

Decoying doves

New twists on old ideas could bring more of the birds closer

BY JOHN N. FELSHER



Wayne Pope rigged this dove decoy with fishing line. He uses fishing tackle to place such decoys high on non-working wires simulating powerlines at Quail Valley Lodge near Faunsdale, Ala.



Photos by John N. Felsher

A Mojo Voodoo Dove spinning wing decoy helps bring the mourning doves closer during a hunt. The spinning wings give off flash that simulates flapping wings. Birds can see them from a long way off.

For millennia, sportsmen tried to lure birds and animals into range of their bows, spears or slings. Ancient Egyptians fashioned reeds into decoys for hunting waterfowl in the Nile River delta marshes. In this hemisphere, Native Americans carved wooden figures that would not look out of place in many duck decoy collections today.

Over the decades, waterfowlers traditionally sat in blinds looking out over their decoys, hoping ducks would fly in their direction. On the other hand, dove hunters generally just picked a place to sit at the edge of a field hoping the swift birds would fly over them or they walked up doves along fencerows.

In recent years, more dove hunters began taking clues from waterfowlers, particularly after the advent of electronic “spinning-wing” decoys. The spinning wings create a strobe effect that looks like wings flapping. Some companies make spinning-wing dove decoys that work like waterfowl decoys. Birds can see that flash for miles.

Since so many predators want to eat them, doves generally congregate in groups to find safety in numbers. Therefore, just like in duck hunting, doves see that flash from a spinning-wing decoy, think they spotted their cousins landing in a safe place and come to check it out. A cluster of decoys could put the small birds more at ease and more likely to come closer.

Many people place spinning-wing decoys directly in front of them. Birds do swoop down low over them and sometimes land next to them. However, birds heading directly toward a spinner might also spot people hiding behind it. Alerted birds could flare

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