

Dove Shooting Ban FAQs

Q. Why is the Michigan Humane Society involved and to what extent are resources diverted from our shelter and daily operations?

A. We are not diverting resources away from our main mission. The MHS has a long history of fighting dove hunting. From the beginning, our supporters have made it clear that they wanted us to take a stand in opposition of this issue. We are aggressively using our volunteers to assist in the petition drive and have offered to help pass on information. We are always aware of the needs of our shelters and hospitals.

Q. How long have mourning doves been protected in Michigan?

A. Doves have been protected in Michigan since 1905.

Q. How long have proponents of dove hunting been trying to get a season approved?

A. MHS records indicate proponents of dove hunting have actively tried to get a dove hunting season in Michigan since 1981.

Q. How often has dove hunting been an issue for the legislature?

A. **1985:** NRC and DNR tried to establish a season without a public vote; they were sued by MHS claiming that the NRC had exceeded their authority by declaring open season on doves; the courts sided with MHS.
1995: A new bill introduced to the state legislature by the NRA and MUCC failed to pass.
2000: Rep. Susan Tabor (R-Delta Township) introduced another bill to initiate a dove season. It failed to pass the Senate vote.
2003: An edited version of the same bill was re-introduced by Rep. Tabor. In spite of great opposition by the majority of Michigan citizens, the legislature passed the bill.
2004: Bill HB5029 was signed by Governor Granholm with the stipulation that a trial season be established in only six western counties.
2004: A trial dove season was established in September.

Q. How does the use of lead shot impact the environment?

A. The use of lead shot by hunters can cause dangerous levels of lead to be left on the ground to poison the environment. Lead shot can also be ingested by non-target species who happen upon a dead or injured dove and ingest the poisonous shot.

Q. Will dove hunting really impact the dove population?

A. Michigan is a breeding ground for doves, not just a pass through state. The hunting of doves here could result in a dramatic drop in the number of birds that reach maturity and nest to reproduce.

Q. What is the "wounding rate" and how does it apply to doves?

A. This refers to the percentage of birds that are shot and wounded or injured, but not killed. In many cases, the injury may not render them immobile immediately and the bird may be able to fly far enough that it cannot be found by the hunter. The bird then falls victim to a predator, disease, starvation, lead poisoning or a life without fully functioning wings or legs. Due to the dove's erratic flight pattern, their quickness and hunters who overestimate their skill level or the abilities of their weapon, dove wounding rates are estimated to be between 30 and 40%.

Q. Doesn't hunting serve to manage wildlife?

A. The hunting of doves serves no conservation or wildlife management purpose. Doves are not predators and do not destroy crops or other foliage. Doves may be confused with other birds such as American Kestrels, which are protected.

Q. What are the petitions for?

A. The petitions are required in order to collect a minimum of 158,000 valid signatures from registered voters to get the dove hunt referendum listed on the 2006 ballot for a statewide vote.

Q. What is the deadline for signature gathering for the petition and what happens when the petitions are turned in?

A. The deadline is March 1, 2005. Once the petitions are verified by the Bureau of Elections, the 2005 dove hunt is halted and the dove hunt will be placed on the 2006 ballot for a statewide vote.

Q. What happens if the dove hunt is voted down in 2006?

A. If public opinion results in a re-instatement of the dove hunting ban, proponents of the hunt can only have it overturned by collecting valid signatures to get a referendum added to the next ballot.

Q. How many groups make up the Stop Shooting Doves Committee and what are the six counties where dove hunting is allowed?

A. There are ten organizations from across the state working together to form The Committee to Restore the Dove Shooting Ban. For a list of participating groups, visit the Michigan Humane Society web site at www.michiganhumane.org.

The six western counties are Berrien, Branch, Cass, Hillsdale, Lenawee and St. Joseph,