





PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

5 February 2002

Scott Weidensaul
778 Schwartz Valley Rd.
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

Dear Scott,

Thank you for submitting documentation for the Eurasian Collared-Dove observed and photographed by Ann Marie Liebner at Hidden Valley Golf Course on 18 April 1998. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted not to accept this record.

Members' opinions were divided, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly explains the long delay in announcing our decision). The final vote fell into three categories: Two members accepted it as a wild ECD. Two accepted the record but questioned the wild origin. Three voted against acceptance, believing that the identification could not be made conclusively from the photographs or the description. Our bylaws require a vote of at least 6-1 for acceptance.

The three dissenters placed the record in the Committee's Class IV-A: "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt."

Considering your extensive experience and the respect we have for you, a detailed explanation of the doubters' concern is appropriate. I was one of the three who expressed concern, so I am attaching a copy of notes I submitted to the Committee. I realize that you may find my opinion overly conservative, and I would be interested in hearing your reaction.

I'm enclosing also a recent discussion on the ID-Frontiers list, which makes the situation seem even more problematic than I thought it was.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record No. 409a-01-1998

Notes on Eurasian Collared-Dove identification -- Paul Hess

As long as the ECD is rare enough to be a review species in Pennsylvania, we should require at least one of the following elements, which are the only reliable characters. (Requiring two might be better, to lessen the possibility of a hybrid.)

1. Vocalization, either the full "coo" song, or the single call.
2. Gray, rather than white, undertail coverts (as the describer does realize, but for which we have no evidence in this case).
3. Black outer webs on the outermost retrices, usually extending at least a third of the way down each feather.

Without those characters, a domestic collared-dove cannot be eliminated. The problem is a belief that a comparison needs only to be made with "Ringed Turtle-Dove" -- which is usually a clearcut distinction to make. (Even the major field guides foster this erroneous belief.)

But that form is only the pale extreme of a great variety of commonly bred domestic collared-doves, some of which are nearly as large and as dark as the average ECD. Here are the particular misapprehensions listed in the description accompanying the photos:

--"No sign of brown in the mantle or wings, which ringed turtle-doves have (you just have to look at mine to see that!)." On the contrary, many of the palest Ringed Turtle-Doves do not have brown in the mantle or wings, although most do have pale brown on the primaries. On the other hand, many ECDs have the appearance of a brownish tint.

--"The dark primaries contrasting with the pale gray secondaries; a turtle-dove has much paler primaries." This applies only to the "Ringed Turtle-Dove"; some domestic collared-doves have primaries virtually as dark as an ECD's.

--"...turtle-doves are a bit smaller than mournings." This applies only to the smallest turtle-dove varieties. Some artificially bred collared-doves are as large as an ECD.

In Florida, where the overwhelming majority of collared-doves are easily identified as Eurasians nowadays, individuals seen fairly often in some areas may look like ECDs at a glance but don't have the "right" undertail and/or retrix characters.

The best discussion of this problem I know was P. William Smith's classic article in 1987: *The Eurasian Collared-Dove arrives in the Americas*, *American Birds* 41(5): 1370-79. I wish it were more widely available.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE ID -- ID-Frontiers

Date: Sun, 10 Feb 2002 19:16:26 -0800
From: Chris Charlesworth <c_charlesworth23@hotmail.com>
Subject: doves in the Similkameen Valley

Chris Siddle and Ryan Tomlinson and I ventured S. from Kelowna towards the South Okanagan (BC) this morning...to Keremeos in search of the recently discovered colony of doves we so badly wanted to see. We pulled into the Keremeos / Cawston area in the Similkameen Valley, and after some searching finally found the right neighbourhood. In all we counted 20 - 30 doves which were very possibly EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES (*Streptopelia decaocta*). I have seen this species in Texas, but these birds troubled me very slightly. Here is my description:

- larger than Mourning Dove.
- primaries darker than rest of wing, especially visible in flight.
- tail had classic "H" pattern of ECDO with black extending down sides of the outer retrices.
- breast, belly and undertail pale grey / white.
- call a distinctive "coo-coooo-coo".

