

**FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE
(*STREPTOPELIA DECAOCTO*) FOR ALABAMA**

Jim Holmes

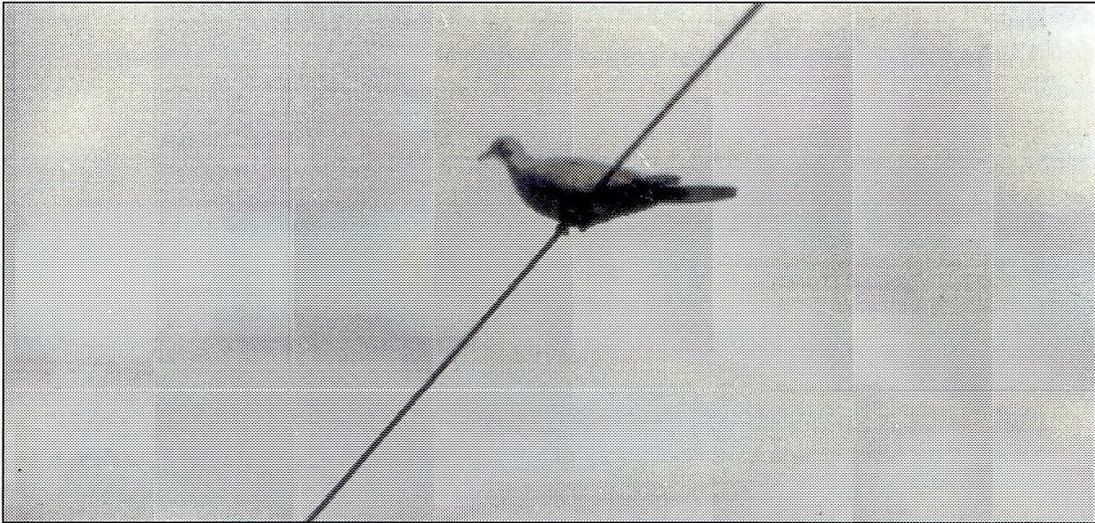


Figure 1. Eurasian Collared-Dove at Ft. Morgan, 7 May 1991. (Photo by Jim Holmes)

During the morning of 12 April 1991 the author flushed a group of four doves along the runway at Ft. Morgan, Alabama. Three were Mourning Doves (*Zenaida macroura*), but the other bird was noticeably larger than the Mourning Doves and had dark primaries. Realizing it was likely to be a Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), two photographs were quickly taken as it sat in short grass. It flushed upon an attempt at taking closer photographs and could not be immediately relocated. Later that day the bird was relocated and studied by Horton Smith, Brenda Smith, and the author.

The bird was again discovered by the author and various other observers, including those attending the spring AOS meeting on 14 April. On 20 April, the bird was observed in flight by the author and others. Finally, on 7 May two Eurasian Collared-Doves were photographed by the author while they sat on wires at Ft. Morgan (Figure 1).

The following characteristics were noted during the various observations. The bird was noticeably larger than a Mourning Dove. The head and underparts were grayish while the back and upper rectrices were pale brown. There was a thin semicircular black collar around the back of the neck with the upper edge of the collar outlined by a very faint line of white feathers. In flight, the outer primaries stood out as much darker than the rest of the wing. The undertail coverts were a slate gray that did not contrast with the bird's underparts. The tail was long and squared at the end and when seen from underneath, the base of each tail feather was dark and did not contrast with the dark undertail coverts. There was a sharp line between the dark proximal portion of the tail feathers and the light distal portion. The bird was silent during all observations and was quite wary, allowing close approach only by car.

There are two species of *Streptopelia* that resemble the above description. The Eurasian Collared-Dove and the Ringed Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*) are very similar in many details and may be separated only by careful observations. Smith (1987) provides an excellent description of the two species and the means by which they may be separated. The two species'

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calls and notes are significantly distinct enough to allow differentiation. The Eurasian Collared-Dove has a loud “coo-coó-coo” while the Ringed Turtle-Dove has a soft “coo-hrrrrroo”. There is also a difference in the undertail patterns of the two species (Figure 2). The Eurasian Collared-Dove has grayish undertail coverts and the outer web, or vane, of the outer tail feathers are mostly dark, whereas the Ringed Turtle-Dove has white undertail coverts and the web of the outer rectrices are white. Both birds seen at Ft. Morgan during April and May had gray undertail coverts and dark outer tail feathers, identifying them both as Eurasian Collared-Doves.

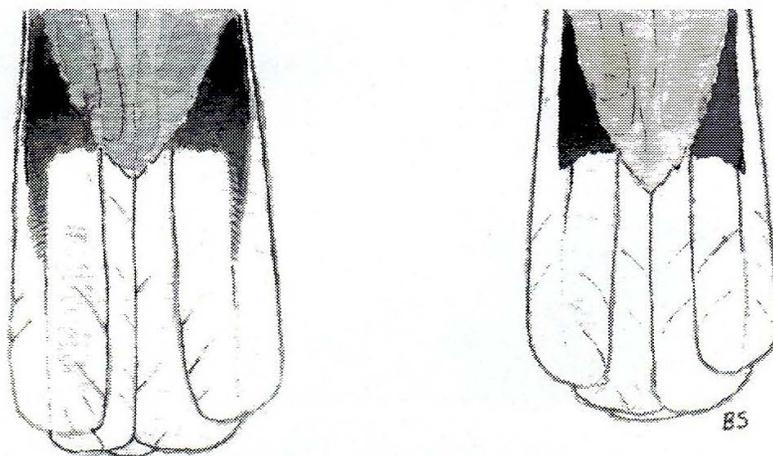


Figure 2. Comparison of ventral tail patterns of Eurasian Collared-Dove (left) and Ringed Turtle-Dove.

The Eurasian Collared-Dove population in Florida, which is now established and spreading, most likely originated from the Bahama Islands (Smith 1987). The occurrence of the species in Alabama was expected as the birds have been seen regularly in the Florida panhandle, only 75 miles east of Ft. Morgan. The species has also been observed at other locations on the gulf coast, including multiple birds residing at Ft. Pike, Louisiana, since 24 April 1988. The LOS Bird Records Committee has rejected the Ft. Pike sightings due to questionable origin (Dittman 1991). More recent sightings in Louisiana as far west as Jefferson Davis Parish has sparked the notion that the LOS Bird Records Committee needs to re-evaluate their prior decision (Cardiff 1991). Finally, with the establishment and expansion of the species, the ABA Checklist Committee is expected to rule on the status of the species in the ABA area in their 1991 report (DeBenedictis 1991).

Literature Cited

- Cardiff, Steven W. 1991. Louisiana Birds, Summer 1991. *LOS News*, no. 143.
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- Dittman, Donna L. 1991. Sixth Report of the LOSBRC. *Journal of Louisiana Ornithology* 2(1).
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