

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
Game Division

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Mourning Dove Fall Survey, 1959 and 1960  
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A mourning dove survey was conducted by Conservation Department personnel between September 1 and November 7 for the past two years, 1959 and 1960. Purpose of the survey was to obtain population indices for doves during the fall migration period to be used in making future recommendations regarding the hunting of this species.

Records were kept for the entire state in 1959, but observations in the Upper Peninsula were discontinued in 1960 because of few dove sightings there the previous year.

Dove observations fell off sharply during October and November of the survey period. In the Lower Peninsula, October sightings of doves were 33 per cent (1959) to 48 per cent (1960) less than in September, and early November records were down 62 per cent (1959) to 72 per cent (1960) from September. Most of the dove observations (70 per cent in 1959 and 84 per cent in 1960) during the survey period were made in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula.

The regular southern Michigan small game opening date of October 20 would be too late for an effective dove hunting season, according to results of this survey. Thirty to 60 per cent fewer doves (1959 and 1960 respectively) were seen per 100 miles of driving during the first week of the small game season than were observed the first week in October. September records for both years indicate there is a build-up in number of doves during the month in the Lower Peninsula, but that doves leave the state in large numbers sometime between the middle of September and October 20. September 15 appears to be the most logical opening date for a dove hunting season in Michigan as far as number of birds available is concerned.

The table below summarizes the more important findings in the two-year survey.

Doves per 100 Miles of Driving

<u>Period of Observation</u>	<u>Lower Peninsula</u>		<u>Northern Lower Peninsula</u>		<u>Southern Lower Peninsula</u>	
	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>
Sept. 1-14	12.0	23.2	7.2	7.5	16.5	35.5
Sept. 15-30	19.3	29.0	14.9	6.2	22.8	45.4
Sept. (average)	15.8	26.7	11.0	6.7	19.9	41.5
Oct. 1-19	11.7	14.0	1.9	6.8	30.2	17.7
Oct. 20-31	9.8	13.5	5.1	5.1	12.1	12.7
Oct. (average)	10.7	13.7	3.1	5.7	17.5	19.2
Nov. 1-7	6.0	7.4	0.2	0.2	12.8	12.6