



drawing by J. L. Biesecker

“Guns of Autumn” begin to rumble locally

by J. L. Biesecker

The guns of autumn have begun to rumble. September 1 was the beginning of the first hunting season of the fall of 1975. Hunters are out in force, swatting gnats, scratching chigger bites, perspiring in the late summer sun and booming away at the little grey winged flash known as the mourning dove.

This game bird gets its name from the soft, sad, almost haunting, cooing call of the male. With its love-brown body and blue-grey wings, the dove averages a little less than one foot in length. Early each spring several dove pairs nest in the Blue Spruce and Cedar of Lebanon outside our kitchen window. In March they take a chance on the weather, make a firm decision and commit themselves to spring when they build a flimsy nest and full it with two eggs. The eggs hatch in approximately two weeks. One pair of doves will raise three or four sets of young each year.

Doves offer a most interesting and challenging target. These little birds fly a broken pattern with spurts of speed, dips, zigs and zags inserted at the most unexpected times. Such aerial agility on the part of an

intended target leaves most hunters blowing holes in the sky as a flight of doves whistle by.

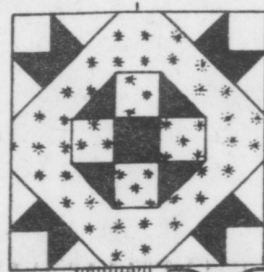
Experts claim that, on the average, the American dove hunter fires five shells for each bird killed. If this is true, someone out there owes me a debt of thanks as I am firing my own and their share of misses.

In spite of the difficulty involved in bagging a dove, game biologists claim that approximately 50,000,000 doves are harvested by hunters each year. To the uninformed this may sound like a horrifying and wasteful statistic but such is not the case. Biologists who have studied the dove, report that 80 percent of the flock fails to live from one nesting season to the next. Apparently this is true whether there is heavy hunting pressure or not. When the flock reaches high numbers, disease and starvation reach out to balance the population. This prolific bird over-produces annually, through its nesting several times each season. Thus, the hunter's dinner table usefully assists in the balance of the dove flock.

Back to the original problem of getting these grey speedsters out of the air and into your game bag.

There are several very good fly-ways in the local area where one can find large numbers of doves moving through. Locate an inconspicuous spot with an unobstructed view along one of the fly-ways, then keep your eyes and ears tuned for the flash of grey and the high pitched trill of rapid wings. All of the above are easily accomplished. Follow these suggestions any morning or evening and you will see doves within the range of your gun. The trick is then to shoot quickly and accurately with a minimum of misses.

I have found that the hunters who are most successful with doves are those who bring their gun up quickly, and with one fast swing - fire. The swing is one that is just long enough to gain a reasonable lead before firing. If you shoot with the long tracking swing of the duck hunter or attempt to follow the zigs and zags, you will surely be shooting my share of holes in the sky. To be successful, the dove hunter must learn from his quarry. We need to make a quick decision, firmly committing ourselves to it and then acting without hesitation.



SUMMARY OF 1975 PENNSYLVANIA WATERFOWL SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

| | SEASONS | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | FIRST DAY | LAST DAY |
| DUCKS, COOTS, MERGANSERS, SEA DUCKS | October 15 December 3 | November 22 December 13 |
| CANADA GEESE | October 15 January 1 | December 6 January 17 |
| SNOW AND BLUE GEESE | October 15 | November 13 |
| BRANT | November 10 | December 6 |

| | BAG LIMITS | |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| | DAILY LIMIT | POSSESSION LIMIT |
| DUCKS | 4* | 8* |
| COOTS | 15 | 30 |
| MERGANSERS | 5** | 10** |
| SEA DUCKS | 7*** | 14*** |
| CANADA GEESE | 3**** | 6 |
| SNOW AND/OR BLUE GEESE | 2 | 4 |
| BRANT | 4 | 8 |

EXCEPTIONS:

* Daily bag limit of 4 ducks may not include more than: 2 black ducks, 2 wood ducks. Possession limit of 8 may not include more than: 4 black ducks, 2 wood ducks.

** Not more than 1 hooded merganser daily or 2 in possession.

*** Singly or in the aggregate of species and does not count in the daily or possession limits of ducks.

**** Daily bag limit of 1 Canada Goose in Crawford County and at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Extra Scaup—On the waters of Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay, 2 additional scaup daily and 4 additional in possession during the regular duck hunting season.

NO OPEN SEASON: Canvasback and redhead ducks and swans:

WATERFOWL SHOOTING HOURS

One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

EXCEPTION:

Noon until sunset on October 15. 9 a.m. until sunset on October 25. Noon until sunset for ducks, coots, mergansers and sea ducks on December 3. Controlled shooting sections of the Pymatuning Waterfowl and Middle Creek Wildlife Management Areas: One-half hour before sunrise until noon on regularly scheduled shooting days.

Free glaucoma test at Columbia Hospital

One of every eight blind people you see is a victim of glaucoma; two out of every 100 sighted people over age 35 will be victims of the “sneak thief”.

Chronic glaucoma in the early stages works painlessly and slowly, gradually

destroying side vision until the final stages when central vision is lost.

The best defense against glaucoma is an eye examination at least once every two years, and glaucoma test every year. You may be free of glaucoma at age 35 and have it at 40.

Every resident of Lancas-

ter County, age 35 or older, may have a free glaucoma test. The Lancaster Association for the Blind and cooperating Lions Clubs have set up a glaucoma testing site from the hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Columbia Hospital.

Leukemia donation honors E-town student

The employees of Hersheypark have donated \$175 to the Human Research Fund at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center as a result of monies raised at a recent employee party held in the park.

The donation was made in memory of James Jirik, an Elizabethtown High School

senior who died of leukemia before his graduation and scheduled summer employment at Hersheypark this season.

According to Herbert Kraybill, Director of Gifts and Endowments at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, “Hematologists are currently studying patients

with acute leukemia in an effort to detect specific abnormalities associated with the disease. We are most appreciative of the support in this effort expressed by the employees of Hersheypark, and feel that it speaks highly indeed for the concern the majority of young people share today.”

