

Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell
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Dove Fields For Fast Action

If you like fast-shooting action that can empty a box of shells in seconds, then go after doves. The national average for a box of 25 shells is 4 doves. Doves are super challenging and super fun to shoot. They also make great table fare.

The trick to a great dove shoot is having a great dove field. In order to have a great dove field you must plant now. The next couple of weeks are the ideal time to plant sunflowers and millet so they will be ready for the September 1st opener.

In my opinion sunflowers and millet are two of the best crops to plant for doves.

Ragweed is a crop that doesn't need to be planted that is great for doves. If you've got a field that has a ragweed problem then turn it into a dove field. I have some great dove hunts in fields covered in ragweed.

The thing to remember about doves that makes a good field is bare ground. A dove has very weak feet and can't scratch through

thick cover. They need bare ground to feed on. If you plant a dove field or plan on using a weed field, bare ground is a must.

Field management is the key to a good dove hunt. The 1st week of August, disk around the field the bare ground that will attract doves. Strips need to be mowed through the field the 2nd week of August. If the bare ground is lacking, then strip disk through the field. The disking will create bare ground while busting seeds off. If managed right, the field can be shot multiple times.

Doves love to rest on power lines. The closer the power lines to the field, the better. If no lines are near a field, construct your own.

Take some tall poles and good line. Run your own lines across field; this will help attract doves to the field.

Some things to remember when shooting doves!! They are a migratory bird so you will need a Kentucky migratory bird permit or wa-

terfowl permit to be legal.

Baiting doves is very illegal and carries a big fine. Just to make sure you're legal, have a Conservation Officer check field prior to hunt. This keeps everyone legal.

A good dove field needs several shooters in the field to keep birds moving. The key to dove hunting is safety when several shooters are in the field. DON'T shoot low birds! Know where all shooters are at.

Remember! If you are invited to a dove shoot this September, make sure the field is not baited. If the Conservation Officer shows up and the field you were invited to hunt is baited, you are getting a ticket. It is wise to walk the field prior to the hunt to be sure it is not baited. Check out the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife webpage for details.

If you don't have a place to dove hunt this coming season, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife has several public fields around the state. The fields are managed for doves and can be a great place to hunt.

The next few weeks is prime time to plant dove fields. Good luck to all those planning on planting fields. Hopefully the weather will work to your advantage.

Until next week, get out and enjoy God's creation!



Calling All Finches
Create a finch feeding station. All you need are thistle tube feeders with trays attached. While finches will arrive, don't be surprised if you see buntings, sparrows and juncos too. But you won't see nuisance birds like grackles, because they don't like thistle seed. And neither do squirrels!
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Ky. Afield Outdoors: Leave young wildlife alone at this time of year

by LEE McCLELLAN
Ky. Dept. Fish & Wildlife

It is a demonstration of the best traits of the human race, but can end in error.

At this time of year, people see young wildlife seemingly abandoned by their parents. Deer fawns left alone in a grassy field. Baby birds that fall from their nests, seemingly helpless in your backyard.

These events bring out the compassion that marks some of the better angels of human nature. People want to help the animals they feel are in danger. Their help is often a curse instead of a blessing. Humans are no substitute for natural parents.

"Baby birds, when they leave the nest, they look young and defenseless," said Kate Heyden, avian biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "They really are not abandoned. They are still being cared for by their parents. They look awkward, but they spend some time on the ground before they can fly."

Heyden said if a landowner finds a bird fallen from a nest that lacks feathers and seems naked, you may want to call a wildlife rehabilitator, as this bird likely fell out of the nest prematurely. Birds that leave the nest at the proper time do have feathers. Most songbirds are protected by federal law.

"It is illegal to keep a baby bird and raise it in your home," Heyden said. "It is also not a good idea."

To find a list of wildlife rehabilitators, go to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's webpage at fw.ky.gov and click on the "Wildlife" tab, then "Injured and Orphaned Wildlife."

Robins often make nests in unusual places at this time



Deer fawns hide in tall weeds during the first few weeks of life to avoid predators. Good hearted people see the fawns and think their mother abandoned them. The mother is close by and will draw danger to her and away from her fawns. Young wildlife often seems abandoned at this time of year, but they should be left alone.

of year. They may nest on top of porch lights, the crook where the gutter downspout meets the house or on or in a child's play set in the backyard. This alarms homeowners.

"Just leave them alone and the nest won't hurt anything," Heyden said. "For most songbirds, you are talking about a month for the whole breeding cycle."

Observe nests from a distance and don't touch nests or eggs. This may cause the parents to abandon the nest. Landowners often find white-tailed deer fawns in the coming weeks while mowing fields or people see them at the edge of the woods by themselves. The mother is nowhere to be found.

"Leave the fawn alone, they've not been orphaned or abandoned," said Gabe Jenkins, deer biologist for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "The mother is close by."

If a threatening presence comes close to the fawns, the mother will run off to draw the danger toward her and away from her fawns. Newborn deer stay bedded in tall

weeds or grass for the first few weeks of life until strong enough to keep up with their mother.

"If you are forced to move a fawn while mowing a field, set the fawn off in the tall weeds where it can hide," Jenkins recommended. "The mother will return in the evening. Fawns are almost scentless and their spots help them hide in the weeds."

People often find rabbit nests in overgrown areas of their yards at this time of year. Again, the best advice is to leave the nest and the young alone. Similar to white-tailed deer, the mother is close by and only visits the nest in the low light periods of early morning and dusk to feed the young. This avoids drawing predators to the nest.

The newborn rabbits stay in the nest from two to three weeks before they start eating green plants and leave. Keep away from the nest and don't take the young rabbits as pets.

If you find young wildlife over the next several weeks, leave them alone.

Stickeler's Answer

There are 167 cubes.

Stickeler's Puzzle on Page 11



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