

Is Recently Cut Corn Field Good Place To Find Doves?

By JIM DEAN
A recently cut cornfield is supposed to be the best spot to find doves. There is increasing evidence, however, that corn may be a second or third rate dove food.

Under certain circumstances, cotton, cucumbers, melons, squash, and other similar crops may attract more doves than corn.

Mike Gaddis and I have had some excellent dove

hunts during the past three or four years, but as I look back, I can remember only a few that occurred over recently cut corn.

We've had several good shoots over cucumber patches, but by far the best and most consistent dove hunting we've had has been in cotton fields. It's not the cotton which attracts the birds. Instead, it's a weed seed that frequently grows in cotton fields. The weed is

called croton, and apparently doves would rather have it than anything else.

This past week, Mike and I took my 12-year-old son Scott to an area in eastern North Carolina where Mike had collected a limit on two previous days. We scouted out a lot of fields, but finally had to settle for a big cotton field.

"This field has been shot more heavily than any other field in this area," said

Mike, "and yet it is still attracting more doves than anything we've found."

We hunted for a couple of hours with fair success, but the field was getting crowded so we decided to see if we could find another good field somewhere nearby.

We drove around looking at dozens of fields including some where corn had recently been cut. Even the most likely looking fields

had only a few doves feeding in them.

"I don't understand why doves seem to pass up corn these days," said Mike. "It seems that it wasn't that way a few years ago. If you found a good cornfield, you often found doves, especially this early in the season. There are still plenty of birds, but they seem to prefer other foods."

Finally, Mike spotted what he'd been looking for.

"There are quite a few doves in that field off to the right," he said as he pulled off the road and squinted through his binoculars. "Let's find the owner and see if he'll let us hunt them."

After we'd talked to the landowner and gotten permission to hunt, we drove down a narrow dirt road until we were near the field.

"Well that's a surprise," said Mike. "It's a cornfield."

"Yeah, after all we've said about corn, it seems strange to find them in it today."

We fanned out and took up stands. After about an hour of shooting, Mike had filled out his limit; I had enhanced the financial status of the arms' companies, and Scott had shot his first dove. It was a fine hunt.

As we walked through the field to the truck, I happened to notice some-

thing unusual.

"Look at this," I said, pointing to some low weeds growing between the rows. "It's croton."

"Yeah, that explains why the doves were here," said Mike. "I believe it's the first time I've seen it growing so thick in corn."

One thing seems certain. Doves like croton, cucumbers and similar seeds—maybe more than they like corn.

Some Change Is Awaiting Deer Hunters

Deer hunters will find some changes in the mandatory big game tagging procedure this season.

"The main change for the 1977-78 deer season will involve the use of the tag and the big game kill report," said a spokesman for the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission's Division of Game.

This year, the tag must not be removed from the carcass of the animal until it is finally skinned and dressed for consumption. Last year, the tag was removed and attached to the Big Game Kill Report. The Big Game Kill Report must be obtained and completed prior to the final skinning for consumption.

Hunters will also note other differences in the tagging procedure when they purchase their big game licenses this year. This is the first year that the "Hunter's Choice" tags will be in effect for either-sex deer hunting in certain parts of the State. Sportsmen are urged to pay particular attention to the instructions which accompany their tags and big game license.

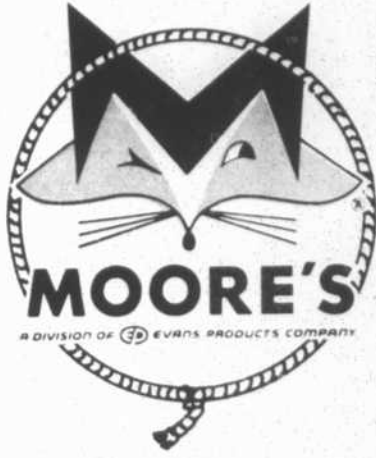
Those who have questions should contact their local wildlife enforcement officer or contact the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission, 512 N. Salisbury Street, Archdale Building, Raleigh, North Carolina 27611. The toll-free telephone number is 1-800-662-7137.

Lisa Bobbitt Is Commended

William E. Terry, principal at John Graham Senior High School, announced this week that one senior achieved Commended student status in the 23rd annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

Letters of Commendation were presented to Lisa Louise Bobbitt. Lisa is among 35,000 Commended students throughout the United States to be honored. Commended students score slightly below the level required for Merit Program participants who will continue in the competition for Merit Scholarships.

Terry reported that the NMSC stated that the corporation "believes the high standing of Merit Program Commended students is an attainment that deserves their public recognition, because the nation as well as these students will be benefited by continued educational and personal development of their talents."



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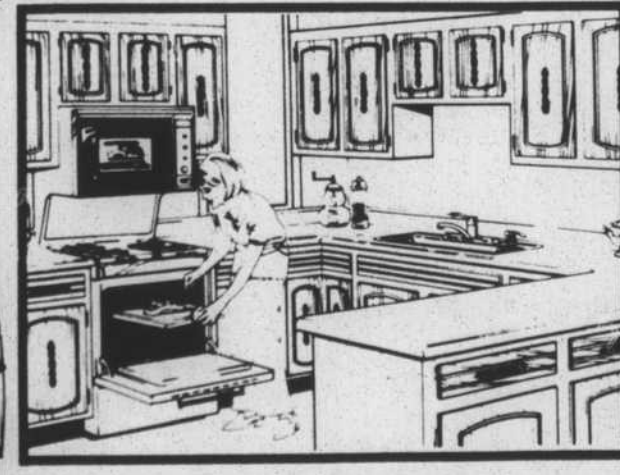
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