

# TPWD Conducts Dove Shot Effectiveness Tests

While Texas hunters were dusting off shotguns and stocking up on ammunition in advance of the Sept. 1 dove season opener in most of Texas, a research team was out two days prior to the season collecting bird specimens for a research study on the effectiveness of various shot shells, including non-lead shot.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department wildlife biologists are in the first year of a multi-year study to determine the effectiveness of different load types on wild mourning doves using trained observers and volunteer shooters.

This study is the first of its kind for doves and is based on a similar lethality research project in Missouri and Louisiana on waterfowl in the 1980s.

"The main premise of this research is to clarify if there is a difference between perception and reality in wounding rates and killing efficiency of lead shot and non lead shot on mourning dove," said Jay Roberson, TPWD dove program leader and the study organizer.

"TPWD does not have a position for or against non-lead shot for doves, but we recognize the importance of this issue.

"Our objective is to replace perceptions with facts."

The study design calls for three consecutive sessions using the same shooters paired with the same observers to ensure consistency across three types of shot shell loads.

The research objective is to obtain under a controlled study environment 500 mourning dove specimens killed with one shot in each of the next two to three years.

Collections are being conducted by permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This year, 22 volunteer shooters participated in each of two collection sessions on Aug. 30 and produced about 400 specimens.

However, due to questions raised Aug. 30 about the department's decision to conduct collection efforts prior to the Sept. 1 dove season opener, TPWD suspended collection for Aug. 31.

The department received complaints those activities would negatively impact hunter opportunity on adjacent property.

Collection efforts resumed on Sept. 1, and the goal of 500 total specimens was reached.

Timing for the collection was critical to achieve the study objectives in an effective and efficient manner.

Aug. 30 and 31 were chosen for collections because of the need for typical representative feeding field shooting conditions and collecting efficiency.

"We needed the confluence of lots of doves with adequate number of shooters," explained Roberson.

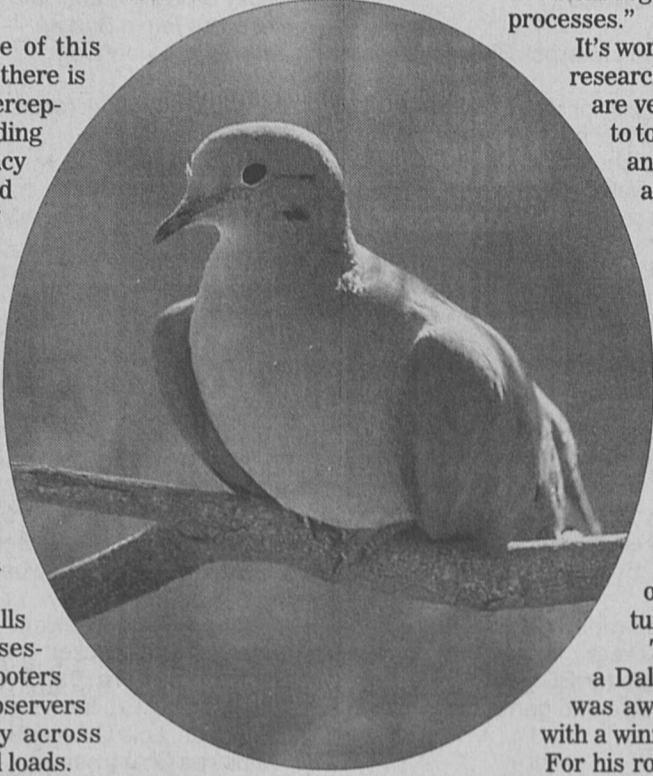
According to Roberson, during

last year's pilot phase of the study, dove specimen collection for the research project took place on opening weekend of the hunting season, Sat., Sept. 1, and Sun., Sept. 2.

This year Sept. 1 fell on a Monday, so Aug. 30 and 31 were chosen for collections because of the need for typical representative feeding field shooting conditions and collecting efficiency.

If the collection was delayed until opening day this year, project organizers foresaw several potential problems that would jeopardize the study's validity.

