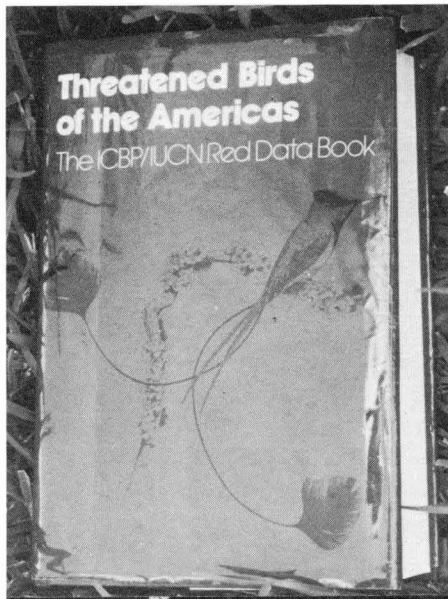


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Threatened Birds of the Americas (the ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book)

reviewed by Jack Clinton-Eitniear
San Antonio, Texas



Editors N.J. Collar, L.P. Gonzaga, N. Krabbe, A. Madrono Nieto, L.G. Naranjo, T.A. Parker III and D.C. Wege.

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For anyone with an interest in conservation and/or the field status of the endangered birds of the Americas, this book is a must. Work on the book, which began in 1985, had to be halted in 1988 due to a lack of funding but was resumed after the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage of discovery produced some funds from the Spanish government. While seven authors are listed, the "tome" is actually the result of contributions of several hundred individuals. The book replaces the 1978 publication by W.B. King, "Red data book, 2 Aves," and its subsequent 1981 reprint under the title "Endangered birds of the world; the ICBP bird red data book."

While King was able to list the endangered birds of the world, the current revision requires four parts to complete the task. Part one dealt with

"Threatened birds of Africa and related islands" (Collar and Stuart 1985) and was followed by the current part two dealing with the Americas. The final parts three and four will deal with birds of Europe and Asia, Australasia and the Pacific.

Throughout its 1,150 pages, species after species is profiled as to its distribution, population, and threats. Finally, each profile is concluded with those conservation measures that have been taken as well as those proposed. There are 38 *psittacidae* listed as threatened and an additional 17 listed in the appendix titled near-threatened.

The majority of the birds listed, however, are small insect, nectar or fruit eating birds. While many are colorful, they are generally poorly represented in captivity. Due to our lack of experience with these "softbilled" birds, the possibility that aviculture will play a major role in their survival seems remote. To compound the misery, there seems to be a very small following of individuals and/or organizations dedicated to the survival of these frequently termed "dicky birds." While habitat protection certainly will grasp many from the hands of extinction, some focused species-specific actions are needed. All aviculturists and pet owners with an interest in conservation should have one or more of the volumes of this important text. Augmented with a copy of the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Directory, individuals and bird clubs should have the resources necessary to join forces in saving the World's birds. ●

The Diamond Dove

(A beautiful dove
for both the novice
and experienced aviculturist)

by Dale R. Thompson
Canyon Country, California

The Diamond Dove is found throughout most of Australia except for the southeastern coastal regions. This dove is very popular because of its small size (seven inches), low cost and its readiness to breed under most conditions. It gets its name from the many white spots found on its gray wings. There are several mutations with the silver mutation being the most common. Others include the dark-eyed white mutation and the cinnamon mutation.

Diamond Doves can be sexed by observing their behavior. Both sexes will coo but only the male can be seen bowing before the female with its tail raised and fanned. The red of the male's eye-ring is larger and brighter than the female's. The female generally is more brownish in coloration with larger and more numerous white spots on her wings.

Diamond Doves are considered free breeders. Since these doves can be pugnacious, they are best kept as single pairs. If their housing is large enough (4' x 8' x 12' flight), more than one pair can be kept together. But remember that the success rate for rearing young is much poorer in a colony situation than by single pairs. Sometimes they can be quite aggressive to each other. These doves can breed throughout the year, but should be given a rest during the colder winter months. Often eggs or babies are lost due to the cold and the female is more prone to egg binding.

Diamond Doves are notorious for being poor nest builders. A few twigs and some coarse grass seem to satisfy the parent birds. Such a flimsily constructed nest almost always results in

the loss of eggs. Several wooden platforms (6" x 6") with slightly raised edges should be placed high throughout the aviary. If the parents persist in building their own nest within a bush or tree, it is best to place a small mesh wire netting beneath the accumulated twigs.

The actual nesting time from building the nest to the weaning of the young is very short, taking approximately four to five weeks. Two white eggs (on occasion three) are laid with an incubation time of under 13 days. The newly hatched young are fed a solution from the parent birds known as crop milk. As with many other types of birds, the parents do not regurgitate seeds and insects at this early stage. The young thrive and grow rapidly, fledging at two weeks of age. The newly hatched young, called squabs, are completely black in coloration. At fledging, the young are dark gray with wings marked in black. The young will molt into the adult plumage between three and four months of age. They can reproduce as young as three months, but this should be discouraged. It is best to wait until they are at least six months old. A good pair of Diamond Doves will have several clutches within one breeding season with a total number of young often numbering 12 or more.

