

Jim Weix

D107

June 22, 2000

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

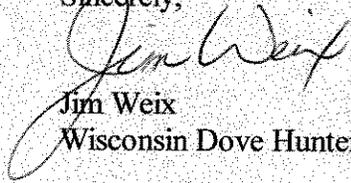
RE: Dove Hunt

Dear Senator Baumgart:

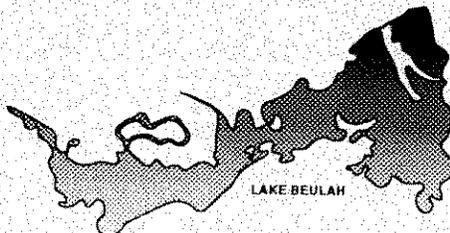
I would like to thank you for the professionalism and fairness that you demonstrated at the hearing on June 22. I heard many people comment on the positive image that you presented.

When all is said and done, I hope that you can put aside your personal reservations on the subject. I urge you to support biology and your fellow sportsmen and women.

Sincerely,



Jim Weix
Wisconsin Dove Hunter's Association



Blazel, Ted

From: Sue Hinz [whinz@bytehead.com]
Sent: Thursday, June 22, 2000 7:57 PM
To: sen.baumgart@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Proposed Mourning Dove Hunt

Dear Sen. Baumgart,

As a constituent I am compelled to write about the current mourning dove hunt controversy. Please oppose this ridiculous proposal. As a member of the ASPCA and a lifelong resident of Wisconsin I believe that dove hunting is simply inhumane. The birds are very small and can be seriously wounded by hunters and are often not found because of their size. Dove hunting is not only inhumane; it is unnecessary. There are already many species of "game" birds for Wisconsin hunters to kill. Dove hunting is done for sport not for subsistence.

I feel very strongly about this hope you will fight to keep this wonderful bird of peace safe!!!

Sincerely,

Susan C. Hinz
2728 Columbus Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Vera Stroud

*16940 West Shadow Drive
New Berlin, Wisconsin 53151*

262-679-1702

June 23, 2000

Senator Alice Clausing
1314 Wilson Avenue
Menomonie, WI 54751

Room 319 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Clausing,

As a resident of the State of Wisconsin for 39½ years, I wish to express my deep frustration with the rule-writing process that has allowed the season on killing mourning doves to get this far. I am asking you, as a court of last resort, to allow your Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Resources, and Campaign Finance Reform to deny the proposed hunting season on mourning doves.

I am also a publicly elected official. I am a county board supervisor, and have been, except for 6 years, an elected public official since 1978. I know the tremendous pressures on you to allow this hunt to proceed, especially in view of your coming run for re-election.

I've heard all the arguments the DNR has made, that the kill would replace the natural demise of these birds and therefore would not result in a true diminishing of their numbers. I have not heard that anyone gave testimony that their numbers in Wisconsin have been cut in half since about 1970.

It is the young birds that die for lack of food in the habitat, not usually the adults. Mourning doves mate for life in a portion of the population, so the destruction of a mate in the fall would presumably lead to a lack of reproduction the following spring for the remaining bird.

Apart from talking numbers, how about the lead shot that is being allowed, leading to a slow painful death for those birds that are not killed outright? How about the lead shot leading to lead poisoning for those humans who consume the birds, there being so little to consume, per bird?

Mourning doves have no history of being a threat in any way to the life and activities of humans. Their only "crime" is that they dare to co-exist with us on this planet.

This is undoubtedly the most blatant example of the "tyranny of the minority" I have ever experienced as a student and practitioner of political science. As you know, over 60% of the population of Wisconsin is against this hunt. This is the first occasion I have experienced of being ashamed to be a citizen of this state.

If you do have opposition over this issue, I pledge to put myself and my friends here in SE Wisconsin at your disposal to help you win your election. I do believe in putting my money and my mouth where my principles lie.

Yours sincerely,

Vera Stroud
Vera Stroud

This is 100% Recycled Paper

cc: Senators Baumgart, Wirch, Schultz, and Lasee

WCCCD

JUN 26 2000

Wisconsin Citizens Concerned for Cranes & Doves

Hunting Sandhill Cranes and Mourning Doves? Because we can, doesn't mean we have to, or that we should

June 24, 2000

Sen. Baumgart
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Sen. Baumgart,

It has been indicated to me that you are not interested in any more testimony regarding the proposal to hunt Mourning Doves in Wisconsin. It seems that since the DNR was allowed two extra appearances to refute testimony offered to your committee that you would at least consider looking at the documents I have enclosed with this letter. There was some intense questioning of George Meyer in regard to his support and lobbying for the proposal before the Natural Resources Board. He claimed that he only did it after the "overwhelming" vote for the proposal by the people attending the DNR Hearings April 10. My first document, an article from Wisconsin Waterfowl, indicates that the lobbying and support started in 1997. The article clearly indicates that early interest in this proposal came from Rep. Johnsrud and was supported by Sec. Meyer and the Department. It did not come from the hunting public.

The second document is to clear up the misunderstanding between you and Susan Chapin in regard to the number of hunters in the state. As you can see the Department issued 708,195 hunting licenses in 1998, down 13% from 1996 and representing about 13.5% of the population of Wisconsin. This is without taking into account that a number of people would have purchased more than one license and more than a few that would have been from out of state. Hunter numbers are not quite what you think.

I have also included the definitions from Chapter 29 of the State Statutes to backup what I pointed out in my testimony. Quite clearly Sec. Meyer and Attorney Tim Andryke are wrong in claiming that the definition of "game birds" only relates to game farms. I was not present when Andryk presented his testimony regarding the comments from our attorney. It's interesting that he was able to get an opinion from the AG's office when neither Sen. Clausung, Rep. Foti, or our attorneys could. I understand it was not presented in written form, we have requested a copy when one is prepared.

The last document relates to the national decreasing interest in hunting and increasing national interest in bird watching. This is something I pointed out to both the Department Secretary and Board. The Department should be looking to the future and what interests the general public not staying entrenched in the old ideas of just who they are responsible to.

Sincerely,



John Wieneke, Secretary,
WCCCD
P.O. Box 103
New London, WI 54961
(920) 982-5561

Mourning Dove Breeding

Population Status, 1997

With funds received from outside our organization, WWA recently polled its members regarding their opinion regarding a future dove hunting season in Wisconsin. Survey results showed the membership favored by a 5 (for) to 1 (against) an opportunity to hunt doves in Wisconsin.

For our reader's information, following is the material provided earlier this year to the Natural Resources Board members by Secretary George Meyer upon the request of Representative DuWayne Johnsrud.



Abundance

The mourning dove, (*Zenaidura macroura*) is one of the most abundant birds in the United States, and is, by far, the most abundant game bird. The estimated fall flight in the conterminous U.S. is more than 500 million doves. For comparison, the estimated fall flight was 83 million ducks in 1996. The Wisconsin annual fall flight estimate is in excess of 12 million doves. Mourning doves are found throughout Wisconsin, but are more numerous south of a line from Green Bay to Eau Claire.

Biology and Management

The mourning dove reproductive cycle in the Midwest begins in late April or early May when egg laying begins and continues until early September when fledging ends. Mourning doves lay two eggs per clutch, and raise between two and five clutches per year. After 14 days in the nest, nestlings fledge and are dependent on the adults for another 10-14 days. Conifers are preferred nesting habitat, but mourning doves will use a wide variety of available trees, and are very successful in shelter belts, small woodlots, and suburban areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service divides the country into 3 management units (Eastern, Central, and Western) for population monitoring and management purposes. Research indicates that 53% of mourning dove nesting attempts are successful in the Eastern Management Unit (EMU), and an average of 4.8 fledglings per year are produced by each pair of doves. The annual mortality rate in hunted states in the EMU is 60% for adults, and 75% for immature mourning doves. The annual mortality rate in non-hunted states is 50% for adults, and 53% for immature mourning doves.

Mourning dove habitat across the U.S. as well as in the Midwest has increased since presettlement times, starkly contrasting habitat trends for most other game

birds. Mourning dove populations have increased as well. Robbins (1991) reports that as agriculture spread north in the United States, mourning dove populations followed.

Two different segments of the migratory mourning dove population use Wisconsin. One segment is made up of doves that breed in Wisconsin. In fall, these doves leave Wisconsin following one of two migration routes. One route leads to wintering grounds in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and the other to Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Mourning doves migrating from Wisconsin are harvested in many other states. Past band recovery studies have shown that Wisconsin mourning doves make up 8% of the harvest in Florida, 6% in Illinois and Louisiana, and 4% in Alabama. The second segment of the mourning dove population that uses Wisconsin is made up of migrants from other states and Canada. Some of these doves winter in Wisconsin, the remainder pass through to more southerly wintering areas.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has conducted annual nation-wide coo-counts and sight surveys to monitor mourning dove population trends on more than 1000 routes each spring for more than 30 years. The population in the EMU has been stable (no significant increase or decrease) over the past 31 years (1966-1996). This is true in both hunted and non-hunted states. Over the past 10 years, there has been a significant decline in the EMU as a whole, and in the hunted EMU states, but no significant trend in the unhunted EMU states. In Wisconsin, there has been no significant change in number of mourning doves heard or seen over the past 10 years or the past 31 years. The USFWS has concluded that hunting does not impact dove population trends.

Hunting

The mourning dove is a migratory bird protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The current federal season framework allows for 70 day hunting seasons that may not begin prior to September 1. States are responsible for establishing their own hunting seasons within the federal framework, and bag limits in the midwest are typically 15 doves per day (Table 1).

Mourning doves are presently hunted in 38 states. In the Midwest, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and all the states south have mourning dove hunting seasons. Michigan has been considering legislation in the previous couple years, and Minnesota began investigating a mourning dove hunt last year.

Approximately 50-55 million mourning doves are harvested each year in the United States. Mourning dove hunting is very popular in southern states, and Texas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, and California are the highest harvest states. Estimated Pittman-Robertson revenues resulting from mourning dove hunting were \$7.6 million in 1987. USFWS research indicates that there is no population level effect of hunting nation-wide, nor is there an effect on population in the Eastern Management Unit (EMU). Approximately 15% of total mourning dove mortality is attributable to hunting. There was no significant trend in mourning dove population indices in the EMU over the past 31 years.

Regulations Development

No authorizing legislation is required. The Department would need to promulgate rules to establish a mourning dove season and bag limits.

