

Mourning doves lay just two eggs. The reason for this is the kind of food the parents give the babies. Parents feed the young what is referred to as "crop milk," a secretion of fat and protein produced by the lining of the crop and regurgitated to the young. It takes both parents to feed the babies. The young develop rapidly and in two weeks are ready to leave the nest and forage for themselves. A similar situation is true for hummingbirds, which have only two eggs. The parents are kept busy fulltime feeding nectar to the babies.

Mourning doves are the most hunted migratory game bird in North America. More than 480,000 will be killed this fall in Oklahoma with between 15-20 million in the United States. In all State or Federal wildlife publications the term killed or shot is not used, instead the euphemism harvested is used. When I think of harvesting, I think of wheat or corn or something in agriculture, not wildlife. September 1st is opening day of dove season. The four photos I've used to illustrate today's note were all taken after September 1st. The photo of the oldest dove was taken on October 6th, more than a month after the opening of dove season.

If the parents are killed the babies will starve to death. Question: is it ethical to kill the adults while babies are still in the nest and dependent on the parents? To my mind, it is not. I don't have an issue with dove hunting, just the start day of hunting season, September 1st. Perhaps opening day could be moved to October 1st. Be the first to know Get local news delivered to your inbox! Sign up! * I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.