Diamond Doves are naturally ground feeders and will often prefer to eat seeds that have been thrown or fallen to the ground than seeds that are fed in dishes or seed hoppers. Since these doves do not husk their seeds, it is best to feed split or hulled seeds. These doves will swallow any seed whole. They should be supplied a variety of seeds including pannicum, canary and white, yellow and red millets. They seem to prefer the white millet. Oyster shell as grit and cuttlebone should also be provided. Green foods are often not eaten but a variety of greens should be offered to find their acceptance. Often comfrey, chickweed or dandelion is eaten. Fresh, clean water is always a must.

Diamond Doves are often kept with a variety of finches, cockatiels or Neophemas. They will not bother even the smallest of waxbills.

The Diamond Dove is an attractive and ideal aviary subject. They are easily cared for and they will delight any aviculturist with their cooing sounds and courtship. ●

Are Foreign Doves in Your Future?

by Tony Brancato
Santa Maria, California

Many bird enthusiasts also raise doves. The most familiar and readily available doves are Barbary Doves or commonly called Ring-neckeds (*Streptopelia risoria*). These interesting doves come in a myriad of colors, are easy to maintain and breed.

Just as common finches or parakeets started many of us in the wonderful world of aviary birds, many a bird fancier began with a few Ring-neckeds and was launched into the unique and exotic world of foreign doves and pigeons. Barbary or Ring-necked doves are not being dismissed casually by this writer. They are, in fact, truly challenging and beautiful in their own right. With nearly fifty colors to choose from, reasonably priced, the Barbary Dove does provide to the novice fancier a hardy, gentle, and easy to breed bird. Very few foreign doves can compete with the Barbary in this respect.

Popular among many aviary keepers are the diminutive Diamond Doves. Diamonds (*Geopelia cuneata*) are gentle, fairly reasonable for the common colors and relatively easy to breed. Mutations of this little dove range from buff yellow to ruddy red. Of course, the exotic colors command exotic prices as well! Diamond Doves are a favorite of bird fanciers because they can be kept with small birds such as finch and canaries. Less known, but equally attractive are African Cape or Masked Doves, (*Oena capensis*) Cape Doves are dimorphic, males have black head and bib, hens do not. Capes are priced between \$75.00 and \$100.00 per pair and, provided with ample aviary space, this small dove breeds well. Colony breeding of capes is possible as capes are one of the nicest and gentlest doves among the foreign dove group.

Zebra or Barred Doves (*Geopelia striata*) also are a choice among bird fanciers. The Zebra has the most musical of dove voices! Zebras can be very aggressive among themselves or with smaller doves. Success with Zebras requires one breeding pair per aviary. Zebra doves will not cause problems with other avian species. Zebra doves are about half the size of a Ring-

necked Dove, and twice the size of a Diamond Dove.

One of the most beautiful of the seed eating doves are Senegal or Palm Doves. This lovely dove is related to the Barbary or Ring-necked Dove. The Senegal (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) has a whistling sound when it flies. Senegals are fairly reasonable in price, good breeders and parents.

The small Asian Dwarf Turtle Dove (half the size of a Ring-necked and related to it) (*Oenopopelia tranquebarica*) are nice additions to the collector. Asian Dwarf Turtle Doves are perky with their easy to identify characteristics (males have blush plum heads, hens brown and are dimorphic hence easy to sex. An excellent breeder it is a great little dove for the "near" novice fanciers.

When mentioning doves most people think of small, however some doves can be quite large. One of my favorite doves is the Common Bronze-winged Dove. They are plump, nearly the size of a homing pigeon. Bronze-winged Doves (*Phaps chalcoptera*) are very gentle, relatively tame for a wild dove and easy to breed. One pair per loft or aviary should be maintained. Bronze-winged thrive on warmth, small seeds, planted aviaries and, when kept with smaller doves or cage birds, pose no problems.

All the doves in this article are seed eaters. I feed a variety of canary, parakeet, finch, and cockatiel grains, plus small health grit, chopped fresh greens (lettuce, broccoli, carrots) and clean fresh water.

There are many other relatively easy to breed doves besides the ones mentioned in this article. Ruddy Ground Doves for example, Pigmy Ground Doves, and many, many, more. Doves are fascinating. They are not the most brilliantly colored birds (at least not the common ones) but they do offer a unique challenge and beauty about them. I have really enjoyed my foreign doves more than I ever thought I would. I would heartily suggest that if you have an interest in doves try a species or two of the foreign doves and be rewarded by a unique and enjoyable experience. ●