The Department has statutory authority to establish a mourning dove season. A mourning dove season is consistent with the Department's mission and tradition of providing for sustainable use of a renewable



Licenses

Chapter 5

Working to provide anglers and hunters with convenient ways to buy licenses, to register their boats, and to get quick, consistent answers to their questions about regulations, licenses and our natural resources.

Who pays for the license program?

The Fish and Wildlife Fund pays for 43% of the \$7.2 million license program and 51 of its 137 positions. The additional 86 positions and \$3.9 million is provided through general tax funds (GPR), environmental fund, boating, all terrain vehicle and snowmobile funds and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

Where does your Fish and Wildlife money go?

Sell hunting, fishing, trapping licenses

Issue special wildlife harvest permits

License game farms

Inform and educate the public

Pay program operations costs

What Has Your Money Accomplished in 1997-998?

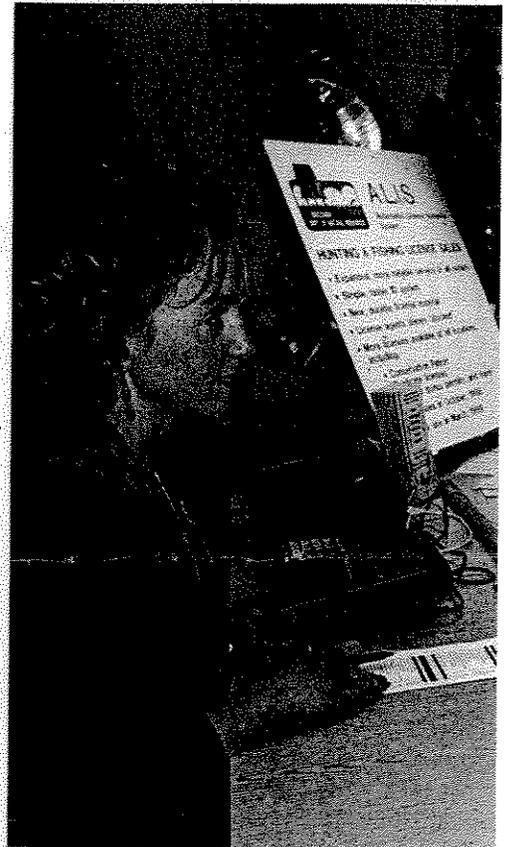
Sell hunting, fishing, trapping and other licenses: State law requires people to buy licenses and permits to hunt, fish and trap; the DNR sells licenses at 18 service centers and works with all 72 county clerks and through retail agents to sell licenses. We improved convenience for 2 million customers by developing and installing computers and computer systems, and training employees, so they could quickly access information to answer customer questions and issue duplicate licenses.

Sales of hunting and fishing licenses (depicts growth and seasonal fluctuations)

FY	Hunting	Fishing	Total
1995	784,003	1,357,428	2,141,431
1996	813,111	1,374,809	2,187,920
1997	739,345	1,401,050	2,140,395
1998	708,195 *	1,467,184 *	2,021,226 *

*FY98 Totals are estimated.

-13%



4.9%
of each Fish &
Wildlife Dollar

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Activities

	1982-1983	1994-1995	% Change
Bird Watching 	21.2 million	54.1 million	+155.2 %
Hunting 	21.2 million	18.8 million	-11.4 %
Fishing 	60.1 million	58.3 million	-3.0 %

1995 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment,
University of Georgia

Wexler, James

From: Nancy Groth [ngroth@excel.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2000 5:44 AM
To: Sen.Baumgart
Subject: Mourning Dove Issue

To the Honorable Jim Baumgart, Please oppose a mourning dove hunting season. It is mere target practice. There are already plenty of other game birds that are legal to shoot. These gentle birds do not deserve to be slaughtered. Thank you for your consideration of this side of the issue.

Sincerely, Nancy and Ernie Groth

P.O. Box H, Elkhart Lake, Wi. 53020

Wexler, James

From: Peter Sattler [psattler@excel.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2000 1:28 AM
To: Sen.Baumgart
Subject: Vote NO on Dove Hunting

Dear Sen. Baumgart,

As residents of Sheboygan, we are DISMAYED to hear that you are in favor of the proposed mourning dove hunt. The irony of allowing open season on our state's Symbol of Peace is hard to miss. We urge you to change your position on this subject. Please support Sen. Alice Clausing's efforts to put this issue before the voters in a statewide referendum. At the very least, please do what you can to keep hunters from using lead shot to kill these beautiful birds.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Peter and Lisa Sattler
2906 Mill Road
Sheboygan, WI 53083

CONSTITUENT PROBLEM FORM

DATE:

CONSTITUENT:

OTHER INVOLVED PERSONS:

Judy ~~W~~ Schroeder

ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 433

Plymouth, WI 53073

PHONE: Home

Work:

FAX:

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM OR REQUEST/ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Oppose the Dove Hunt

Sen. Jim Baumgart
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
Tollfree # 1-888-295-8750

Senator James Baumgart.

My husband and I are requesting you to vote against the Mourning Dove hunting bill. They are our state symbol of Peace. Hunting of Doves is inhumane. They are so small they can be wounded but never found which would cause needless suffering on these peaceful birds. It is also unnecessary. The hunters have many other game birds and doves have very little meat. It is just another opportunity for senseless killing of helpless animals.

My husband and I are constituents of yours and we plead with you to vote against this bill.

Kathy & Tom Hayner
1328 N 31st St.
Sheboygan, WI
53081

Please accept this as my argument against the hunting of the Mourning Dove in Wisconsin.

The Mourning Dove is the STATE BIRD OF *ALL OF THE CITIZENS OF WISCONSIN*.

Why is a special interest group- the hunting population of Wisconsin allowed to decide what is to be hunted in Wisconsin?

Please put the vote to all of the citizens of Wisconsin. Let all of the residents vote on whether or not the STATE BIRD of *OUR STATE* (NOT JUST THE HUNTING SOCIETY) should be KILLED for the pleasure of some of the residents.

I've attended the meetings. This Mourning Dove issue is the issue of the hunters fighting the idea of anyone else telling them what they can and can not hunt.

Why then shouldn't the other residents of Wisconsin be allowed to vote on what should or should not be hunted?

There are many residents who feed these birds and enjoy watching them. Killing them for pleasure is the same as killing the robin for pleasure- however the robin IS NOT OUR STATE BIRD.

Will a new state bird be chosen for our state and who will make that decision ? The hunting population or ALL of the residents of the state.

When it is your turn to vote please consider that you represent all of the citizens of Wisconsin not just the hunting population.

Thank you for your consideration

Karen Zitzke
W204 N8291 Lannon Road
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

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

Dear Senator;

We are not in favor of a Mourning Dove Hunt. It is the States bird of peace and shooting it is just as bad as desecrating the flag.

Sincerely,

Mr. + Mrs. Duane Boelk

Mr. and Mrs. Duane Boelk
P.O. Box 458
Oakfield, Wi. 53065

Senator Jim Baumgart
Rm 306 South State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, Wi.

Please do not support a Mourning Dove hunt.
There is no shortage of birds to shoot already
in Wisconsin. Shooting Mourning Doves is
not necessary and would make hunters appear
mean-spirited. Wildlife is for everyone,
not just one group of people.
Real men do not shoot songbirds.

Sincerely,

Judy Stephenson

2780 Hwy CC
Slinger, Wi. 53086
262-644-6205

Senator:

I do not want Wisconsin to have an open season on Mourning Doves .. Are the hunters in Wisconsin sportsmen or are they just looking for something to kill ? I fully agree that there should be controls on such things as deer and fish but what harm does the little mourning dove do to us or our environment? For those who are true sportsman I am sure they will agree .

So Please have compassion on the bird, it does give us some solace with its cooing . Do not make Wisconsin look hard and cruel.

Thank you.

Jerome Andersen
3850 Schreiner Road
Spring Green, Wi.
53588

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerome Andersen", written in black ink.

Carol Brodsky
4153 Fisk Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54904
(920) 235-4473

To Senator Baumgart;

Let it be understood that I am not against hunting. My father was a hunter all his life. He shot deer and ducks, but I know he would be appalled at the idea of killing song birds. My father was a naturalist as well as a hunter.

In short, killing song birds is an appalling idea. Based on reason and simple common sense, please consider the following points:

The Wisconsin population of Mourning Doves is not large enough to constitute a nuisance, as they are in southern Indiana.

The chairman of the Conservation Congress in Winnebago County, himself, said Mourning Doves lay their last clutch of eggs in late August to early September. At the same time the proposed hunting season to kill Mourning Doves would be September - October. It is apparent that by this timing baby birds (squabs) would be left to die. Is that civilized?

Mourning Doves feed in small flocks. They take flight in a small flock. If they are shot with a shot gun, the scatter-pattern of the buckshot will wound many or more birds than it kills. The wounded Doves will fall into the underbrush and hide. They will be left there to die. No hunter I know of will search through heavy underbrush, mosquito and deer fly ridden, to find a wounded and dying Dove.

Those Mourning Doves that are killed will yield a "palm sized" morsel of food. If prepared correctly to be palatable, it will very likely be filled with buckshot. Imagine biting down on unavoidable buckshot. The dentists will be the only ones to benefit.

I am not a rabid environmentalist. But I am deeply saddened by the fact that although I live in the country, I have not heard a Meadow Lark in fifteen years. I have not heard a Bobwhite quail in at least three decades. I have not heard a Whippoorwill in over fifty years. Now because the Mourning Dove has managed to survive statewide urban sprawl and loss of habitat that has so devastated other bird species, some hunters want to kill these gentle, inoffensive song birds.

I never had the privilege of seeing a Passenger Pigeon. They were wantonly slaughtered and EXTINCT before I was born. No, I and my children and grandchildren and everyone else WILL NEVER SEE a Passenger Pigeon. I have tried to keep my deep, heartfelt anger controlled on this matter of killing Mourning Doves but I cannot stop my tears.

PLEASE join some other hunters I have talked to on this matter and vote NO, NO, NO! on establishing a killing season for Mourning Doves in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Carol Brodsky

To The Honorable Senator Baumgart,
We are opposed to Dove hunting!
Please act in our interest.

Pat J. Morris
505 W 3rd St.
Ashland WI 54806

John Morris
505 W 3rd ST ASHLAND WI

Sheila L. Hoerich
308 3rd St. E.
Ashland, WI 54806

Randi Hoerich
Ashland, WI

Henderson, Patrick

From: Legislative Hotline
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2000 12:12 PM
To: Sen.Baumgart
Subject: Legislative Hotline Message

Senator Baumgart;

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

Robert Heinzen
2331 Hunters Ridge ct
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Date: 07/07/2000
Time: 12:10:03

NO CALL REQUIRED

Please oppose the dove hunt if you get the chance.

