

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) on Long Island 13-27 Oct 2001

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On Saturday, 13 Oct 2001, I was casually looking out at a large flock of Mourning Doves milling about the large pole-mounted hopper feeder in my backyard in Cedarhurst (Nassau Co.) New York. Among the doves sitting on the roof of the feeder was one showing a distinct white edge along the bottom of its folded wing, which in flight would show as a white wing-patch. It only took me a moment to realize that what I was looking at was no mere variation of the common Mourning Dove species, but an altogether different bird – a White-winged Dove! Having already seen this species elsewhere (Florida and Point Pelee National Park, Ontario, May 1999), the identification was easy and immediate. I grabbed my 12-year-old son who was standing beside me and excitedly pointed out the bird to him, and we both enjoyed good looks at the bird, which was no more than 20 feet away from where we were standing.

My backyard is rather small, landscaped simply with grass and two huge catalpa trees. These trees, are old and ridden with insects, and attract a large number of birds, especially during fall migration. I get quite an extensive variety for such a suburban location along Long Island's South Shore. Thinking this would be just an errant fly-by, I observed the bird throughout the afternoon and didn't expect to see it again. However, it was there the next morning with the same flock of approximately 16 Mourning Doves. At this point I contacted the New York RBA and invited any and all to both confirm and share my sighting.

The dove appeared daily over the course of the next week-and-a-half, developing a sort of a schedule by which I could predict its arrivals and departures, and I was able to advise visitors as to the most likely times the bird would be in the yard. On one Sunday afternoon several well-known birders showed up to add this species to their New York State lists, including Angus Wilson of the NYSARC and Joseph DiCostanzo of The Linnaean Society, and some fine photographs were taken by Dr. Michael Stubblefield and put up on the Linnaean Society's web site.

The White-winged Dove remained until a cold front moved into the area 14 days later, after which it was not seen again. Its 13 day appearance, however, established a new state record for the longest stay of a bird of this species to date.



White-winged Dove
21 Oct 2001 Cedarhurst, Nassau Co
Michael D. Stubblefield

Editor's note:

Referring to the species account in *Bull's Birds of New York State* (Levine 1998), it is interesting to note that the five accepted records of this casual vagrant were all from the South Shore of Long Island. Since publication of this book, there have been sightings in the Northeast at an accelerated pace. The probable source is the introduced Florida population. It is also quite unique that the observer had previously seen this same species in Pt. Pelee, Ontario, where it is also a vagrant.