



SA WINGSHOOTERS ASSOCIATION

CODE OF CONDUCT – PIGEON & DOVE SHOOTING

Pigeons and doves are probably South Africa's most utilised gamebirds. It is legal to shoot some of the species all the year round. Their meat makes for good eating if prepared correctly and provides quality protein food, which can also be donated to communities residing on and around the properties where shoots take place.

PIGEON & DOVE SHOOTING AND THE LAW

The shooting of all the species is controlled by the provincial conservation ordinances, and is different for every area that you shoot in, so we would recommend that you obtain a copy of the relevant regulations prior to your shoot.

Bag limits as set out by the provincial regulations should be adhered to at all times, and where bag limits are not prescribed by provincial regulations we urge you to stick to the bag limits as recommended by SA Wingshooters. Should the manager or landowner feel the need to impose more restrictive bag limits, please adhere to these.

FIELD IDENTIFICATION

SA Wingshooters recommend that you obtain an up to date bird identification field guide and acquaint yourself properly with the species that is legal to shoot in your area.

The most common species are as follows:

Rock Pigeon (*Columba guinea*) also known as the Speckled Pigeon or Kransduif of Bosduif

Red-eyed Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) also known as the Redeyed Dove or Grootringduif

Cape Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia capicola*) also known as the Tortelduif

Laughing Dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) also known as the Rooiborsduif

DECOYING

Pigeon and dove decoying is the art of setting out decoys and building a hide in a field where pigeons are feeding and using artificial or dead bird decoys to attract pigeons to within shotgun range (20 to 30 meters). This requires good local knowledge or reconnaissance to determine when and where the birds feed in order to achieve results.

Hides may be built with camouflage nets, straw bales or natural cover. When using bales remember to ask the farmer's permission to move them and always replace them after the shoot. Natural hides are made with materials found on the farm and should be dismantled at the end of the shooting day. Do not damage the farmer's property in your efforts to construct a hide. The hide should be large enough to accommodate the shooter, his dog and equipment, and have as level a floor as possible.

FLIGHTING OR PASS SHOOTING

Shooting birds on flightlines is very popular and, after reconnaissance has determined the line of flight, guns stand concealed on the edges of woods or in hedgerows and shoot passing birds without the aid of decoys. This is the type of pigeon and dove shooting most often practised in South Africa

SAFETY

Great care should be exercised when setting a hide or selecting a shooting position to make sure you are aware of all footpaths, roads and rights of way and that the angles of fire are safe before starting to shoot. Also make a mental note of where all other guns are positioned. Remember that no.7 shot can travel 300 meters.

Remember that the shooter will be concealed from any approaching pedestrian or vehicle and it is the duty of the shooter not to endanger anybody. This equally applies to any of the farm employees working in nearby fields, remember it is your duty to ensure their safety at all times. It is illegal to shoot within 50 meters of a public road.

Shooting from a hide often involves taking shots at birds approaching the decoys at or near ground level. Care must be taken over the possibilities of pellets ricocheting off the ground. Do not shoot in a unsafe direction or towards livestock.

Farm and other boundaries must be respected and shooting should not be undertaken where shot may drop on buildings, houses or neighbouring land.

Always be aware of the noise factor when shooting and do not unnecessarily disturb the public or live stock.

WARNING!

Shooting near overhead power lines or insulators can result in severe injury or death. The main points to remember are:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical apparatus.

GUNS AND CARTRIDGES

A double-barrelled well-fitting gun will be the most effective and no. 7 or smaller shot is recommended. 12-bore shotguns are most commonly used but the smaller gauges such as 20-bores can be equally effective.

Hearing and eye protection should be worn at all times.

For reasons of security the gun should be unloaded/safe and taken with you whenever you leave the hide.

Remember that a gun must not be taken and dogs should also not be sent onto neighbouring land for any reason without permission.

IN THE FIELD

Permission from the landowner/farmer is needed for the following:

- Before shooting each day
- Before driving across fields
- Before inviting a companion to shoot
- Before taking a dog with you

When walking through fields with growing crops take care to do as little damage as possible. Respect the farmer and his property, do not cause damage to fences and leave gates as you find them.

Do not disturb nesting birds when building a hide.

Ensure that all efforts are made to pick up each and every shot bird, to this end we recommend that you pick up all shot birds immediately, prior to shooting the next bird. This applies especially to wounded birds and birds falling a distance away.

Whenever possible dogs should be used to ensure all shot pigeons are retrieved, particularly from thick cover, and a priest or spike or other effective method is recommended for despatching wounded birds.

Remember to take water for the dog.

Do not clean birds on the property and leave feathers and or viscera on the property, unless the farmer or landowner gives permission for, and designates a specific area, for the cleaning of birds.

Farmers and landowners should be offered some of the bag and any surplus should either be eaten, given to friends or given to the farm workers. Do not leave dead birds or unused carcass portions lying in fields or in vegetation or ditches.

Never leave empty cartridges or other litter and clear up the hide site after shooting.

FINALLY

Remember that the farmer is actually doing you a favour by letting you shoot on his property and that good relations with landowners and farmers are essential not just for future pigeon shooting but also for many other shooting opportunities.