Call Received by Pat McKee Assembly

July 10, 2000

Robert Heinzen
2331 Hunters Ridge Court
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Dear Mr. Heinzen:

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 was held by the Senate Agriculture, Environmental Resources and Campaign Finance Reform Committee regarding administrative rules to begin the hunt in 2001. No action was recommended by the committee.

I will remember your position on this proposal if it should be considered by the Legislature again in the future. I appreciate hearing from you about this issue.

Sincerely,

JIM BAUMGART
State Senator
9th Senate District

JB:jw

John Wieneke

From: Mailer-Daemon@email-delivery.infotrac-custom.com
To: kdkkearns1@aol.com
Subject: Signs of the dove: America's premier gamebird hits turbulent air.
Date: Monday, January 01, 1998 12:00 AM

Full content for this article includes illustration and photograph.

Source: Sports Afeld, Sept 1998 v220 n3 p52(1).

Title: Signs of the dove: America's premier gamebird hits turbulent air.
Author: George Harrison

Abstract: Across the United States populations of mourning doves are diminishing due to environmental changes in their habitats caused by land development and farming practices. In some areas where these birds have adapted well, a debate is brewing whether to declare open season on them to control growth.

Subjects: United States - Plants and animals
Mourning dove - Growth
Bird populations - Control

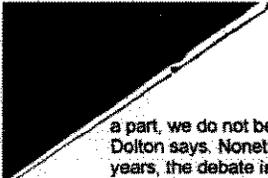
Electronic Collection: A21236252
RN: A21236252

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According to a recent report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the mourning dove is the most abundant, most widely distributed and most frequently taken gamebird in North America. Of the estimated 475 million doves flying around the U.S. each autumn, some 41.3 million are harvested in 37 states by 2.3 million hunters who invest 10 million hunting days. That's a lot of recreation. Additionally, mourning doves are regular visitors to bird feeders throughout the country, to the enjoyment of bird-watchers and photographers. But not all the news is good.

"We are becoming increasingly concerned about declines in the eastern and central portions of the country, down about 14 and 10 percent respectively over the past 10 years," says biologist David Dolton of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Migratory Bird Management. He points out that declines are evident in both hunting and nonhunting states. "We believe this is due primarily to land-use changes, such as with urban growth and farming practices that have destroyed valuable habitat. There are also studies under way to more fully understand the role of hunting pressure in dove populations," Dolton says.

Doves were declining in the western U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s, and when hunting was eventually restricted, beginning with the 1987-88 season, the population stabilized. "While we believe that the hunting restrictions played



a part, we do not believe hunting was solely responsible for the decline," Dolton says. Nonetheless, as numbers have slid slowly downward in recent years, the debate is being revisited.

Open Season? Because mourning doves have prospered in many regions despite heavy hunting pressure, there is also increased interest in opening seasons on them in the 11 states where they are not hunted or are protected as songbirds. In Ohio, there will be a referendum this fall to ban hunting them statewide. Iowa and Wisconsin, meanwhile, are currently in a debate between hunters and preservationists over whether the mourning dove should be reclassified as a gamebird.

"It was presented to the Iowa legislature last year, but the antihunting groups had a bigger turnout than the sportsmen," says Richard Bishop, chief of Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "Biologically, nothing is being done for mourning doves in Iowa, but if the legislature will change its classification to 'gamebird,' money and management could be directed to doves as it has been with wild turkeys, deer and others," Bishop says.

"There is no biological reason not to establish a dove season in Wisconsin," says Keith Warnke, upland ecologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "But it's a very emotional issue, and it's going to take a strong grassroots effort on the part of Wisconsin hunters," he says.

Full Cycle: Despite declines in some regions, mourning dove populations are very healthy throughout their breeding range, which stretches from southern portions of Canada, through the U.S., and into Mexico. One reason for their abundance is their reproductive strategy—they are virtual breeding machines.

In most of the country, the nesting cycle begins in March or April with court-ing and the mournful call for which the bird is named.

After much billing and cooing, and courtship gliding on fixed wings, "the male selects a nesting site, often on a branch of an evergreen, 10 to 25 feet high," says ornithologist Hal Harrison. "On a flimsy platform of sticks, the female lays two pure white eggs, which are incubated for 13 to 14 days by both birds," Harrison says.

The hatchlings of mourning doves may be the ugliest of all baby birds, but fed on a regurgitated glandular fluid called "pigeon milk," they quickly grow into handsome fledglings. After about 10 days, the youngsters leave the nest, and within a week they are on their own.

Mourning doves commonly produce three to five broods in a single breeding season. However, "mortality among juveniles is high, with 56 to 84 percent not surviving their first year. The annual adult mortality rate is 46 to 70 percent, in different parts of the U.S.," says Dolton.

For those birds that do manage to survive their first year in the wild, the average life span is three to five years. One dove held in captivity, however, lived to be 17.

— End —

THE MOURNING DOVE IN WISCONSIN

QUICK FACTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Zenaida macroura*. (There are two subspecies of mourning dove that reside in Wisconsin, *carolinensis* and *marginella*.)

FOODS: Weed seeds and waste grains.

HABITAT: Mourning doves are habitat generalists and prefer woodlots and edge components over interior forests.

PRODUCTIVITY: Mourning doves are very prolific birds. The nesting season runs from April to September; peak nesting is May through August. Each pair produces multiple broods each year.

What is not mentioned here is that nesting failures are common, average fledging rate per pair in Wisconsin is about 3 in a breeding season.

(The following was pulled from the section "reproduction" and emphasizes what I have said above and contradicts the term "prolific".)

Previous investigations show nest success is variable and averages 53% in the Eastern Management Unit (Fig. 4). Past research indicates that mourning dove productivity is above the level needed to maintain the population in the Eastern Management Unit. *How old is this "past research"?*

ABUNDANCE: moved to next page

HUNT MANAGEMENT: Hunting is monitored and managed by professional wildlife biologists from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife agencies.

The same professional biologists are expressing great concerns about the declining Mourning Dove population across the US.

EFFECTS OF HUNTING: Continent-wide hunting mortality is estimated at 10-15% of the fall population annually. This mortality is believed to be below the level which would significantly decrease long-term dove abundance or hinder expansion of geographic area. The mourning dove population in Wisconsin can sustain hunting without limiting the population.

What evidence is there to prove this statement? Wisconsin is at best sustaining its current breeding population of Mourning Doves, at worst this population is slipping every year. Of the projected 150,000 Doves that would be harvested every year, at least 40% or 60,000 Doves would have returned to breed the following spring, about an additional 4% loss to the breeding population. In addition another 1% or 12,000 Doves would be lost to the breeding population due to the high crippling losses (30%) involved in Dove hunting.

IDENTIFICATION

The mourning dove is a member of the family of birds called Columbidae. Male and female mourning doves look very similar with grayish-brown backs, buff-colored undersides, black spots on the wings and behind the eye, and white feathers in the tail, which show during flight. Juveniles can be distinguished from adults by light buffing on the tips of the primary feathers which persist until the first molt. Young are indistinguishable from adults by the age of 3 months.

POPULATION

The mourning dove is one of the most abundant birds in the United States and occupies a very broad range in North America (Fig. 1). Because doves are very abundant, widely distributed and inconspicuous, precise population estimates are difficult. The current continent-wide population estimate is over 400 million in the fall migration.



Fig. 1. Breeding and wintering ranges of the mourning dove (adapted from Mirarchi and Baskett 1994).

Just 3 years ago, Secretary Meyer reported to the Department Board that there were 500 million in the fall migration!!!

ABUNDANCE: Mourning doves are one of the most abundant and widely distributed birds in North America and Wisconsin. The breeding range extends from central Canada in the north to southern Mexico in the south and encompasses all of the lower 48 states. Banding and harvest data from the USFWS indicate that 4-5 million doves migrate from Wisconsin each fall.

However, distribution maps from the USF&W Service show very little breeding range directly north of Wisconsin. See above

Just 3 years ago Secretary Meyer Reported to the Department Board the there were in excess of 12 million Doves migrating through Wisconsin!!

The last serious banding study is at least 30 years old!!!

Mourning doves are abundant throughout Wisconsin, and are most numerous south of a line from Green Bay to Eau Claire. Conservative population estimates place the number of mourning doves migrating from

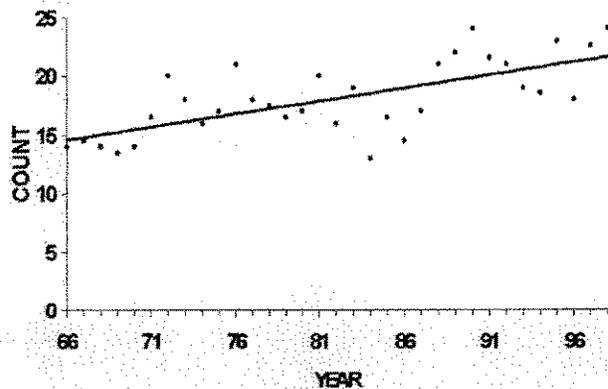


Fig. 2. Wisconsin mourning dove population trends (1966-98) based on number of mourning doves heard per route. Adapted from USGS Breeding Bird Survey results.

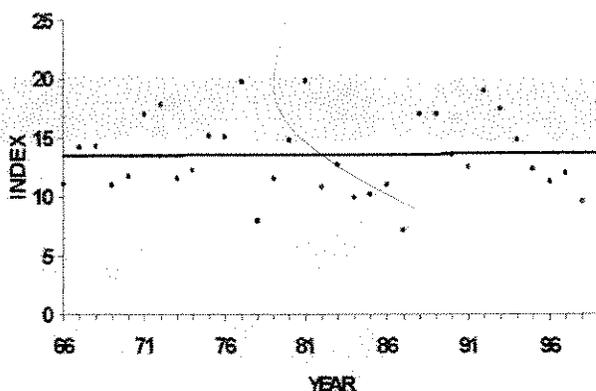


Fig. 3. Wisconsin breeding mourning dove index based on mourning doves heard (1966-99). Adapted from USF Call Count Survey results.

HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Mourning doves are highly adaptable to a variety of habitats including coniferous forests, deciduous forests, residential, urban, and agricultural landscapes. Habitat needs include trees for nesting and roosting, a food source and a source of water. Habitat in Wisconsin has likely expanded with agricultural expansion since settlement. *With the expansion on large scale agriculture in Wisconsin, fence rows and tree lines between farm fields have disappeared. This has reduced the nesting opportunities and success for breeding pairs.*

Wisconsin in the fall at 4-5 million.

According to data collected by the North American Breeding Bird Survey (Fig. 2), the Wisconsin dove population has shown an increase over the past 33 years (USFWS 1999). **The trend over the past 10 years shows a slight decrease (USFWS 1999).** *The index derived from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Call Count Survey (Fig. 3), shows a decline in number of doves heard over the last 10 years in Wisconsin and in the Eastern Management Unit (USFWS 1999).* However, over the long-term, the Call Count Survey results indicate no change in the Wisconsin dove population over the last 34 years (USFWS 1999).

Note that the Breeding Bird Survey data are actual count data and the Call Count Survey data are an index so the results are not directly comparable. The information is provided to demonstrate two of the several indices used to monitor mourning dove populations. All provide useful information when assessing the status of the mourning dove in Wisconsin.

What is also not noted here is a corresponding decline in harvest numbers from a peak in 1976, along with a corresponding decline in hunter interest as numbers and opportunities decline.

REPRODUCTION

The mourning dove reproductive cycle in the Midwest begins in late April or early May, when egg laying begins and continues until early September when fledging ends. Doves build scant nests of twigs and grass usually placed in trees or shrubs 10 to 30 feet above ground. In wooded areas, elms and maples are preferred. In more open areas, coniferous shelterbelts and windbreaks are preferred for nesting.

See above, reference to change in farming methods

Mourning doves lay two white eggs per clutch and raise between two and five clutches per year. ***Again, 2-5 is the reference to national averages and has very little to do with Wisconsin!*** Both parents take part in incubation and brood-rearing activities. ***Hunting is proposed to start Sept. 1, when brood-rearing activities are still going on!*** Young doves, or squabs, hatch featherless and grow rapidly, increasing their weight by 14 times within 15 days of age. Young can survive on their own 5 to 9 days after leaving the nest and most leave the nest area within 2 to 3 weeks of fledging.

Previous investigations show nest success is variable and averages 53% in the Eastern Management Unit (Fig. 4). Past research indicates that mourning dove productivity is above the level needed to maintain the population in the Eastern Management Unit. ***How old is this "past research"?***

MORTALITY

The natural mortality rate for mourning doves is high; approximately 6 out of 10 birds do not survive from one year to the next. Research indicates that mourning dove mortality is caused by a variety of factors including predators, disease, accidents, hunting and weather extremes. ***Given the reproductive rate of Wisconsin Doves this mortality rate would result in a stable population, without hunting.***

FOOD HABITS

Ninety-nine percent of the mourning dove diet is comprised of weed seeds and grains. Preferred weed seeds include pigweed, foxtails, wild sunflower, and ragweed. Preferred grains include corn, sorghum and millet. Insects make up a very small proportion of the dove diet. Doves move an average of 2-8 miles for food. ***Please note that black sunflower seeds are left off this list, please refer to the Sports Afield article.***

MIGRATION PATTERNS

Two different segments of the migratory dove population use Wisconsin. One segment is composed of doves that breed in the state. In fall, these doves leave Wisconsin following one of two migration routes. One route leads to wintering grounds in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and the other to Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The second segment of the mourning dove population that uses Wisconsin is made up of migrants from other states and Canada. Some of these doves winter in Wisconsin, the remainder pass through to more southerly wintering areas. ***What other states and from where in Canada? How old is this information? Is it from the 30-year-old banding study? Based on observations from all over the state the migration patterns have changed and many Doves winter in Wisconsin.***

HUNTING

The mourning dove is a migratory bird protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act which provides for managed hunting. The current federal season framework allows states to choose from either a 70-day hunting season with a daily bag limit of 12 doves or a 60-day season with a daily bag limit of 15. Seasons established by states may not begin prior to September 1 and may be more restrictive than the federal regulations. States are responsible for establishing their own hunting seasons within the federal framework.

Mourning doves are currently hunted in 37 states (Fig. 3). ***Why did the question asked at the Congress hearings say 38?*** In the Midwest, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and all states south have mourning dove hunting seasons. ***All of these states have greater population densities than Wisconsin. Indiana has 3 times the population.*** Wisconsin's dove population can sustain a hunting season.

Mourning doves have been hunted for many years throughout the United States and they continue to be one of the most abundant birds in North America.

Nationwide, approximately 41 million doves are harvested annually.

This harvest number is from 1989, the last harvest number published. Since 1989 when 10 million hunting days were invested in this harvest, interest in Dove hunting fell to 8.1 million hunting days in 1996 a

20% decline. Under these circumstances it would be very difficult to believe that hunters continue to harvest 41 million Doves annually. Other sources of mortality are 4-5 times higher than hunting mortality. **The Mourning Dove is a very important food source in the eco-system of Wisconsin. Two species, the Cooper's Hawk and the Peregrine Falcon benefit from a healthy Dove population.** Long-term banding studies indicate that 8-15% of dove mortality in the Eastern Management Unit is the result of hunting.

Studies in Ohio concluded that urban mourning doves are far less vulnerable to hunting than rural doves, indicating that dove numbers at backyard feeders will not be reduced due to rural hunting pressure. ***This study is badly flawed and was conducted for political purposes not science.*** Other research has demonstrated that September hunting does not negatively impact the number of young doves added to the population. ***What other species is hunted while still nesting?***

The Department of Natural Resources does not expect that mourning dove hunting will result in an increase in the number of licenses sold. Nor is it expected that the dove harvest will be at the level seen in some states to the south. Using a rough estimate that approximately 20,000-30,000 people may choose to hunt doves and an average harvest of 5 doves per hunter, the resulting harvest prediction is 100,000-150,000 doves from the fall population. ***With a population in the millions, why will Wisconsin hunters harvest just 5 Doves per hunter?***

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources supports limited, regulated hunting of mourning doves. Sustainable hunting is one of many public uses of our natural resources managed by the department. Wisconsin has a long tradition of responsible, regulated hunting for a wide range of wildlife species. Hunters are required by law to use all game harvested, and may not shoot animals for sport. ***Crow hunting???*** Hunting laws prohibit unsafe shooting practices.

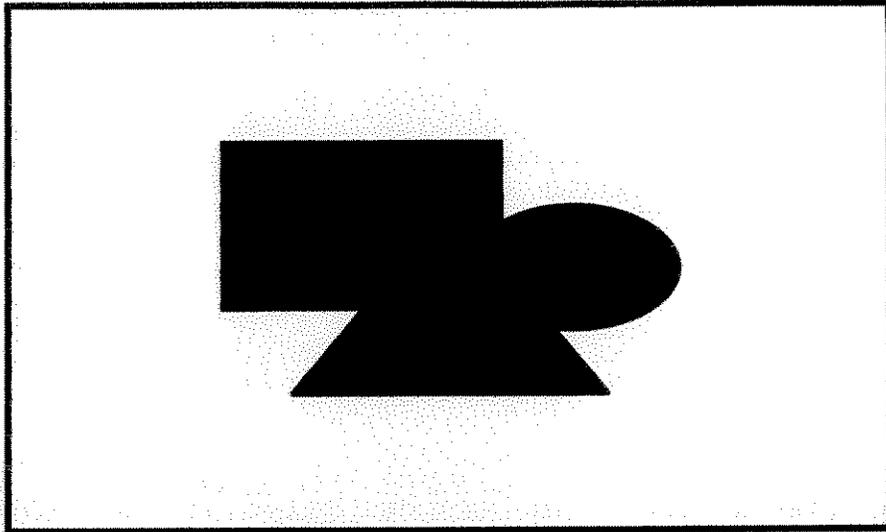


Fig. 4. Mourning dove management units with 1998 hunting and nonhunting states (adapted from Dolton and Smith 1999).

LEGAL AUTHORITY

Sec. 29.014, Stats. gives the department rule-making authority to establish and maintain open and closed seasons for fish and game, which includes all varieties of wild mammals or birds according to sec. 29.001(33), Stats.

Does the Department of Natural Resources Board support the argument that ALL wild mammals and birds are GAME?

THE PROCESS TO ESTABLISH A SEASON

The Conservation Congress placed an advisory question on the spring 1999 fish and wildlife hearing questionnaire asking whether people supported a mourning dove season in Wisconsin. The result was more than 2-1 in favor of a season.

The question was supported by an argument containing 11 statements. 5 of the statements contained information that was grossly inaccurate or just wrong. 3 of the statements were conjecture. Only 3 of the statements cannot be faulted for misinformation. To draw conclusions from this vote is no more valid than to draw conclusions from the 2000 vote after the proponents urged a yes vote because "it's not about Dove hunting, it's about hunting!"

After reviewing the results of the spring 1999 Conservation Congress question and discussing a mourning dove season internally, the department has asked the Natural Resources Board for permission to hold a public hearing on a proposed mourning dove season. The Natural Resources Board will act on this request at its January meeting. If the request is approved, the proposed season will receive a public hearing at the spring 2000 fish and wildlife hearings held in each county on April 10, 2000.

The department then must take into consideration the results of the public hearing along with other forms of public input and make a recommendation to the Natural Resources Board in June regarding whether the proposed season should be approved and forwarded to the legislature for their approval. If the department decides to recommend approval of the season and the Natural Resources Board agrees, the season proposal will be forwarded to the legislature for a 30-day review period.

The respective legislative committees in the assembly and senate may allow the 30-day period to pass without comment—in which case the proposed rule is approved—or they may take a variety of actions to request changes to the rule prior to approval or to prevent the rule from taking effect.

SUGGESTED READING

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Mourning dove. *In* The birds of North America, No. 117. A. Poole and F. Gill, Editors. Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, D.C.: The American Ornithologist's Union.

Pat + John

Conservation

GEORGE REIGER

The Sunflower Factor

Fields of planted sunflowers revolutionized dove hunting. Unfortunately, there's been an unintended side effect.

DOVE HUNTING HAS CHANGED greatly over the past twenty years, but federal management has not kept pace. In the "old days," hunters cruised the back roads each Saturday morning looking for newly picked corn, sorghum, or cucumber fields. Once a scout found a concentration of mourning doves, he'd contact the landowner or farmer, get permis-

One summer, a farmer experimented with a small, but high-oil-content sunflower seed. He lost so much of the crop to blackbirds and doves, he decided not to try again. People who hunted his unharvested field, however, had the best dove shooting of their lives. The next spring, a few landowners began growing sunflower plots of their own.

