters estimate there are between three and four million doves in the state. The DNR estimates six million (last spring the DNR estimated 14 million) in the state. Based on bird survey counts and other information compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the actual estimate is closer to 1.5 million. This is one of the lowest populations in America.

The mourning dove needs the support of all citizens who care about the fate of one of the most popular birds at your feeder, and the most gentle bird in America. Please come out on April 10 and show your support by voting no to a dove season.

KEVIN KEARN
Sun Prairie

Disturbing the doves' peace

Mourning doves were on the ballot this week, and the small birds with the distinctive, haunting cry lost the election. At least they did from the sensible perspective of those who believe the birds should not be hunted in Wisconsin, including Gov. Tommy Thompson, a hunter himself.

More than 27,000 people, a record number, turned out for statewide hearings Monday night on the proposed dove hunt. More than three-fourths favored making the dove a game bird, providing what many rightly fear may be a virtual mandate to the Natural Resources Board to allow a hunt, beginning next year.

The question isn't whether the state's dove population can sustain a hunt. According to the Department of Natural Resources, mourning doves are among the most abundant species in North America. And since the birds are migratory and hunted in most other states, some folks argue that the birds will be hunted regardless.

But this is about far more than mourning doves: It's also about hunting rights vs. ani-

mal rights. Many hunters believe that if mourning doves are protected, their hunting rights will be eroded. Outdoorsmen fear that the ultimate aim of some animal rights advocates is to limit or ban not only hunting, but also fishing. Mourning doves are simply the first step in that direction, hunters believe.

Those concerns ought not to be dismissed lightly. Allowing mourning doves to be hunted would not serve any practical conservation purpose the way deer hunting, for instance, helps to control the state's large deer herd. There might not even be much dove hunting; the president of the Wisconsin Alliance for Resources and the Environment, a group that favors the hunt, said as much, conceding that "very few people will hunt them in Wisconsin."

The governor says a dove hunt could intensify opposition to hunting. The mourning dove, after all, is the state's official bird of peace. It's hard to see how shooting it would enhance that image or, for that matter, the image of those who pull the trigger.

Vote against dove hunting

Editor, News-Herald: On Monday, the Conservation Congress Spring Hearings will include a question about whether to legalize mourning dove hunting. The only reason mourning dove hunting is even being considered is for sport shooting, a cruel and ridiculous practice that should be outlawed. Mourning doves, while abundant in our state, are not overpopulated. They are not a nuisance.

Dove hunting serves no useful purpose. Doves are actually helpful to farmers because they eat weed seeds on the ground, acting as a natural herbicide. Also, dove hunting will result in the discharge of thousands of pounds of lead shot. This will lead to more pollution and pose a risk to wildlife.

Doves are small, peaceable birds that should be protected from special interest hunting organizations and sport hunting fanatics that want to change our laws to serve themselves. Please attend the April 10 hearings and vote "no" on a dove hunting season.

NIKI SHAY
La Crosse

YOUR VIEWS

Don't kill everything that moves

Editor, News-Herald: When one speaks out against the actions of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, a group that advises the department on hunting and fishing rules, one usually gets labeled as an anti-hunter or a member of the Animal Rights Coalition. I am neither. In fact, I come from a family of hunters and have hunted myself. However, hunting isn't just killing everything that moves and having a killing season on gentle, harmless mourning doves just doesn't make sense!

This year's annual county meetings will be held on April 10. The Marathon County meeting will be held at the Marathon High School starting at 7 p.m. Wood County will hold its meeting at the Pittsville High School on the same date. So many of us were silent when the annual county meetings took place last April showing a vote of 2 to 1 in favor of hunting these peaceful little birds. Whoever controls the vote controls the law. Now bird lovers must be present at their respective

county locations on April 10 and vote no to a dove season. We don't need this type of hunting season in Wisconsin.

BARBARA GAULKE
Colby

Vote against senseless slaughter of doves

Editor, News-Herald: The DNR and Rep. Johnsrud, 96th Assembly District, wants us to believe that our Wisconsin hunters with guns in hand would find the "elusive" mourning dove as a good killing sport.

Elusive? These gentle little birds that eat from our feeders and build their nests in the nearest shrub by our houses? They are almost domesticated and we are led to believe that it is sporting to shoot them. It would make more sense to

throw rocks at them or kick them aside while walking in your yards.

Real hunters are concerned and do not gun animals/birds down just to kill or use as target practice. They value life and justify the kill by harvesting the meat. Is a 2-inch drumstick worth taking the life of this gentle peaceful bird? As it is, we do not have great numbers of mourning doves in central or northern Wisconsin. Many are helped through the winter by feeding them. Their gentle cooing puts them in the songbird category and they are a delight to hear a watch by bird lovers.

People in the 96th Assembly District should also ask themselves if Wisconsin needs DuWayne Johnsrud in the State Legislature. He has proven that he serves only himself. Taxpayers should find out how much it cost them to entertain Johnsrud's friends with a dove luncheon or how much money the Dove Hunters Association shelled out for his re-election. Many people believe that politics and big business was corrupted the DNR's mission and I believe that this is a good example of just that.

If Wisconsin ends up with a law allowing the shooting of mourning dove will only be because people did not get out and vote. Please come out in the April election and vote against the senseless slaughter of this gentle bird that stands for peace in Wisconsin.

BARBARA GAULKE
Colby