"We could have spread the collection effort over several weekends during the season," Roberson said.



"Using results from last year's pilot, it would have required a minimum of five to six weekend efforts, which meant travel costs and weekend commitments from 24 trained observers.

"We also saw a problem getting 24 volunteer shooters to travel at their own expense to Central Texas to participate in a multi-day collection over the course of several weekends," he added.

"It would be unrealistic for us to expect the same group of volunteers and observers to commit to that kind of protracted schedule."

And there were other important reasons researchers concluded the collection needed to occur before opening day.

They needed to collect doves that had not previously been struck and carrying pellets from other shot types.

Waiting until after the opener would have risked collecting doves that had been hit, but not killed, by hunters that were not part of the research effort.

Researchers also needed to most nearly estimate the wounding rates and killing efficiencies of Texas-produced doves that would occur on an opening weekend when the majority of doves are harvested.

Researchers were concerned

about a perception that dove collection for the project might reduce hunting opportunity on adjacent property.

For this reason, the research contract specified that the test be conducted as far away as possible from adjacent landowners, who were notified in advance and gave informed consent.

"Our intent was never to reduce hunting opportunity on adjacent landowner property," said Scott Boruff, TPWD deputy director of operations.

"We understand the perception that our collection effort may have been poorly timed.

"We are listening to concerns and will factor them into future decisions regarding our research processes."

It's worth noting that these research project collections are very small in relation to total harvest, hunters and land area hunted annually in Texas.

There are about 5 million doves taken in Texas each year.

There are nearly 600,000 acres in Brown County.

The research project contract was limited to 550 acres for Aug. 30 and 31 and carried out in an 80-acre pasture.

Tom Stephenson, a Dallas-based outfitter, was awarded the contract with a winning bid of \$32,390.

For his role, Stephenson was required to provide fields, facilities and associated services.

In particular, Stephenson had to provide at least five fields totaling 400 acres during Aug. 24 through 29 for training observers.

In addition, Stephenson was required to provide a minimum of 150 acres well-populated with mourning doves providing a high probability that 24 volunteer shooters will accumulate at least 300, one-shot killed specimens over six separate morning and afternoon shooting sessions on Aug. 30-31.

Stephenson also provided on site lodging and facilities and resources for observers and support staff throughout the training phase.

Stephenson was also responsible for recruiting 24 volunteer shooters representing a diverse demographic.

There was no stipulation in the contract prohibiting Stephenson from assessing a fee to ensure or enhance participation.

Tom Roster, an international ballistics consultant and recognized as the world's foremost authority on migratory game bird wounding mortality and shot shell performance, trained and certified 22 observers during that six-day period.

Roster serves as a consultant with the Cooperative North Amer-

ican Shot Nursing Education Program (CONSEP), whose lab will handle X-ray and necropsies on the dove specimens collecting during the study.

CONSEP has been paid \$35,000 for necropsies and x-rays of 100 carcasses collected during the pilot phase last year and \$5,295 for tests of anomalous wad opening on patterns.

They will be paid an additional \$15,000 this year for training of observers.

"This is the first year in a multi-year study," said Boruff.

"Texas has the largest contingent of dove hunters in the nation and this scientific information will be invaluable in the future when our leadership is faced with making decisions about dove management."

TPWD is conducting a number of studies related to dove hunting in addition to the shot lethality research.

These studies are ongoing and no conclusions are anticipated in the near future.

In addition to the dove shot lethality study, research efforts include:

-A lead toxicity prevalence study to identify the proportion of doves with toxic levels of lead in bone and tissues across the state.

-A dove banding and recovery study to provide estimates of survival rates before and after implementation on non-lead shot in experimental areas.

-A human dimensions study to gauge dove hunter attitudes toward non-lead shot.

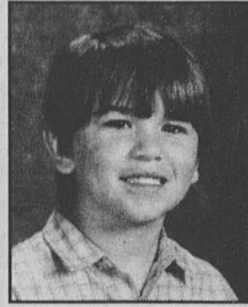
No proposal for hunting regulation rule change regarding the use of different types of shot for mourning dove is anticipated in the near future.