Within several years, dove hunting was revolutionized. Rather than spending long and sometimes fruitless hours looking for doves—and then, more

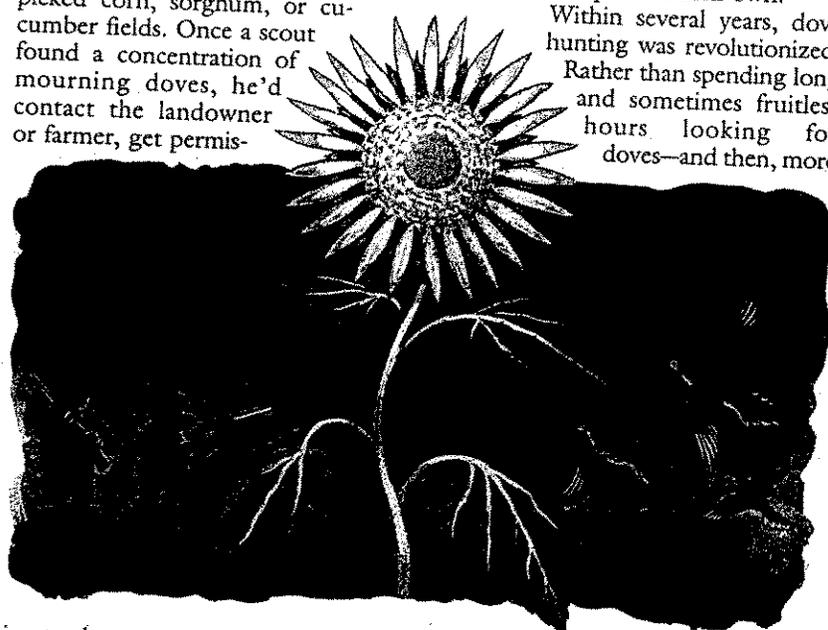
October, we abandoned doves—although some of the potentially best flights were yet to come, especially if the winter was mild. However, with the decline of ducks and quail in the 1980s, increasing numbers of Southern landowners planted fields in sunflowers and proso millet. Since they'd made a major investment in tractor time and fuel, herbicide and fertilizer—to say nothing of the fact that each field planted for doves is lost for a cash crop—most landowners hunted their dove fields as often as possible.

Non-landowners started clubs in which members pooled several hundred dollars each to rent land and pay a farmer to grow sunflowers. Game-farm and shooting-range managers began cultivating sunflowers for clients who paid \$50 to \$100 an afternoon for their chance at some of the millions of mourning doves shot each year in this country.

How many, precisely?

Nobody knows for sure. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) made its last calculation twenty years ago, the estimated annual kill was 49.4 million birds. (By 1989, according to an estimate published by the Wildlife Management Institute, the nationwide tally had fallen to 41.3 million.) But how many more doves are shot each year now that so many more birds are concentrated on fields planted specifically for dove hunting?

Although mourning doves are marvelously prolific—able to fledge up to six broods of two birds each in an optimum year—the species began to decline, first in the far West, where the birds are hunted in every state and shot without much attention to daily limits once they cross the border into Mexico. The decline spread east in the



sion to shoot, and call his buddies for the afternoon hunt.

In my own Virginia county, Doug Bice was the major-domo who most often rallied the troops to meet at Phillips Hardware. Six to a dozen pickups with two or three hunters each would assemble between noon and 1 o'clock. Early arrivals would reminisce about previous Saturdays and promise themselves they wouldn't miss so many birds this time. When the last of us showed up, our cavalcade would set off for the chosen field.

often than not, finding a flock shortly before the farmer was to disk and plant his field in a winter crop—landowner-hunters were now attracting doves so dependably they could shoot birds two or three times a week.

In the "old days," we hunted most Saturdays in September and, perhaps, one or two Wednesday afternoons as well. When other seasons opened in

How do you manage a gamebird that can't be stockpiled?

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM YEARRINGTON

1980s, especially as Midwestern states formerly closed to dove shooting opened seasons of their own, and Southern sportsmen spent more days in the sunflower fields.

Despite the mourning dove's enormous importance to our economy—providing many more than the 11.4 million annual hunting trips estimated by the USFWS two decades ago—relatively little research has been devoted to the species. The Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit did discov-

September limits. Yet even while documenting the mourning dove's decline, biologists remain locked into the doctrine that you can't stockpile a gamebird whose average lifespan is less than a year. But if that's true, why have management at all?

When the number of doves heard on the Eastern calling-count survey was down again this year, USFWS press releases deduced the decline was caused by "the cold, wet spring which probably affected dove calling behavior."

That may be true, but so what? "Cold, wet springs" depress reproduction as surely as shooting depresses survival.

Unlike biologists, who spend more time in front of computers than in the field, wardens are out each fall, noting hunting pressure and dove declines. Frustrated by the biologists' resistance to reducing limits or seasons, some wardens may be acting on their own to hobble hunters with radical interpretations of federal baiting regulations.

A dove-hunting industry has grown up around the cultivation of sunflowers, and many influential people don't want the status quo disturbed. Yet many of these people are ignorant of the mourning dove's decline and would accept bag or season reductions if they only knew the facts. That's why greater sin at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lies with the biologists than the wardens. The latter are only trying to protect the birds in their heavy-handed way. The biologists, on the other hand, are keeping the truth from the public by way of keeping the truth from themselves.

The handwriting was already on the wall a scientific generation ago. In 1977, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) published a summary of all that was known about the mourning dove and recommended ways to better manage the birds. The data showed that the number of mourning doves shot each fall had been rising steadily from approximately 11 million birds nationwide in 1942, 15 million in 1949, 19 million in 1955, 41 million in 1965, to the 49.4 million estimate of 1976. Over the period of 1963 to 1973, the species had declined nationwide at an average annual rate of 1 percent in the East, 2 percent on the Central Zone, and an alarming 4 percent in the West.

Nationwide, the mourning dove population had declined 6 percent over the eleven-year period.

Despite this downward trend—which may have been accelerated by the sunflower revolution of the past twenty years—none of the IAFWA's 1977 concerns have been heeded. Some are impossible to carry out. For example, the IAFWA recommended that dove "management should mean more than documenting fluctuations and adjusting hunting regulations. Production is an important part of wildlife management and needs emphasis in dove management."

This is high-sounding rhetoric, but the fact remains that the states and federal government have little capacity to do more than "document population fluctuations and adjust hunting regulations." For every public acre planted in sunflowers for dove hunting, hundreds of private acres are so managed. Yet the states and federal government do have the capacity—indeed, the sole responsibility—to "adjust hunting regulations" to maintain the flocks.

Furthermore, as the IAFWA report

Many people would accept bag or season reductions if they knew the facts.

er long ago that "adult mourning doves return with remarkable fidelity to the areas in which they nested the year before," and this behavior may be the key to understanding why the species is declining. Whereas once hunters killed as many transient doves as local birds in the flocks they scouted, a far larger percentage of the birds now killed each September are local birds concentrated on sunflower fields for weeks before the season opens.

WHY MANAGE DOVES AT ALL?

This pressure on local birds is compounded by the fact that hunters with sunflower fields generally shoot these fields as often as possible. Sportsmen have been assured by wildlife managers that doves can't be stockpiled—that most of the birds they don't kill today will only be killed by another predator or die of disease tomorrow. Hunters feel, therefore, little compunction about killing "all the law allows."

As a result, each year there're fewer surviving adult doves to replenish local flocks. Some hunters now find their best shooting comes only after migrant doves arrive after the season has started. Other hunters find they have a three-day season on local birds, and that's it. In any event, dove hunting is becoming as unpredictable as it was in the "old days."

The solution lies in relieving pressure on local birds by reducing

Next Month: Our report on migratory bird management shifts focus to take a close look at waterfowl. Despite optimistic news releases, North American ducks are still in trouble.—G.R.

DOVE ZONES

Since doves have no particularly way pattern, they're managed according to three zones. The Western zone includes the state of westernmost Texas, where they are to be hunted. The central zone includes all the states from Montana to New Mexico to Minnesota down the Ohio River valley (and Louisiana). The Eastern zone is comprised of all the states east of the Mississippi plus Louisiana. Formerly, dove management zones were first established in the 1950s when doves began to decline in the East due to the rapid conversion of countless thousands of rural and urban acres to industry, housing, and highways, and—especially in New England—to the reversion of old farms to woodlands.—G.R.

noted, Canada and Mexico must be included in any responsible management plan for the species: "Canada, as a production area, and Mexico, important as both a production and a harvest area, should be considered in a mourning dove management plan that seeks to maintain a population capable of sustaining an annual harvest by hunters and providing opportunity for enjoyment for non-hunters as well."



OPINION

Dove hunting part of natural rhythm

By Thomas Heberlein

WJS
6-16-04
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GUEST COLUMN

There is a proposal about to add a bird (*Zenaida macroura*) to the list of Wisconsin game species. There are several millions of these birds. Their most serious predator is the feral cat. Less than half of the birds live more than a year.

The Department of Natural Resources estimates that 20,000 to 30,000 hunters would harvest about 10 percent of the doves each year. Doves on their way to a roasting pan can be a renewable and sustainable resource.

From economic studies we can estimate that this hunting would generate more than

\$1 million of what economists call consumer surplus every year. It would require no new taxes or fees.

Thousands of people would learn about the birds. While they are not large, three split dove breasts will replace a single serving of chicken. Good food, days out of doors, sustainable low-impact harvests, economic benefits and no tax increase. Sounds like a winner.

Seventy-seven percent of the unprecedented 30,000 people who attended hearings in all 72 of Wisconsin's counties supported a dove hunt. The citizen board that oversees the DNR voted 5 to 2 in favor. Yet after all this public support, state Sen. Alice Clausing is holding yet another hearing.

In the Wisconsin State Journal she claims "Everywhere I go, no matter where it is, the thing on people's minds is doves. The general public is so upset with this you can't imagine."

Heberlein is a professor of rural sociology at UW-Madison who lives in Lodi. He has conducted numerous studies of attitudes toward natural resource issues. He is currently the co-principle investigator on a study of anti-hunting attitudes in Sweden funded by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.



Thomas Heberlein

As a rural sociologist who has studied attitudes toward hunting in both the United States and Europe, perhaps I can put this in perspective.