The only troubling feature was the undertail coverts. In Sibley, the ECDO pictured have grey undertail coverts, that do contrast with the rest of the underparts. I checked in (Mullarney, Svensson, Zetterstrom & Grant) the birds of Europe and found that they do not emphasize the grey undertail. In fact they picture a white undertail. Some sources say the call of the Eurasian Collared-Dove is distinctive from the other main species of confusion, the Ringed-Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*). If so, these birds were definitely ECDOs.

Upon talking to local Cawston and Keremeos residents, a school teacher kept captive doves in the area in the late 60s and early 1970s. The birds accidentally escaped and small numbers were seen, especially in winter, when the birds flocked together and converged on feeders in region. During the summer, the birds disperse and nest in the hills and heavily wooded yards around the towns. They have been steadily increasing, although raptors take a toll in the winter, since then, and now number close to 100. There's a breeding population that has been present since the 1970s and they are breeding. These birds may account for the recent rash of ECDO sightings in the S. Okanagan Valley of BC.

Does anyone have any comments on the acceptability and identification of these doves?

Chris Charlesworth
Kelowna, BC, Canada

Date: Mon, 11 Feb 2002 10:05:17 -0000
From: Mike Alibone <mike@ALIBONE.FSNET.CO.UK>

From your description, below, your doves appear to be ECDO as you are suggesting. The plumage description is fine and the voice is perfect. I do not know about captive status for this species in Canada or USA (although I believe it has become established in the south east US). In the UK, where ECDO is a common widespread resident, it is the Barbary Dove (=Ringed-Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*)) which is kept in captivity (also in USA) probably more often than the Collared Dove. Barbary Dove call is quite different to Collared Dove, with a number of 'R's being evident in the middle syllable of the call.

Mike Alibone
Northampton, UK

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 08:43:01 -0800
From: Don Gorney <dongorney@YAHOO.COM>

I am surprised by the lack of discussion about the ID of the doves reported by Chris Charlesworth in British Columbia. I e-mailed Chris privately with my dissenting view of the doves ID being Eurasian

Collared-doves (ECDOs) based on his description. Chris' original e-mail and his private response back to me indicate the doves in question had WHITE undertail coverts. From personal observations and what I have read in the literature, ECDOs should not have white undertail coverts. I have closely viewed approximately 125-150 ECDOs from a number of locations in Florida. Not one of these birds had white or whitish undertail coverts. So, does anyone have information that indicates ECDOs (the ones being seen here in US) sometimes have white undertail coverts?

An almost first or second state record here in Indiana involved a bird very similar to Chris' description. The bird appeared to be an ECDO and gave a three-parted song that matched that of ECDO. However, besides the very white undertail coverts there were a few other physical characteristics that were bothersome. (I also had lingering doubts about the origin of this bird based on a few things that are irrelevant for this discussion). But, the important thing here is the bird gave the call of an ECDO and the song was heard by many birders. Bill Smith viewed the photos of the bird on-line and indicated his doubts about the bird being a true ECDO. In the end, I assume the bird was a hybrid (and probably of captive origin) even though it gave what sounded like the correct song. Photos are available at <http://www.indianaudubon.org/gallery/eucdindy.htm>

I guess another question is do ECDOs outside of the US sometimes have white undertail coverts? If the BC flock truly dates back to the 1970's then it predates the released Bahama flock and one would need to consider an Old World origin for the original bird stock.

