



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PRELIMINARY RESEARCH INDICATES EXISTENCE OF DOVE PRODUCTION-HARVEST UNITS

Three independent and self-sufficient mourning dove production-harvest areas in the United States are indicated by nationwide research, the Department of the Interior reports.

The areas are: (1) all of the United States east of the Mississippi River, plus Louisiana; (2) the area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, including Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico; (3) the area from the Rocky Mountain States to the Pacific Coast.

About 95 percent of the doves shot inside a unit were produced in that unit; and 96 percent of the harvested production of a unit was shot inside the unit or in Mexico or Central America.

In other words, research to date indicates very little cross-traffic by doves between these three areas. Should subsequent research substantiate these findings, mourning dove management programs can be geared to the conditions which exist in each area each year just as waterfowl management considers conditions in each of the four flyways.

A nationwide nestling banding program began in 1956. Prior to 1956, considerable dove banding was done through the Southeastern Cooperative Dove Investigation, which was initiated in 1948. The banding is coordinated by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The major objectives are to relate production to harvest areas and to outline mourning dove management units. Banding quotas were established for each State to meet the defined objectives. On a numerical basis, these quotas have been attained in two-thirds of the States, but in many States a better distribution of banding is needed.

Biologists are working to add to knowledge of the distribution pattern and population of the mourning dove. Also, they are looking for means of refining population study techniques and the accumulation and analysis of kill data. To hasten this work, the Bureau has negotiated contracts with the Wildlife Management Institute and North Carolina State's statistical laboratory for help on the inventory and hunting kill phases.

The mourning dove is found in the 48 States and is listed as a game bird in 30 of them.

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