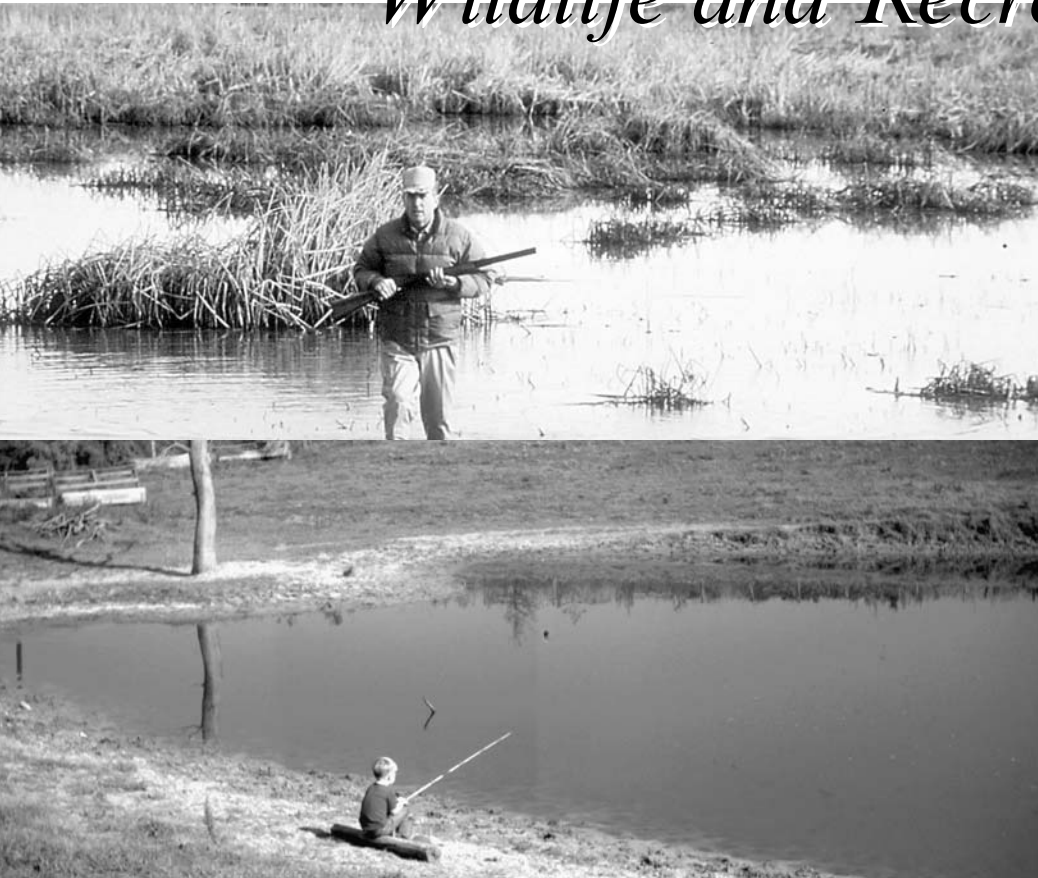


NATURAL RESOURCE ENTERPRISES

Wildlife and Recreation



PROPER CARE OF HARVESTED MOURNING DOVES FROM FIELD TO TABLE

Across the nation, each fall and winter more shotgun shells are spent in attempts to harvest mourning doves (and white-winged doves in the Southwest) than for any other hunted game species. Unfortunately, not everyone who hunts doves appreciates the great table fare doves make if they are properly cared for in the field and properly cleaned, stored, and cooked.

The following information provides some tips that will improve the care and handling of harvested doves as well as their preparation for eating. Clearly, there are many other good recipes for

preparing doves for the table, but these preparation methods and recipes are tried and proven. These recipes will enhance enjoyment of any meal featuring doves that were harvested in an enjoyable afternoon or morning hunt.

CARE OF DOVES IN THE FIELD

Doves are often harvested in warm to hot weather, particularly in the first season of the fall, usually in September in the South. Because of this, it is important that they are not harvested and carried around all afternoon in a vest or hunting

pouch, or they will not make the best of table fare. However, if you place them in a plastic bag and then in an ice chest shortly after they are harvested, you can then clean and pluck or skin them properly right after the hunt.

It is often a good idea to take along an ice chest for cold drinks and water, and taking some extra plastic bags (half-gallon size works well) is an excellent way to keep the harvested birds in good condition until you finish hunting and can clean them. You will also want to bring along a larger plastic bag (trash-sized bag) to use later for storing feathers, entrails, and other remains from cleaning the birds until you have a proper location for disposal.

