

Ecology and Management of the Mourning Dove

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Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 30(2) : 295-296

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-30.2.295>

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BOOK REVIEW . . .

Ecology and Management of the Mourning Dove, Compiled and edited by Thomas S. Baskett, Mark W. Sayre, Roy E. Tomlinson and Ralph E. Mirarchi. A Wildlife Management Institute sponsored book published by Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105. 1993. xxi + 567 pp., 99 tables, 73 figures, approximately 350 black and white photos and drawings, two appendices, references cited, index. \$44.95 U.S. (Cloth).

This book is unquestionably the definitive work regarding the overall history, biology, and management of what is arguably the most important game bird in North America. The Ecology and Management of the Mourning Dove has been skillfully prepared through the efforts of the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and 23 highly knowledgeable editors and authors. The WMI has traditionally focused on the publication of scientific information, obtained through research and management experience, for the improved management of wildlife in North America. Of the more than 25 books which have resulted from WMI's efforts, this one must be classified among the most unique, primarily because it is the only comprehensive book available dealing with the ecology and management of the mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*).

Divided into four major sections, the 29 chapters of the book cover an exceptionally broad spectrum of information about this highly popular member of the avian community.

In the introductory Section I, the characteristics and importance of the mourning dove are addressed along with an extensive and fascinating historical review which dates from pre-Columbian times through the 20th century. The section concludes with a very readable chapter on the taxonomic classification and distribution of the mourning dove along with some comparisons with other species of Columbidae.

In Section II, details on the life history and biology of *Z. macroura* are presented. Based upon extensive field and laboratory observations, the subjects of migration, nesting and production, and reproductive characteristics are presented. Additional chapters provide information on crop gland activity, basic growth and maturation, molting characteristics, as well as discussions on energetics, metabolism, and reproductive physiology. The section concludes with chapters on behavior, foods and feeding ecology, diseases, parasites, contaminants, and other natural mortality factors. I was particu-

larly interested in the excellent chapter on diseases, parasites, and contaminants. The broad range of viral, bacterial, fungal, and ecto- and endoparasitic organisms, along with environmental contaminants associated with mourning doves is addressed in sufficient detail to keep the interest of those having a background or knowledge in this arena. It is not, however, so exhaustive as to discourage the uninitiated. Whether the reader is an experienced biologist, avid hunter, dedicated birding enthusiast or casual admirer, one cannot read this section without greatly enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the mourning dove and its life processes.

In Section III, the authors address the historical background and development of the well known "call-count" surveys for population estimates. Discussion of biological influences on call-count surveys, analyses of banding data, and population characteristics and trends in the Eastern, Central, and Western Management Units occupy the remaining chapters within this section.

The concluding Section IV deals with a number of research and management topics to include capture, banding, marking and radio-telemetry techniques, determination of age and sex and other research techniques, as well as the care and propagation of captive mourning doves. The section concludes with chapters on hunting regulations, harvest considerations, hunting traditions, conditions in various regions throughout the United States, shooting field management, and a variety of research and management needs.

I have enthusiastically pursued these "grey bullets," both as a researcher and a sportsman, from coast to coast and in nearly twenty states. My admiration for and interest in this wonderfully adaptive and intriguing bird unquestionably has been enhanced by the publication of this much needed book. I believe the same impressions will hold true for the vast majority of other readers. For the more casual or less technically inclined reader there are portions of the text which will seem overly detailed. Such portions may be easily skimmed and greater focus given to chapters which are more generalized or of greater interest to the reader.

Researchers, biologists, birders, and interested sportsmen and women will glean much from their reading, reviewing and referencing this work. The text is cohesive and readily assimilated. More importantly, the more than 1,300

cited references can direct one to specific primary sources of data and information addressed in this long awaited addition to the wildlife literature.

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