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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
Game Division

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Fall, 1959, Mourning Dove Survey

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ABSTRACT

Mourning doves are considerably more numerous in Michigan in September and early October than they are in late October and early November, according to a statewide survey conducted by Game Division biologists in the fall of 1959. Region III (southern Michigan) dove sightings were also down sharply after October 20 but the two southern tiers of counties in Michigan held doves longer in the fall than counties to the north. In fact, more doves (per 100 mi. of driving) were seen in the month of October than in September in these two rows of counties, indicating a build-up in this area of birds migrating from areas farther north.

A fair number of doves were seen in Region II (northern Lower Peninsula) during September, but very few were recorded in October. Few doves were seen in the Upper Peninsula even in September.

Observers recording doves seen while hunting listed many more in the early part of the pheasant season in southern Michigan than they did toward the end of the season.

PURPOSE

A mourning dove survey was conducted in the fall of 1959 in an effort to determine when most of the doves leave Michigan, to aid the Department in making future recommendations regarding the hunting of this species.

PROCEDURE

Game biologists recorded doves seen while driving during five specific weekly periods between September 1 and November 7, 1959. They also kept records of doves seen in the course of hunting small game.

FINDINGS

Biologists saw 2,928 mourning doves while driving 28,864 miles during five weekly counting periods between September 1 and November 7, 1959. State-wide, dove observations in October (8.9 per 100 miles) were down 38 percent from September when 14.3 doves were seen per 100 miles. November records (4.9 doves per 100 miles) were off 45 percent from the number seen in October.

From a slightly different viewpoint, the statewide picture shows that doves were seen much more frequently during September and early October (12.1 per 100 miles) than they were in late October and early November (7.3 per 100 miles).

In Region III, 12 percent fewer doves were seen in the month of October than in September. Dove observations in this region dropped an additional 29 percent in November.

After October 20, doves seen in Region III were 45 percent fewer than in September and early October taken together. In the southern two tiers of counties, sightings were down 30 percent after October 20.

In 261 hours of hunting (statewide) in October, 210 doves were seen (80.5 per 100 hours of hunting). In November, only 15 doves were seen in 97 hours (15.5 per 100 hours of hunting) for an 81 percent decrease in doves seen from October.

In Region III, November dove observations while hunting dropped 83 percent from October.

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TABLE 1

Summary of Fall, 1959, Mourning Dove Survey

Doves seen per 100 Miles

<u>AREA</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>Percent change Oct. from Sept.</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>Percent change Nov. from Oct.</u>
Statewide	14.3	8.9	- 38	4.9	- 45
Region I	0.1	none		none	
Region II	11.0	3.1	- 72	0.2	- 93
Region III	19.9	17.5	- 12	12.8	- 27
Southern 2 tiers of counties	14.7	18.7	+ 27	18.1	- 3

	<u>September 1-October 7</u>	<u>October 20-November 7</u>	<u>Percent change from Sept.1-Oct. 7</u>
Statewide	12.1	7.3	- 40
Region III	22.5	12.3	- 45
Southern 2 tiers of counties	21.4	14.9	- 30

Doves seen per 100 Hours of Hunting

	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>Percent change from October</u>
Statewide	80.5	15.5	- 81
Region II	19.8	2.3	- 88
Region III	158.8	26.4	- 83

