

N.C. Dove Season Opens Wednesday At High Noon

The poet Shelley once wrote a poem about birds called "Hail To Thee, Blythe Spirit."

Come September 2 at noon when the dove season officially opens across North Carolina, hunters will be greeting large flocks of migrating mourning doves with another kind of hail—principally No. 7½ shot.

Those hunters who commonly swap two or three boxes of expensive shotgun shells for half a dozen doves and a few puffs of feathers will probably not be calling them "blythe spirits" either, but never mind.

The point is that the dove hunting season is once again upon us, and the first part of this year's split season opened at noon Wednesday, September 2 and will close October 10. The second session will open at noon December 16 and close January

15. Shooting hours each day are from noon to sunset, and you can legally shoot 18 doves daily (if you can hit them), and have as many as 36 in possession. The possession limit allows for those who like to freeze some for later deasts.

The opening of the dove season always poses at least two problems for hunters. The most obvious one concerns hitting the shifty critters as they wheel and zig-zag across a cut corn field just ahead of a sea of misguided pellets. It takes a considerable amount of shooting to sharpen your reflexes after the long summer layoff.

The other problem—one that seems to be on the increase—is finding good places to hunt. This problem is particularly acute for the urban dweller or the man who doesn't know any farmers

who permit hunting.

Fortunately, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has set aside some 32 areas across the state for public dove hunting. Many of these areas have been developed for dove hunting, which means that they have been planted with crops like millet which attracts doves.

Fifteen areas have been set aside only for dove hunting. These 15 public dove hunting areas are scattered across the state from near Asheville all the way to the coast, with most being concentrated in the Piedmont. On these areas were only dove hunting is permitted, hunts are scheduled on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons only.

The Commission has also set up dove hunts on 17 of its small

and migratory game areas. Some of these areas have been planted to attract doves, while some have not. The days you may hunt these areas also vary, although most hold afternoon hunts on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

For more detailed information on these areas, you may check the recent August issue of WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA. A map and directions to these areas appear in the magazine.

All of these areas, both the dove hunting areas and the small and migratory game areas, require a special \$5.50 season game lands permit in addition to your hunting license. You may pick these up at li-

cense dealers in sporting goods and tackle shops across the state.

The following areas allow dove hunting on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, but the areas have not been planted to attract doves.

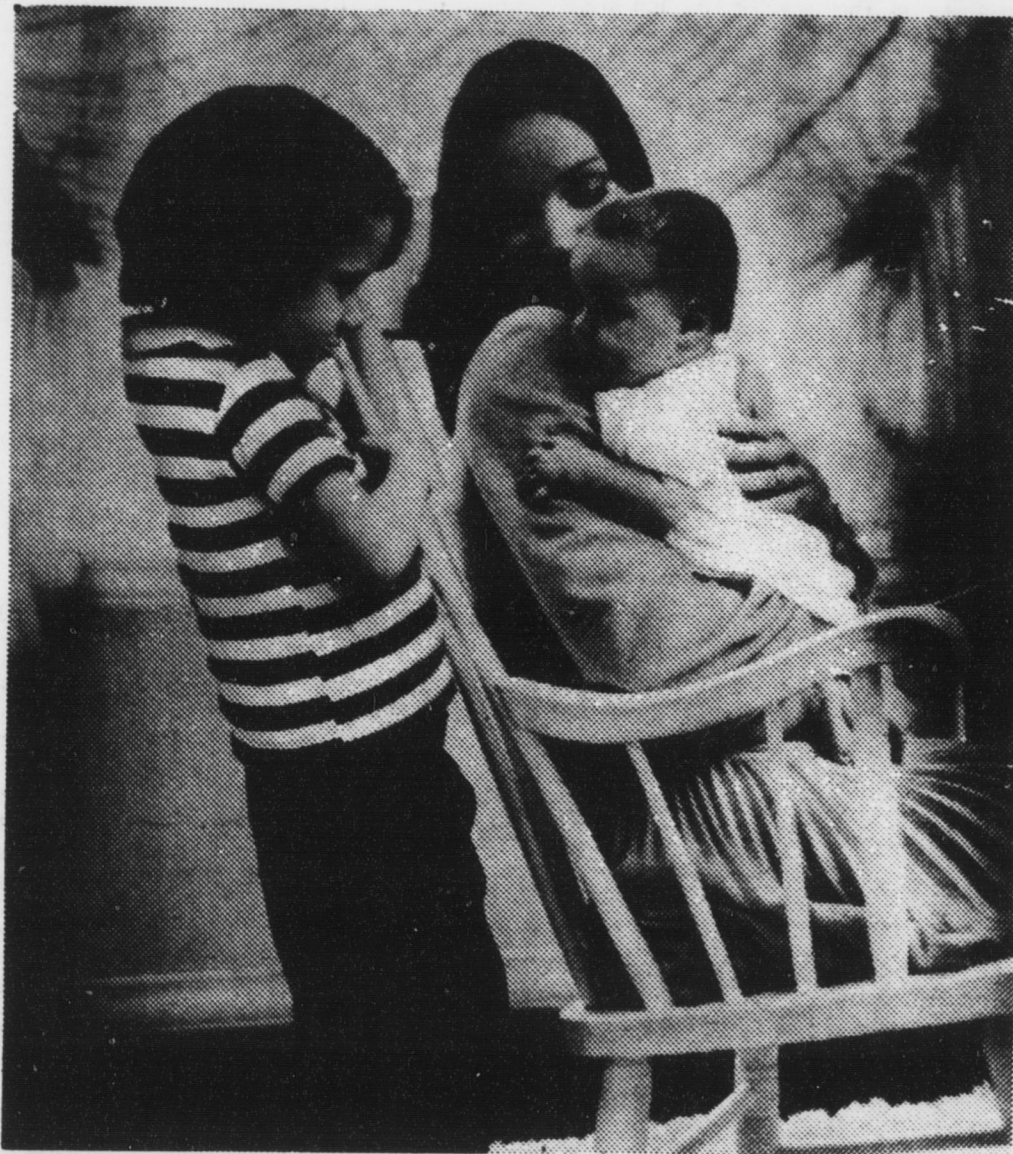
Rowan County—Hall Farm, two miles north of Cleveland on SRs 1971 and 1972.

The following small and migratory game areas have been planted to attract doves and allow hunting on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

Davie and Davidson counties—Cooleemee Plantation, accessible from US 64 west of Yadkin River in Davie County, and also from SRs 1176, 1178 and 1185 south of US 64 in Davidson County.

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