In 1978, Steve Kellert at Yale did the first national survey of attitudes toward hunting. He found that only 5 percent of the American public opposed hunting under all circumstances. I did a national survey in 1995 using the same questions. In spite of nearly 20 years of hoopla and activism I found virtually the same result: About 5 percent oppose hunting under all circumstances.

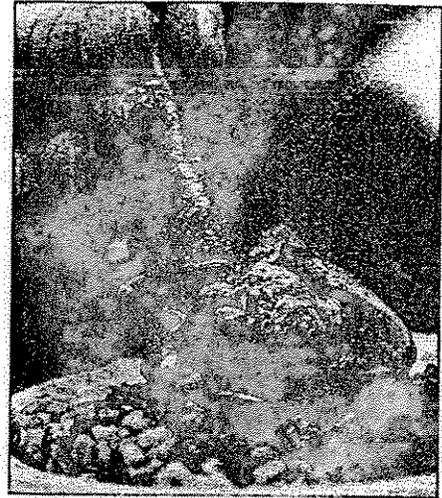
So it is 5 percent that are representing "everybody" to the senator. Five percent of Wisconsin's population is more than 200,000 adults. They care strongly about this issue, and sometimes they can seem like everybody.

But it is not that simple. Attitudes toward hunting are "soft." That is, they can be influenced by a single word in surveys. Ask people how they feel about hunting for meat and recreation and about two-thirds support it. When Kellert and I changed one word in our surveys, replacing "meat" with "sport," both surveys found that support for hunting dropped to just below 50 percent. Ask people how they feel about trophy hunting and the support drops to less than 30 percent.

People support hunting but it depends on what and why. Now you can see why the 5 percent always say mourning doves rather than the scientific name *Zenaida macroura* to refer to this common bird. The editorialists have picked up on this and added the slogan "bird of peace" as a modifier. And the argument makes itself as our leaders fall to the tyranny of sound bites.

What of science and rationality? What about sustainable use? Even some hunters who aren't interested in hunting themselves opposed dove hunting. This well-meaning group thinks this dove hunting thing is going to rile up the anti-hunters.

Let's get it straight, friends. Not hunting doves, failing to press for sustainable use of wildlife is not for one minute going to change the hearts and minds of the 5 percent. They think humans should not kill things and surely should not take joy out of killing. They generally anthropomorphize animals, giving them little names. To them, hunting means killing and they are solidly opposed to it.



Cooked mourning dove was served earlier this year in a legislator's office.

Going down like 10 pins on this will only embolden this group. It will make them stronger.

From many points of view there is no good reason to hunt squirrels, bunny rabbits, and certainly not the exotic Chinese pheasants stocked into the landscape for non-sustainable targets.

Take Sen. Clausing's daylong public hearing next Wednesday as yet another opportunity to explain hunting to the non-hunting public (and remember in Wisconsin a majority of the population is either a hunter, married to a hunter or the son or daughter of a hunter.) The important educational, food, and spiritual benefits of hunting. Even a child's biography of Aldo Leopold makes it clear "From his father, Aldo learned that killing was not the reason for the hunt. Carl Leopold taught his son that hunting was a special way to feel close to nature. On fall hunting trips, Aldo learned to feel part of the natural rhythm of bird migrations."

Unless the Legislature opposes it, in some future September some of us can hunt the doves. Before the duck season opens, before you can see grouse through the leaves, before the pheasant is legal game.

In hunting as in business, once you quit expanding you begin contraction.

Support for dove hunting is more important for the future of hunting than all the lofty speeches at governors' press conferences. If we are to learn about nature we need to take every opportunity to be part of the natural rhythm, including hunting doves.

Nature Watch GEORGE HARRISON

Mysteries of The Mourning Dove

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1813, John James Audubon observed a flight of passenger pigeons along the Ohio River in Kentucky that was so dense “the light of the noonday sun was obscured as by an eclipse.”

If Audubon were with us today, he might see some similarity in the autumn flights of mourning doves as they fly over

cultivated fields and into roosts of dense cover. Of course, there are not as many doves as there were pigeons—flocks number in the hundreds, not the thousands—but they still total at least 400 million in the lower 48 states, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates. They are the most prolific, adaptable,

and widespread game bird in North America—more mourning doves are harvested than all other game birds combined.

Why is it that mourning doves are so successful, even while being hunted, while a billion passenger pigeons are no more? The quick answer is that mourning doves are protected as migratory birds, while the more vulnerable passenger pigeons pre-dated the game laws that would have protected them against market hunting. But there is more to the mourning dove's success than protection. Mourning doves are highly adaptable. Unlike passenger pigeons, they are at home in a variety of wild habitats, from deserts to prairies, and from farm-



Bird of peace or ultimate game bird? Dove hunting is at the heart of a growing controversy brewing in several states.

lands to evergreen plantations and urban parks. Perhaps more important, they adapted to changes in those natural habitats and have even benefited from the conversion of prairies and wilderness to farmlands and suburban backyards.

A breeding pair begins the life cycle by courting in late winter, when the male's melancholy *cvoo-ah, cvoo, cvoo, cvoo* call is heard throughout the land. The slightly larger male can be seen puffing up his feathers, flashing his

iridescent neck, and towering over the female while following her around their territory. Together they build a flimsy nest of sticks to support two white eggs that are incu-

bated for thirteen to fourteen days before hatching. Both parents feed the young by pumping “pigeon milk,” a granular fluid produced in the crop, directly into the nestlings' mouths. The young leave the nest just two weeks after hatching, while their parents get

SA FACT

A pair of mourning doves is a virtual breeding machine. One pair is capable of producing five broods of two chicks each, from March through August.

DOVE HUNTS HEATING UP

In spite of the fact that hunting has been shown to have little or no impact on overall mourning dove populations, hunting them continues to be the subject of hot debate, particularly in the non-dove-hunting states of Iowa and Minnesota, and in Wisconsin, where a first-ever dove hunt is pending.

While there is little doubt that the birds' numbers have declined in their traditional farmland habitats, there is an interesting trend that appears to balance out mourning dove populations across the ecosystem. “We believe that dove numbers have decreased on farmlands due to human development and cleaner agricultural practices,” said Dave Dolton of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But at the same time, dove numbers appear to have increased in suburban backyards. The notion that millions of doves have moved to town, and are hanging out at backyard bird feeders is supported by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's annual Great Backyard Bird Count. “Three years in a row, the mourning dove was the species most often reported,” said Cornell Lab's Allison Wells. “This year 221,934 mourning doves were counted in 35,000 backyards in a single day.”

ready for the next brood.

A mourning dove's diet consists almost entirely of seeds . . . weed seeds and waste grains. People who want to attract mourning doves to their backyards need only offer bird seeds, some water, and a little natural cover—and then stand back. **SA**

The
Tale of
America's
Most
Successful
Game
Bird

“ **It does not appear that hunting has any statistically significant effect on dove populations.** ”

DAVID DOLTON OF THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Gov. Lucey Signs Bill Protecting Mourning Dove

NOV 18 1971



Mourning Dove

CAPTIVES

By ARTHUR L. SRB

(Associated Press Writer)

This was a day of great rejoicing for the friends of Wisconsin's mourning doves.

For in a quiet Statehouse ceremony, Gov. Patrick J. Lucey signed into law a bill making the mourning dove a song bird and Wisconsin's official symbol of peace.

The dove thus joined the club of Wisconsin's official state birds, the cardinal, wren and robin. Many other song birds which are legally protected from the seasons on the dove hunter.

"This will save the mourning dove from extinction," Reuben LaFave (R-Oconto) said after the bill-signing ceremony.

"Wisconsin is a great nesting state for the dove, and now we can be assured that the birds more than 600,000 hunters in Wisconsin," he added.

Lucey's signature capped a bill signing ceremony in the more than a decade of work by governor's office were Cedric La Fave and many others to Parker, managing editor of The Capital Times and a long-time supporter of the legislation, and

Two previous governors, Gaylord Nelson and John Reynolds, had rejected similar proposals.

after they had cleared the Legislature because conservationists assured them a hunting season would not be declared on doves.

But, La Fave said, the Dove eat, like duck."



A brass replica of a mourning dove watched with interest this morning as Gov. Patrick Lucey signed a bill protecting mourning doves and designating them the state symbol of peace. Also looking on are Mrs. Harry Hunt (left), Pewaukee, a member of Defenders of Animals, Inc., and Reuben LaFave (R-Oconto), chief author of the bill and Cedric Parker (right), managing editor of The Capital Times and longtime supporter of the bill. (Staff Photo by Corinne A. Thompson.)

Protection for Mourning Dove

PLAUDITS TO GOV. Lucey, for signing into law Wednesday a bill which designates the mourning dove Wisconsin's official symbol of peace and protects it from being hunted.

It's a move that should have taken place years ago—and would have, were it not for opposition from hunters and others who pooh-poohed the idea. As late as 1968, there were attempts made to have an open hunting season declared on the bird.

One might well ask, as did Sen. Ruben LaFave (R-Oconto), at the bill-signing ceremony: "What kind of monster would shoot a songbird?"

The mourning dove is no more an appropriate object for a hunter's gun than are the robin, the cardinal, the wren, and the other songbirds which are also protected by law. The dove yields almost no meat; it's not prized for its feathers. The thought of anyone finding "sport" in killing it boggles the mind.

CEDRIC PARKER, managing editor of The Capital Times who

had fought for years for protective legislation for the dove, put it aptly: "Let people shoot at beer cans off fence posts, not at mourning doves on the telephone lines." NOV 11 1971

Lucey deserves praise for not caving in to the hunting lobby. Our thanks, too, to Dane County legislators David O'Malley, Midge Miller, Earlard Peterson, and Ed Nager for their support of the bill, to Assembly Speaker Robert Huber for shepherding the measure through the Assembly, and Mrs. Harry Hunt, Pewaukee, president of Defenders of Animals, Inc., who encouraged introduction of the bill. Madison Rep. Norman Anderson, a respected conservationist, was conspicuous by his absence on the list of supporters and we are at a loss to understand why.

While we realize that hunting is here to stay, we hope the mourning dove bill serves as the springboard for legislation protecting other species far more endangered than the dove. We might start with the official state animal, the badger, now driven to the point of extinction.

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Wisconsin's 'Dove of Peace'

NOV 18 1971

GREEN BAY PR. GAZ.

While the state consensus on the performance of the legislature during this tedious year must be cautious thus far, some of the lesser enactments of our representatives in the Capitol deserve applause. One of them is a new statute pushed through with comparative ease after a decade of hemming and hawing that will at long last put the popular and appealing mourning dove on the legal list of songbirds and thus insure it against the shot and shell of hunters.

