



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DOVES REPORTED DYING OF DISEASE IN ALABAMA

Extensive losses in the mourning dove population of some parts of Alabama, particularly Autauga County, have been reported by Fish and Wildlife Service game pathologists, the U. S. Department of the Interior said today. The mourning dove is a favorite game bird, especially in the South.

The doves are suffering from an infectious canker-like growth in the back of the mouth and throat. Small yellowish patches can be detected in the throat of infected birds, the Service reported. In severe cases, the canker may become so enlarged that the food passage is closed, and an external lump can be seen.

The disease, known to scientists as "Trichomoniasis," is caused by a micro-organism, Trichomonas gallinae. The infection is passed on to other doves in food contaminated by diseased birds. The disease has been known to occur in domestic fowl, hawks, wild doves, and pigeons throughout the world. The present Alabama outbreak seems restricted to mourning doves.

The disease does not affect humans, and mildly infected doves, taken by hunters, are not spoiled as food. The spread of the disease will be watched by Service scientists, who are working with State conservation agencies in a cooperative mourning dove investigation throughout the southeast.

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