

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE IN NEW YORK STATE

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The Spreading of Eurasian Collared-Dove in the US

Smith (1987) and Romagosa and McEneaney (1999) give accounts of the history of collared-doves in Florida and the Caribbean as well as their spread in Europe. Collared-doves (*Streptopelia sp.*) have long been kept as domesticated birds and two populations of feral Ringed Turtle-Doves (*S. "risoria"*) existed in Florida as early as the late 1920's. Eurasian Collared-Dove (*S. decaocto*) appeared in Florida in the early 1980's. These birds are believed to be the descendants of birds released in Nassau, Bahamas in 1974. Their spread in Europe is an indication of what we should expect in the United States. Over approximately a century, Eurasian Collared -Dove has radiated from a restricted range around the Black and Aegean Seas, to throughout the whole of western Europe and is still expanding its range in eastern Russia.

This species is also expanding rapidly in the United States. Romagosa and Labisky (2000) show that on Florida CBCs, it increased from 4% in 1986, the first year the it was correctly identified, to 82% in 1996. Over this same time frame, it has spread from Florida, and by 1999 had been sighted as far as California, Oregon, Montana, and Saskatchewan and Ontario in Canada (Romagosa and McEneaney 1999). The main direction of colonization in the US is northwest from Florida. The species has spread extensively in the midwest (Brock 2001a, b, and c) and has bred in Iowa (Brock 2001c). Breeding has been observed in the southeast in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina (Davis 1997), and in Virginia (Iloff 2002). Iliff (2002) points out that its spread along the East Coast is much slower than in the midwest and Gulf Coast. Given its history in Europe, it is likely that within a century of its introduction, it will breed across most of North America.

Eurasian Collared-Doves are owned and traded by pigeon breeders in the US although they are not as popular as Ringed Turtle-Doves. Sightings of Ringed Turtle-Dove escapes are uncommon although there are a few reports in *North American Birds* outside of Florida in the past six years. It is likely that Ringed Turtle-Dove is not reported because it is considered exotic. It is possible that some US sightings of Eurasian Collared-Doves could be escapes but the rapid expansion involves an independent population.

Smith (1987), DeBenedictis (1994) and Romagosa and McEneaney (1999) discuss the identification of Eurasian Collared-Dove. This last reference provides a convenient table of physical and vocal differences between it and

Ringed Turtle-Dove. The best field marks are the gray coloration of the undertail coverts, the coloration of the outer rectrices, and the vocalization differences. (See Figs. 1 & 2)

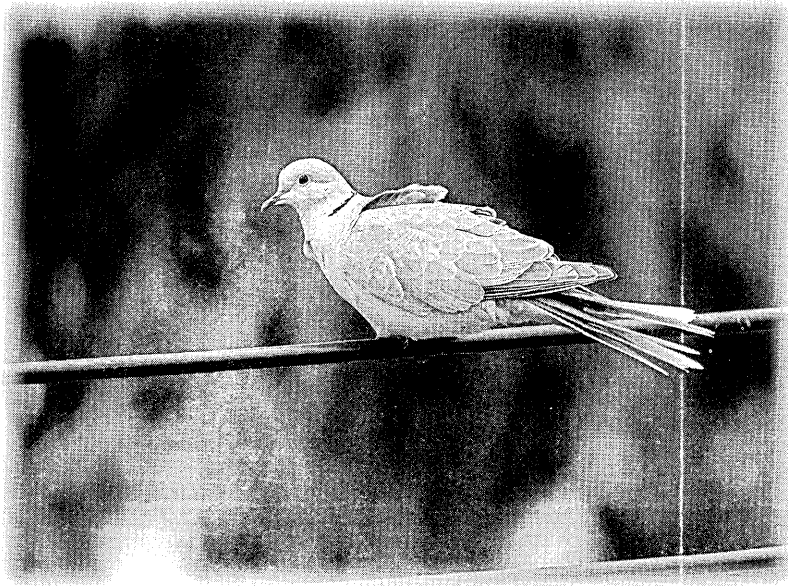


Fig. 1 – 16 Jun 2002 © Kevin and Jay McGowan

Sightings In Nearby States

The Pennsylvania Records Committee has accepted two records for this species from photographic evidence: 28 Jul 1996 from Crawford Co, and 7 May 2000 from Berks Co. There are two records under review: one from Erie Co present from 25 Nov 2000 to 28 Feb 2002, and a nesting pair photographed on 9 May 2001 in Franklin Co. Nesting also occurred in 2002. It is known that at least in Lancaster Co., the Amish breed and sell Eurasian Collared-Doves (*Pulcinella pers. comm.*).

The first accepted record for New Jersey is 7 Sep 1997 from Cape May Point (Walsh, et al. 1999). Since then, there has been at least one additional record from Cape May (Boyle 2002). The only reported New England sighting was provided without details from Newbury, VT (Hunt 2001). The first report for Delaware was a bird seen at a feeder in Selbyville, DE, 11-13 Aug 1998 (Paxton, et al. 1999). By the spring of 2002, a colony of four to five Eurasian Collared-Doves has since become established in this same town (Burgiel, et al. 2002). The first Maryland record was a bird observed and photographed at a feeder in mid April 2002 at Port Deposit (Iloff 2002).