Sen. Reuben LaFave of Oconto, who was the author of the bill this year and in other years, is entitled to a respectful tip of the hat from all those lovers of wild creatures who have hoped for so long that their state government would take this popular step. The LaFave initiative, it should perhaps be noted, is the more noteworthy because his political career otherwise has so often tended to reflect the interests, real or supposed, of those numerous constituents in Northeastern Wisconsin who are actively concerned with the yield of game for the bag and fish for the creel.

To their credit, representatives of the hunting clubs this year were apparently reconciled to the inevitability of legislative action to protect the dove. The tentative and periodic proposals for experimental hunting

seasons for the lovely creature that has symbolized peace and love since Biblical times had been indifferently received. It had become clear during the recent years of important enlargement of the constituency service base of the Department of Natural Resources that the agents of the hunting interest had no real hope of persuading it to authorize dove shooting. Nevertheless, the fact that the legislature has foreclosed the possibility, however remote, will be applauded by thousands including many persons identified with outdoors affairs pressure groups.

The classical argument of those who opposed the LaFave bill was that the dove is a migrant species, that the "crop" yielded in Wisconsin seasonally moves on in fall and winter, and that some of the other states — Illinois is typically cited — permit their residents to kill as game the little bird with the plaintive voice that is reared here.

That may be. The answer is that there is no way that we can civilize the legislature at Springfield. We can intervene when the opportunity offers to persuade our own legislature, which is now entitled to the gratitude of those uncounted thousands of Wisconsin residents who enjoy the living beauty of the "dove of peace," as our new law describes it.

**Mourning Doves
Are Befriended
By Sen. Laun**
AUG 16 1961

MADISON (Special)—Legislative clerks have verified reports that Sen. Alfred Laun Jr. (R-Kiel) is a friend of the Zenaidura Macroura family, commonly known as the mourning dove family. Both Senate and Assembly approved Senator Laun's bill to reclassify state law listing the mourning dove as a song bird

rather than a game bird. When Gov. Gaylord Nelson signs the measure, mourning doves will coo a happier song.

As a game bird, mourning doves could be a target for hunters, although Wisconsin never had an open season on them. Mourning doves are "legal" game in Illinois.

As a song bird, mourning doves will come under the same anti-hunting ban which protects the official Wisconsin bird, the robin.

Mourning doves, Laun's researching showed, like to feed on weed seeds and insects. The Kiel lawmaker said mourning doves have one bad fault — they are poor housekeepers — "just throw nests together in a bundle of twigs, with no planning."

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1971 Assembly Bill 1415

Date published:
November 10, 1971

CHAPTER 127, Laws of 1971

AN ACT to permit disabled veterans from the Great Lakes Naval Hospi-
tal to hunt pheasant on one day in November in each year, without a
license.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate
and assembly, do enact as follows:

Notwithstanding any other law, any disabled veteran who is a
patient at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Illinois,
may hunt pheasant in this state in Columbia county on any one day in
November in each year, the day to be specified by the administrator
of the hospital to the department of natural resources, without
obtaining a resident or nonresident hunting license under chapter 29
of the statutes therefor.

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1971 Assembly Bill 227

Date published:
November 16, 1971

CHAPTER 128, Laws of 1971

AN ACT to amend 175.25 (2) of the statutes, relating to prohibiting
junk storage near county trunk highways.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate
and assembly, do enact as follows:

175.25 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

175.25 (2) No accumulation or storage of such material shall
be allowed within 2,000 feet outside of the corporate limits of a
city or village or within 750 feet of the center line of any county
trunk, state trunk or federal highway or within 500 feet of the
center line of any town road, except upon a permit issued by permis-
sion of the town board.

Date published:
November 11, 1971

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1971 Senate Bill 422

Date published:
November 16, 1971

CHAPTER 129, Laws of 1971

AN ACT to amend 1.10 and 29.01 (3) (d) of the statutes, relating to
deleting the mourning dove from the definition of game bird and
making it the Wisconsin state symbol of peace.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 1.10 of the statutes, as affected by chapter 14, laws of 1971, is amended to read:

1.10 (title) STATE SONG AND STATE SYMBOLS. The Wisconsin state song is "On, Wisconsin", music written by W. T. Purdy, the words to which are as follows: "On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin! Grand old badger state! We, thy loyal sons and daughters, Hail thee, good and great. On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin! Champion of the right, 'Forward', our motto — God will give thee might!" The state symbols are as follows: The mourning dove (*zenaidura macroura carolinensis linnaeus*) is the symbol of peace; the Wisconsin state tree is the sugar maple (*acer saccharum*); the Wisconsin state flower is the wood violet (*viola papilionacea*); the Wisconsin state bird is the robin (*turdus migratorius*); the Wisconsin state fish is the muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy masquinongy Mitchell*); the Wisconsin state animal is the badger (*taxidea taxus*); the Wisconsin wild-life animal is the white-tailed deer (*odocoileus virginianus*); the Wisconsin state mineral is the galena (lead sulphide) and the Wisconsin state rock is the red granite. The Wisconsin Blue Book shall include the information contained in this section concerning the state song, tree, flower, bird, fish, animal, wild-life wildlife animal, mineral and rock.

SECTION 2. 29.01 (3) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

29.01 (3) (d) "Game birds" includes the following aquatic birds: Wild geese, brant, wild ducks, wild swan, rails, coots, gallinules, jacksnipe, woodcock, plovers and sandpipers; the following upland birds: ruffed grouse (partridge), pinnated grouse (prairie chicken), sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, Hungarian partridge, Chukar partridge, bobwhite, quail, California quail and wild turkey; and the following columbine birds: mourning doves.

1971 Assembly Bill 13

Date published:
November 16, 1971

CHAPTER 130, Laws of 1971

AN ACT to amend 66.067 and 67.04 (1) (w); and to create 59.07 (135), 144.30 (10) and (11), 144.435, 144.437 and 144.445 of the statutes, relating to authority of counties to engage in solid waste disposal and granting rule-making authority.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 59.07 (135) of the statutes is created to read:

59.07 (135) SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT. The county board of any county may establish and operate a solid waste management system or participate in such system jointly with other counties, cities, villages or towns. For this purpose, the county board may exercise the following powers:

(a) Develop plans for a solid waste management system.

(b) With dispose of, d tion because municipal, d rubbish, waste logical wastes, ch

(c) Acqu domain, within system.

(d) Authc duct reasonable the suitability, ever permission i

(e) Acqu such easements needed to assi that is part of the

(f) Establ are deemed a; dance with sa; practicable, be tional or pro; ations.

(g) Acqui of the county incinerators or agement system.

(h) Adopt the solid waste tions.

(i) Cont; municipalities to r

(j) Engag; tion projects in agement or to and resources incl

(k) Accep; assistance prog; ments.

(L) Appro; acquisition or equipment and agement system its own waste shall be subje; operation of th a revolving ca system.

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1971 SENATE BILL 422

April 22, 1971 - Introduced by Senators R. La FAVE, BUSBY, LORGE, SWAN, SCHUELE, KEPPLER, SOIK, KNUTSON, CIRILLI, BIDWELL, DEVITT, and R. C. JOHNSON; cosponsored by Representatives HUBER, FROEHLICH, GAULKE and WILGER, by request of Mrs. Harry Hunt for Defenders of Animals, Inc., Vilas-Oneida Wilderness Society, Three Lakes Waterfront Homeowners, Northwestern Conservation Council and Audubon Society of Wisconsin. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT to amend 1.10 and 29.01 (3) (d) of the statutes, relating to
2 deleting the mourning dove from the definition of game bird and
3 making it the Wisconsin state symbol of peace.
4

5 Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

6 This bill deletes the mourning dove from the definition of
7 game bird and makes it the Wisconsin state symbol of peace.
8

9 The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate
10 and assembly, do enact as follows:

11 SECTION 1. 1.10 of the statutes, as affected by chapter 14,
12 laws of 1971, is amended to read:

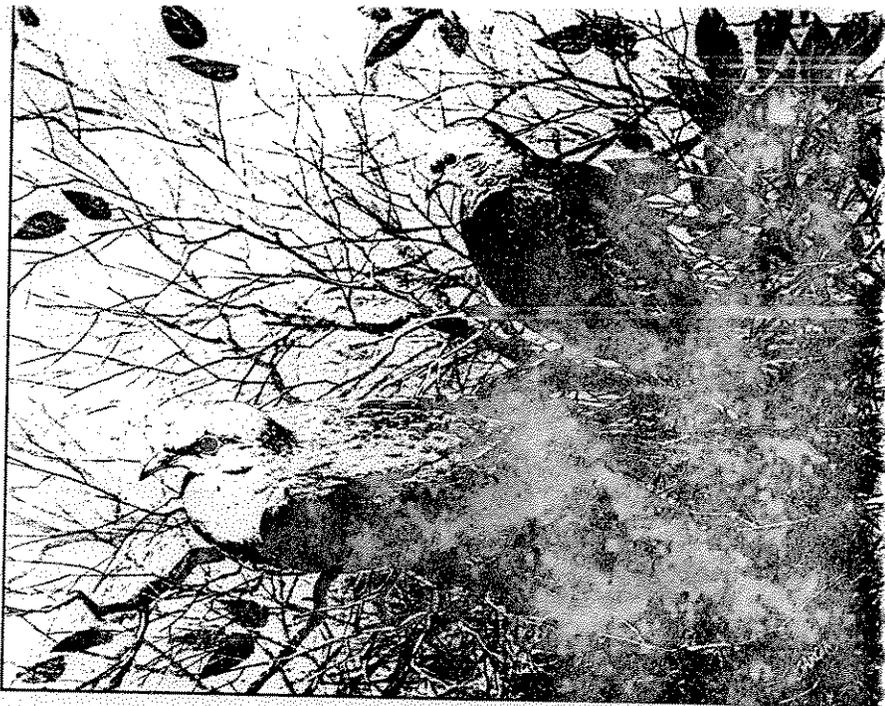
13 1.10 (title) STATE SONG AND STATE SYMBOLS. The Wisconsin
14 state song is "On, Wisconsin", music written by W. T. Purdy, the
15 words to which are as follows: "On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin!
16 Grand old badger state! We, thy loyal sons and daughters, Hail
17 thee, good and great. On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin! Champion of
18 the right, 'Forward', our motto — God will give thee might!". The
19 state symbols are as follows: The mourning dove (zenaidura macroura
20 corolinensis linnaus) is the symbol of peace; the Wisconsin state

Mourning Dove Breeding

Population Status, 1997

With funds received from outside our organization, WWA recently polled its members regarding their opinion regarding a future dove hunting season in Wisconsin. Survey results showed the membership favored by a 5 (for) to 1 (against) an opportunity to hunt doves in Wisconsin.