Cleaning birds in the field is not a good idea. You should wait until you have left the field and find an appropriate location. Put all feathers, entrails, and other remains from all cleaned birds in a plastic garbage bag for proper disposal. Once the birds are cleaned, whether picked or skinned and eviscerated, place the cleaned bird (minus

head, feet, feathers, and intestines) in plastic bags and put on ice until you will cook or freeze them. Quart-sized plastic bags make good containers for storing dressed birds.

Upon arriving home, thoroughly wash the birds, carefully picking out any shot or embedded feathers. Place the bird carcasses in salty water and let them soak overnight in the refrigerator, unless you plan to prepare them immediately. If freezing for later use, package the birds, keeping in mind that the average person can eat from three to six cooked doves at a meal. Because doves are dark-meat birds, skinned birds will freezer burn more quickly than picked birds. It is important to package them well, whether you skinned or plucked them. Taking proper care of the birds in the field and after cleaning is crucial to having an outstanding meal of doves, however they are prepared for the table.

The following recipes may be useful, unless you already have your own favorite way to prepare them for your family or guests.

Miller's Marinade

1/2 cup soy sauce

1/2 cup water

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon crushed garlic

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon tabasco sauce

Mix ingredients and pour over fresh or fully thawed meat. Marinate in a glass or sturdy plastic container overnight or for up to 24 hours. Depending on the number of birds to be cooked, adjust the amount of marinade.

Here is a favorite recipe to use with the marinated meat: Marinate the birds overnight, and skewer half of a piece of smoked bacon with toothpicks to the outside of skinned dove breasts and cook on the grill, turning them over a few times until the bacon is done on the outside. This usually results in a dove breast that is cooked medium well, with the meat closest to the breast bone being medium rare.

Fried Dove

Take thawed or fresh doves, spread them on waxed paper, salt and pepper to taste, then roll lightly in flour. Put doves in an iron skillet with approximately 1/4 inch of hot cooking oil. Brown doves on both sides at 350°. Drain off most of the oil, leaving 3 or 4 tablespoons. Turn heat to low, cover with lid, and simmer for 45 to 60 minutes. If desired, you can make gravy from the drippings after the birds are done.

A variation of this recipe is to add either cream of mushroom or celery soup to the skillet after draining the oil. This method will make its own gravy. Another option is to add one teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce to the remaining oil after draining.

Broiled Doves

10 doves

1/2 cup sugar

1 cup soy sauce

2 garlic cloves, crushed

Mix the sugar, soy sauce, and garlic in a large bowl and marinate the birds in this mixture for 3 to 4 hours. Broil the birds, basting them occasionally with the marinade. When the leg bones can be twisted away from the meat, the birds should be done. To make them as tender as possible, cook them very slowly over moderate heat.

Grilled Doves in Foil

10 to 12 doves

3 apples

10 to 12 slices bacon

salt and pepper to taste

Soak the doves in vinegar-water for an hour. Rinse in cold water, and wipe dry. Salt the inside of each bird. Core and quarter the apples, and put one segment in the cavity of each bird, fastening it with a toothpick. Wrap two doves to a package in aluminum foil, and grill slowly over charcoal (or in an oven) for an hour.

Doves in Wine Sauce

10 doves	1 tablespoon sugar
1 cup burgundy wine	1 tablespoon celery salt
1 cup fresh or canned mushrooms, sliced	1 teaspoon vinegar
1/2 cup flour	2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup cooking oil	

To marinate the doves, soak them overnight by mixing the wine, vinegar, sugar, and garlic. When ready to prepare, drain the marinade into a dish for later use, dry the doves, and rub them with celery salt. Next, roll the doves in flour. Saute the doves in oil until brown. Drain off the oil, and add the marinating sauce. Add enough wine to cover the birds, add the mushrooms, and cover. Cook over low heat for about 2 hours. If desired, thicken the sauce with a flour-and-water paste. *Enjoy.*

Doves with Rice

10 doves	1/2 cup red wine
1/4 cup oil	salt and pepper to taste
1 onion, sliced	pinch of thyme
1 can tomato paste	pinch of sage
1 can tomato sauce	1 cup uncooked rice (or more)
1 can stewed tomatoes	

Brown the doves in oil. Add onion and saute until slightly brown. Add the three tomato ingredients and as much water as is needed to barely cover the doves. Next, add the remaining ingredients except the rice, and let simmer for 45 to 60 minutes. Prepare the rice in a separate container according to the package directions. When the doves are cooked, pour the sauce over the rice. If you use fewer doves, decrease the tomato ingredients accordingly, and if more than four people will be served, increase the rice to 1 1/2 or 2 cups.

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