

In order to avoid any confusion or duplication of the identifying band numbers, the numbers for all bands used on wild migratory birds in North America, by mutual agreement are assigned and issued by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To try to better explain what I have been telling you, I have these color slides of the waterfowl banding operations in Canada.

## THE DOVE BANDING PROGRAM IN THE SOUTHEAST

By LEO M. MARTIN  
*U. S. Game Management Agent*  
Decatur, Alabama

There has been a lot said and a lot more written about the Mourning Dove and the banding of nestling doves. Everyone talks about it and some write about it. It seems now that we are finally doing something about it.

At the 1954 meeting of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners in New Orleans, Louisiana, Mr. Howard Wright from Missouri said that a dove flyway concept was needed. At the same meeting there was a panel discussion led by Mr. Harold Peters with Leonard Foote and Frank Wilson. They said that more trapping and banding in the northern states was needed. At the 1955 meeting of this same association at Daytona Beach, Florida, Mr. Harold Peters said that continuation of banding especially through establishment of permanent banding stations was needed. He also said that dove banding had fallen off alarmingly. At the same meeting Mr. Dan Russell from Kentucky gave a report on, "Do we really shoot migrant doves." He said, generally speaking, the southeastern states shooting doves in September are shooting birds produced in the state where shot. He said, between 1950 and 1954 that Kentucky banded 972 nestling doves and he used banding records to prove that 75% of the direct recoveries were made in the state where banded regardless of whether the birds were killed in September, October or even February.

At the 1956 meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas there was a panel discussion led by Mr. Harold Peters. This panel emphasized the need for additional data on breeding populations. All this and much more has been said in the last three years.

What has been done? I understand there were over 13,000 doves banded in the southeast in 1956. Who did it? The State of Louisiana I believe has banded almost half of these.

I was first asked to try banding nestling doves in 1956. My first thoughts were, how will I ever find more than a dozen or so nests during the entire nesting season? Since then I have wondered how will I ever find time to visit and band all the nests I have found.

Banding nestling doves is like banding waterfowl in only one respect. Both take a lot of time and hard work. Nestling dove banding does not take a lot of expensive equipment and travel to the far north. It can be done close to home in north Alabama. The equipment needed is a very light ladder, a car-top carrier to transport the ladder, a fishing pole with a mirror attached to its end. This is used for looking into nests without climbing and into hard-to-get-to places.

In the summer of 1956 I banded 294 nestling doves within 10 miles of Decatur, Alabama. I estimated I spent 200 hours banding this 294 doves. I located, marked and tried to observe 267 nests. Only 163 of these nests hatched the eggs and reared the birds to six days of age or older. A record was kept of the age of the birds when banded. These figures indicate that a little over half of the nests found were successful, 54% to be exact. The big loss seems to be in eggs since 163 eggs were known to be lost while only 20 young birds were known to be lost to all causes. A few nests were not visited the second time.

Sixteen bands have been recovered to date. Two of them were recovered in Louisiana, one in December and one in January. Ten were recovered in Ala-

bama in October, one in December and three in January, also in Alabama no more than 50 miles from the banding site. This is between 5 and 6% recovery during the first hunting season.

During 1957 I banded 234 nestling doves, working in the same area as the year before. The percentage of the nests hatching and rearing the birds to banding size was again between 50 and 60%. Of course no recoveries have been reported from the current hunting season.

During 1956 birds of all ages were banded. Some were too small to hold the band without using tape to hold the band on the leg. Others jumped from the nest when approached and had to be chased down and caught. The interesting part is, all 16 recoveries were from birds that were from 6 to 10 days of age when banded.

Where are dove nests found? Anywhere and in most any kind of tree or bush in north Alabama. At least half the nests I found were in small cedars that stood in pasture fields around farm ponds. The reason for this may be because I spent more time looking in this type area.

Two nesting colonies were found in cedars around farm ponds. One had from 10 to 20 active nests during the peak of the nesting, the other had from 15 to 30 active nests. Another colony was found in a fence row and in a dense thicket in most all types of small trees. It had 26 active nests when found.

There seemed to be less depredation on the eggs and the young birds in the cedar tree-farm pond colonies than in the fence row-dense thicket colony. I assume the reason for this is the fence row is a natural lane of travel for several of the predators.

My observations led me to believe that flushing the adult from the nest with eggs in the late evening will sometimes cause the nest to be deserted. I also believe that eggs will not hatch when the adult is flushed from the nest on a cool, windy day. Some adults were observed returning to the nest after flushing in 10 minutes while others had not returned in 30 minutes. Perhaps these eggs will still hatch but I don't believe they will. It is my honest opinion that band recoveries would run 25% or higher provided all nestling doves banded reached the flying stage.

I have some slides that will show a dove egg ready to hatch, already pipped and the following ones will show the dove from one day old to 10 days.

## **THE METHODS USED IN ALABAMA IN COMBATING THE HUNTING OF DEER AT NIGHT**

By D. W. WALTERS

*Conservation Officer, Alabama Department of Conservation*

Night hunting has long been a method of taking deer illegally, dating back to our forefathers. One of the first Game Laws passed, was in Georgia on December 10, 1790, prohibiting hunting with a gun and fire light. The penalty was set at five pounds and 39 lashes. Mississippi Territory passed a similar law in 1803.

Our night hunting law in the State of Alabama is as follows: "It shall be unlawful to take, capture or kill, or attempt to take, capture or kill, any bird or animal protected by the laws of this State, between sunset and daylight of the following day." Upon conviction he shall be fined not less than \$50.00 and not more than \$500.00, and may also be imprisoned in the county jail not to exceed six months.

I think the time has arrived to strengthen our night hunting laws in Alabama, to give us permission to confiscate all equipment being used at that time for that purpose, as some of our neighboring states do.

In the State of Alabama we have deer in 56 of our 67 counties. Only about 25 counties have heavy enough deer concentration for night hunting. And about 10 counties where we have any great amount.