For our reader's information, following is the material provided earlier this year to the Natural Resources Board members by Secretary George Meyer upon the request of Representative DuWayne Johnsrud.



Abundance

The mourning dove, (*Zenaidura macroura*) is one of the most abundant birds in the United States, and is, by far, the most abundant game bird. The estimated fall flight in the conterminous U.S. is more than 500 million doves. For comparison, the estimated fall flight was 83 million ducks in 1996. The Wisconsin annual fall flight estimate is in excess of 12 million doves. Mourning doves are found throughout Wisconsin, but are more numerous south of a line from Green Bay to Eau Claire.

Biology and Management

The mourning dove reproductive cycle in the Midwest begins in late April or early May when egg laying begins and continues until early September when fledging ends. Mourning doves lay two eggs per clutch, and raise between two and five clutches per year. After 14 days in the nest, nestlings fledge and are dependent on the adults for another 10-14 days. Conifers are preferred nesting habitat, but mourning doves will use a wide variety of available trees, and are very successful in shelter belts, small woodlots, and suburban areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service divides the country into 3 management units (Eastern, Central, and Western) for population monitoring and management purposes. Research indicates that 53% of mourning dove nesting attempts are successful in the Eastern Management Unit (EMU), and an average of 4.8 fledglings per year are produced by each pair of doves. The annual mortality rate in hunted states in the EMU is 60% for adults, and 75% for immature mourning doves. The annual mortality rate in non-hunted states is 50% for adults, and 53% for immature mourning doves.

Mourning dove habitat across the U.S. as well as in the Midwest has increased since presettlement times, starkly contrasting habitat trends for most other game

birds. Mourning dove populations have increased as well. Robbins (1991) reports that as agriculture spread north in the United States, mourning dove populations followed.

Two different segments of the migratory mourning dove population use Wisconsin. One segment is made up of doves that breed in Wisconsin. In fall, these doves leave Wisconsin following one of two migration routes. One route leads to wintering grounds in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and the other to Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Mourning doves migrating from Wisconsin are harvested in many other states. Past band recovery studies have shown that Wisconsin mourning doves make up 8% of the harvest in Florida, 6% in Illinois and Louisiana, and 4% in Alabama. The second segment of the mourning dove population that uses Wisconsin is made up of migrants from other states and Canada. Some of these doves winter in Wisconsin, the remainder pass through to more southerly wintering areas.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has conducted annual nation-wide coo-counts and sight surveys to monitor mourning dove population trends on more than 1000 routes each spring for more than 30 years. The population in the EMU has been stable (no significant increase or decrease) over the past 31 years (1966-1996). This is true in both hunted and non-hunted states. Over the past 10 years, there has been a significant decline in the EMU as a whole, and in the hunted EMU states, but no significant trend in the unhunted EMU states. In Wisconsin, there has been no significant change in number of mourning doves heard or seen over the past 10 years or the past 31 years. The USFWS has concluded that hunting does not impact dove population trends.

Hunting

The mourning dove is a migratory bird protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The current federal season framework allows for 70 day hunting seasons that may not begin prior to September 1. States are responsible for establishing their own hunting seasons within the federal framework, and bag limits in the Midwest are typically 15 doves per day (Table 1).

Mourning doves are presently hunted in 38 states. In the Midwest, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and all the states south have mourning dove hunting seasons. Michigan has been considering legislation in the previous couple years, and Minnesota began investigating a mourning dove hunt last year.

Approximately 50-55 million mourning doves are harvested each year in the United States. Mourning dove hunting is very popular in southern states, and Texas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, and California are the highest harvest states. Estimated Pittman-Robertson revenues resulting from mourning dove hunting were \$7.6 million in 1987. USFWS research indicates that there is no population level effect of hunting nation-wide, nor is there an effect on population in the Eastern Management Unit (EMU). Approximately 15% of total mourning dove mortality is attributable to hunting. There was no significant trend in mourning dove population indices in the EMU over the past 31 years.

Regulations Development

No authorizing legislation is required. The Department would need to promulgate rules to establish a mourning dove season and bag limits.

The Department has statutory authority to establish a mourning dove season. A mourning dove season is consistent with the Department's mission and tradition of providing for sustainable use of a renewable

natural resource. Yet, a dove season proposal would be very controversial. An effort to establish a mourning dove season in Wisconsin is likely to be generally supported by hunters, but organized vocal promotion has not yet occurred.

Fiscal Impacts

The department expects a small fiscal impact. Revenues may increase from an increase in license sales and Pitman-Robertson tax revenues with increased ammunition purchases if mourning dove hunting is permitted. Habitat management costs would be low due to current widespread availability of habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service currently conducts population monitoring coo-counts each spring. Any necessary expanded state monitoring would not significantly increase costs.

Wisconsin History

There have been several attempts to establish a mourning dove hunting season in Wisconsin. In 1972, there was an effort to establish an experimental season in southeastern Wisconsin. Wisconsin hunters overwhelmingly supported a mourning dove season in Wisconsin when surveyed by the *Wisconsin Sportsman* magazine in 1986. The most recent attempt to establish a season was in 1989 when the Natural Resources Board denied the petition to establish a season on mourning doves.

Public Issues

Based upon the experience of other states, as well as prior experience in Wisconsin, we can expect to hear public discussion on these issues

Status

Viewpoint: The mourning dove is considered a song bird by many people and inappropriate for hunting. The mourning dove has also been called the "international bird of peace" by several anti-hunting campaigns. State statutes designate the mourning dove as the Wisconsin "bird of peace".

Table 1. Season dates and daily bag and possession limits for dove hunting in Midwestern states (1996)

State	Season Dates	Daily Bag	Possession Limit
Illinois	Sept 1 - Oct. 14 Nov. 2 - 17	15	30
Indiana	Sept. 1 - Oct 16 Nov. 8 - Dec. 1	15	30
Nebraska	Sept. 1 - Oct. 30	15	30
Ohio	Sept 16 - Oct. 15 Nov. 1 - 30	15	30

Counter view: Use does not diminish any status assigned a species. For example, the white-tailed deer is the state wildlife animal and its status as such is unaffected by hunting.

Safety

Viewpoint: The mourning dove is commonly seen as a backyard bird and some people believe hunting may bring safety concerns.

Counter view: Hunting is not allowed in residential areas, and hunting near any building is prohibited unless allowed by the landowner.

Misidentification

Viewpoint: Mistaken identity and incidental kill of other species such as kestrels and killdeer is a potential problem.

Counter view: The responsibility for identification lies with the hunter. Mistakes, if they occur, remain unlawful and subject to citation.

Use

Viewpoint: The size of the bird and the amount of meat are too small to justify hunting mourning doves.

Counter view: The amount of available meat is similar to that of woodcock and quail, and is considered delicious. Similarly, many highly valued species (i.e. brook trout and panfish) have small amounts of meat per animal taken.

Nesting

Viewpoint: September hunting will negatively impact productivity by the harvest of one or both of an actively nesting pair.

Counter view: Only 1% of all nesting is initiated in September. Nesting has slowed considerably by September 1 and only 10% of all fledglings fledge in September.

Several U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studies have concluded that September hunting has no detectable impact on the rate of recruitment of fledglings to the population, nor does it

impact the population as a whole.

Opportunity

Viewpoint: Wisconsin sportspersons do not need another species to hunt.
Counter view: A dove season is a "want" rather than a "need". It is consistent with Wisconsin's policy of providing sustainable use of renewable natural resources. Mourning dove hunting would provide more opportunity for hunting in southern Wisconsin, where there is the greatest demand.

Trespass

Viewpoint: Hunting mourning doves will encourage increased trespassing.

Counter view: Trespassing is already illegal. Recent legislation will help address this concern.

Power lines

Viewpoint: Hunters will shoot doves off of utility wires, causing power outages.

Counter view: Shooting anything on a power wire is illegal and unethical. There is no documentation of power outages as a result of mourning dove hunting activity.

Season Support and Participation

Wisconsin hunters have supported previous attempts to institute a mourning dove season in the state. However, the organized promotion of dove hunting by the major conservation organizations has not yet occurred. The number of hunters in other Midwestern states ranges from 22,000 in Indiana to 78,000 in Illinois. Past experience both in Wisconsin and in other states has shown that proposing a mourning dove hunting season will likely be a very emotional issue.

Conclusion

Mourning dove hunting is biologically feasible with no adverse population level effects. Doves are an abundant, highly prolific species that is widely hunted in the United States. The Wisconsin mourning dove harvest would likely be an insignificant addition to the overall Midwest harvest. Mourning doves banded as nestlings in Wisconsin are currently harvested in many states as they migrate south. All evidence indicates that hunting has a negligible effect on population trends. Mourning dove populations are stable in the eastern United States, including states where they are hunted.

Recommendation

If the Natural Resources Board wishes additional study on this issue, the department recommends authorization to enter into discussions with Wisconsin's conservation organizations and clubs to learn more about their level of interest in this issue. If sufficient support exists, a question could be developed for the 1998 spring hearings. Please contact Steve Miller to indicate your preference for any further department action.

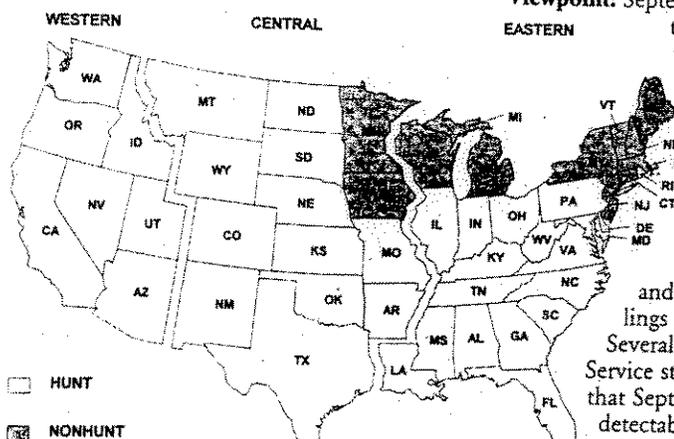


Fig. 1 Mourning dove management units with 1996 hunting and nonhunting states.