Any TPWD proposals for rule making will be based upon good science with ample opportunity and time for public review and comment, said Roberson.

"It will probably be several years before we have sufficient information to provide answers to questions agency leadership and stakeholders may ask regarding dove shot effectiveness," Roberson said.

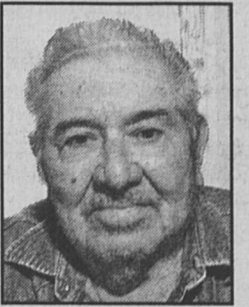
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Happy Birthday  
Cody  
Sept. 19



Gina, CoCo, Bully, Michael, Sarah and Racheal

Happy Birthday  
Tony  
Sept. 22



We Love You!

**Q. My baby has a fever and a touch of diarrhea. Is that because he's teething?**

**A. Some pediatricians don't buy into the idea that these symptoms are related to teething, but others see a connection. The usual scenario is that a parent will bring in an irritable 6-month old with a low-grade fever (less than 100.5°) and some mild diarrhea. The child is also drooling and chewing on his fingers or anything else near his mouth. An exam doesn't show any problem, and the parent is sent home with instructions for managing the fever. Then, two or three days later, a new tooth appears-and soon after that the fever and diarrhea disappear.**  
A good rule of thumb is that whatever problem you think is due to teething should pass with treatment within 24 hours. If it doesn't, your baby may actually be sick with something else and should be seen by his pediatrician.

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## 4 Player Scramble Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 27, 2008

1 p.m. Shotgun Start - Eagle Lake Golf Course

Entry Fee: \$200.00 per team

Includes Lunch, one Mulligan/per player. Buick Open Modified Handicapping System will be used.

**\$5000 Hole in One Prize**

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Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Longest Drive & Closest to the Pin  
Cart Rent: At player's expense (limited carts available call to reserve carts early 979-234-5981.)

Carts needed: \_\_\_\_\_?

Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
City/St/Zip: _____	City/St/Zip: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
E-mail: _____	E-mail: _____
Handicap: _____ Course Index: _____	Handicap: _____ Course Index: _____
Course Name: _____	Course Name: _____

Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
City/St/Zip: _____	City/St/Zip: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
E-mail: _____	E-mail: _____
Handicap: _____ Course Index: _____	Handicap: _____ Course Index: _____
Course Name: _____	Course Name: _____



### Food FACT:

TRUE OR FALSE:  
CHICKENS CAN LAY DIFFERENT COLORED EGGS.

ANSWER: TRUE

### Chicken Crossword

1		2		3
5				
6				

**CLUES ACROSS**      **CLUES DOWN**

1. Poultry                      1. Discard  
5. Cereal plant                2. Yellow starchy food  
6. People who own or manage a farm      3. Birds that nest

### THIS DAY IN... HISTORY

September 20

- 1881: CHESTER ARTHUR WAS SWORN IN AS THE U.S. PRESIDENT FOLLOWING JAMES GARFIELD'S ASSASSINATION.
- 1973: BILLIE JEAN KING DEFEATED BOBBY RIGGS IN A TENNIS MATCH THAT PIT WOMAN AGAINST MAN.
- 1998: CAL RIPKEN, JR. SAT OUT A GAME, ENDING HIS 2,632 PLAYED GAME STREAK.

### new word

alektorophobia

fear of chickens

### How they SAY it in...

**ENGLISH:** Father  
**SPANISH:** Padre  
**ITALIAN:** Padre  
**FRENCH:** Père  
**GERMAN:** Vater

### Did You Know?

AMERICANS CONSUME AROUND 8 BILLION CHICKENS EVERY YEAR. THERE ARE MORE CHICKENS ON THE PLANET THAN HUMANS, SO THERE ARE PLENTY OF CHICKENS TO FEED US ALL.

### get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture featured here is?

ANSWER: ROOSTER