Sightings In New York State

Eurasian Collared-Dove has been found a number of times in New York State. A sighting occurred on Long Island in 1996. This bird was observed at a nursery on the East Hampton-Amagansett line (Suffolk Co.). It was still present the following year and P.A. Buckley confirmed its identity about 12 Jun 1997. The sighting was never reported in *The Kingbird*. A second sighting occurred at Jeff Stenson's feeder on Staten Island (Richmond Co.) and was photographed on 2 Feb 2000 and dismissed as a probable escape (KB 50:199). Other sightings in the Long Island area have probably occurred but no others are recorded in *The Kingbird*.

The first sighting away from the coast was made at Derby Hill by Marge Rusk on 5 May 2001 (KB 51:712). This report is awaiting evaluation by NYSARC. A second upstate Eurasian Collared- Dove record occurred in Hamlin, NY on 8 Jun 2002. This bird has remained in the same location throughout the summer and into the fall.

The Hamlin NY Eurasian Collared-Dove

Surprisingly enough, the excitement with the Eurasian Collared-Dove began with the sighting of a White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*). In the early evening of 8 Jun 2002, Mike Davids was driving west on Church Road in Hamlin, Monroe Co., NY and discovered a White-winged Dove sitting on top of a telephone pole about one-half mile east of Walker-Lake Ontario Road (NYS Rt. 260). When he got home, he notified local birders, and a few went out looking for the dove. In searching for the White-winged Dove, Brett and Sheryl Ewald found a Eurasian Collared-Dove in the front yard of a farmhouse near the corner of Church and Walker-Lake Ontario Roads. While they, Mike, and others were watching the Eurasian Collared-Dove around 7:30 p.m., Julie Claffey pointed out the White-winged Dove when it started singing nearby. The area around this intersection is open farmland, with the immediate area around the farmhouse surrounded by mature spruce and deciduous trees. Both dove species were identified by their songs. The Eurasian Collared-Dove exhibited the gray undertail coverts that separate it from Ringed Turtle-Dove.

Over the course of the next week, many people came to see the two birds, which were always in the same vicinity. The first night, and for the first few days, they both sang repeatedly, making them easy to find. The Eurasian Collared-Dove spent its time around the farmhouse, alternating between the deciduous trees in front of the house, the spruce trees by the road, the utility pole in the farmyard, and the deciduous trees near the house across the street. The White-winged Dove was more localized to the deciduous trees in front of the farmhouse. On several occasions they interacted, with the Eurasian Collared-Dove chasing the White-winged Dove off its perch. Throughout its time in this location, the Eurasian Collared-Dove also interacted with Mourning Doves, chasing away any that landed nearby. Sometimes, these interactions were accompanied by a harsh, nasal call. The White-winged Dove was last seen by Dave Tetlow on 18 Jun, ten days after it first appeared.

For the first several days, the Eurasian Collared-Dove was also observed landing for short periods of time in a specific section of a spruce tree along the road. On the third day (10 Jun), a Mourning Dove nest was discovered concealed in the vicinity of these spruce trees, containing two older juvenile Mourning Doves, which left the nest the next day. After that, the Eurasian Collared-Dove was not noted to spend time in that particular area of the spruce tree.

During June and July, it was obvious that the primaries and tail were molting. Observations on a number of days in July and August revealed that it was spending more time near the intersection of Church Road and Walker-Lake Ontario Road, several hundred meters to the south of the farmhouse. It would move between different telephone poles and wires, chasing away any of the Mourning Doves that landed nearby. It was no longer singing at this time. It was approachable to about thirty feet, but would fly upon any attempt to move closer. The bird was still present in the vicinity of the farmhouse at the time of this writing (1 Nov 2002).

Editor's Note: As of 1 Jun 2003 the Eurasian Collared-Dove is still present.

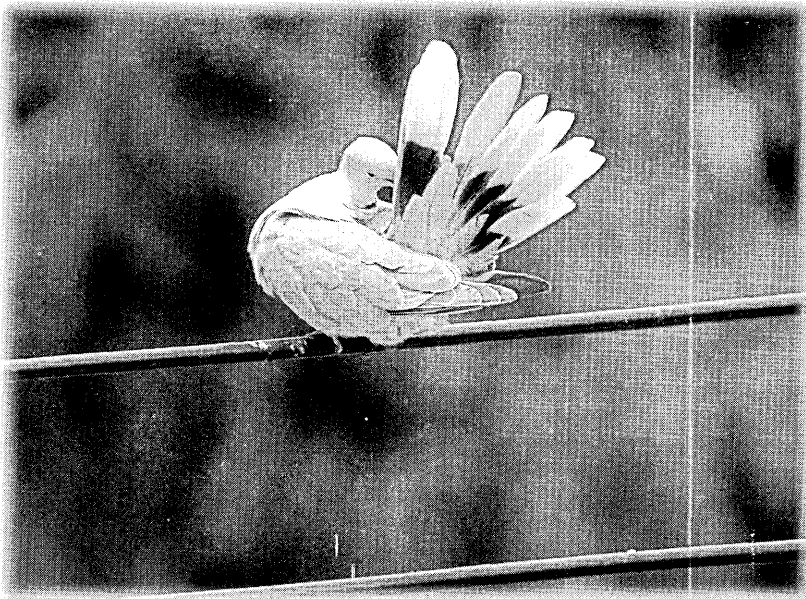


Fig. 2 – 16 Jun 2002 © Kevin and Jay McGowan
Note the gray undertail coverts.
Although not dark, they are noticeably darker
than the white-tipped tail feathers.

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