

Connecticut



Waterfowlers
Association

February 18, 2019

Dear Environment Committee Members:

I am writing you on behalf of the Connecticut Waterfowlers Association (CWA) a 52-year-old Connecticut conservation group dedicated to wetland conservation and the preservation of the tradition of waterfowl hunting. The CWA urges you to support S.B. 599, *An Act Authorizing the Hunting of Doves*.

This bill is of interest to the CWA because we view dove hunting as a “gateway” activity to help recruit new hunters who likely will move on to other types of hunting including waterfowl. There is no biological reason not to hunt doves and ample justification for it. Please consider the following:

- Forty-one states currently have dove hunting seasons. Most states (e.g., Alaska) that do not have seasons do not have huntable populations of doves.
- In most states, including Connecticut, doves are abundant with stable or increasing populations.
- The hunting of doves would have negligible effect on population size, as the mortality from hunting would be compensatory. That is, most doves that are harvested likely would have died from other causes (e.g., predation, disease, inclement weather).
- If dove hunting is allowed in Connecticut, it would take place in rural, agricultural areas away from suburban and urban areas.
- Populations of doves that people enjoy viewing at their bird feeders would not be affected.

Most people do not realize the incredibly important role that sportsmen have played in wildlife conservation. Hunters were the first conservationists. It was sportsmen that drew attention to the dwindling populations of wildlife that occurred in the early 1900s, due to unregulated harvest of many species. As a result, states enacted laws to protect species by setting season and harvest limits for wildlife.

Sportsmen also pay for the vast majority of wildlife conservation that benefits both hunted and non-hunted species. In 1937, the federal Pittman-Robertson Act was signed into law. That law required excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and some other hunting items. These funds are distributed to state wildlife agencies and can only be used for wildlife conservation. Since 1937 this process has generated more than \$10 billion for conservation. A dove hunting season in Connecticut would further this conservation legacy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Chasko, President, CWA
Certified Wildlife Biologist

