

Mourning Doves on My Porch

Do you know about mourning doves? Well I do and they are amazing. The reason I know about them is because one particular family lays their eggs at my house every year. For the past three years, a beautiful gray mourning dove comes in early March and lays two tiny white eggs in my mom's hanging basket. We leave the planter untouched, just for the mother dove to lay her eggs in each year. Nothing is planted but we add some fresh dirt and mulch for her to hopefully come back and build a new nest.

The parent doves never leave the nest unless the other dove is there watching the eggs. The mourning doves are a part of the dove family. They are also known as western turtle dove, the American mourning dove, or the rain doves. Mourning doves are one of the most abundant of all North American birds. Mourning doves are the leading game bird with up to 70 million shot in the U.S. They are light gray and brown and dull in color. Every morning on my way to school, I check on the mother bird (I learned in my research that it is probably the father dove who sits on the eggs most of the time). Very rarely do I see the eggs uncovered but luckily, I have been able to peek in the nest a few times and take a picture. We had a really bad wind storm this past March and I was very worried about the eggs. The next morning when I checked, the dove was still protecting her eggs.

In late April, we start listening for chirping noises. I have never witnessed the miracle of life when the eggs hatched but I have tried! After they have hatched, I have taken a few photos of the babies when the mother and father dove leave to get food. One of them brings back food to the chirping babies. The birds are so cute and amazing to watch as they quickly grown and then learn to fly. By mid May, the dove family leaves our front porch with their babies. It happens so quickly. Someday I hope those baby birds will come here to lay their eggs too. These wonderful birds showed me how beautiful nature is and why we should protect it.

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