Don Gorney
Indianapolis, IN

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 13:11:10 -0500
From: Paul Lehman <lehminn@BELLATLANTIC.NET>

I was happy to read Don Gorney's posting about the identification of the BC doves because, like him, I had been bothered by the described color of the undertail coverts, and had written Chris Charlesworth about this "problem" when the news was first spread, and wondered if the birds might be some sort of domestic form of collared-dove. Given that the BC birds were the result of local releases and not from the exploding population to the southeast, this possibility is even more likely. This situation is a good example of how perhaps not all "Eurasian Collared-Doves" turning up in new places are, in fact, that species. I believe that Michigan's overdue first Eurasian Collared-Dove last summer turned out to be a Ringed Turtle-Dove. And escaped domestic collared-doves or hybrids/intergrades, or whatever some dove fanciers might conceivably create, are more difficult to separate from a true Eurasian Collared-Dove than is a Ringed Turtle-Dove.

Now, I know most of us really want to spend our free time checking out every report of "Eurasian Collared-Dove" when they turn up at new localities.....!! But the identification of some of these birds is less than certain.

Paul Lehman
Cape May, NJ

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 14:41:17 -0600
From: Michael Retter <mretter@HOTMAIL.COM>

Paul Lehman's comments are especially relevant here in the Midwest. For decades, there has existed in NE Illinois a very viable 'hybrid swarm' of Streptopelia doves, making the occurrence of "real" EUCDs in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana (and especially in the Chicago area) very difficult to prove. It sounds as if the British Columbian population is similar to the one in Chicagoland. Perhaps the IL population may even have produced the aforementioned Michigan bird? I wasn't sure if the rest of the country knew of the existence of this population, so I thought I'd lay it out on the table, so to speak. Its mere presence should caution finders of Streptopelia in the surrounding states to be especially careful when trying to identify them. But still, there are now many populations (some of up to 100 birds) of what appear to be "good" EUCDs in southern and central Illinois. There is an article on Chicago's hybrid Streptopelia population in Meadowlark, the journal of the Ill. Ornithological Soc. If anyone is interested in this article, please feel free to contact me.

Michael L. P. Retter
Illinois Wesleyan Univ., Bloomington, IL

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 15:11:04 -0600
From: Ross Silcock <rsilcoc@SIDNEY.HEARTLAND.NET>

In this context I think the distribution of Eur Collared-Dove (ECDO) in Nebraska is interesting and perhaps instructive. Currently most towns in the Panhandle (west) have a few ECDOs, whereas in central and eastern Nebraska ECDOs are almost non-existent. It seems clear that western birds have spread from the south (I believe the distribution is similar in Kansas to that in Nebraska) and that eastern Nebraska birds may be stragglers from captivity or from populations such as that in Illinois (as well as a few "genuine" birds). As Paul points out, discriminating ID of these birds could provide clues to the derivation of these birds.

Ross Silcock
Sidney, IA 51653

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 14:58:39 -0800
From: creagrus <creagrus@MONTEREYBAY.COM>

I am very glad to see the recent commentary on i.d. and distribution of collared-doves. Here in northern California (Middle Pacific Coast Region in NAB) we published a short note in our Regional report in the past year that "new" populations of Eurasian Collared-Doves around King City, Monterey County, proved not to be range expansion from the populations in southern California, but were traced (rather fortuitously!) to intentional releases in the immediate vicinity a couple years ago. The birds appear to be breeding now. Thus this is an example of the spread of this dove by human-aided releases -- not range expansion. [Incidentally, feathers from this population have been collected and sent for DNA analysis in the on-going project in Florida on this topic.] I believe that the entire California population, wherever it exists, is the result of continued releases by people, and not at all related to range expansion in the southeastern U.S.

Also, various reports of Eurasian Collared-Doves around the Monterey area this fall proved to be Ringed Turtle-Doves or variants. Identification caution is certainly warranted with claims of this dove in new locales, and the impact of human agency should not be underestimated.

Don Roberson
Pacific Grove CA
[Regional Editor, North Amer. Birds]

Date: Sat, 16 Feb 2002 16:49:05 -0000
From: Peter Wilkinson <pcwilkinson@CLARA.CO.UK>

This is an ID in which I have been interested for some time. I see ECDOs every day here and have banded somewhere over 500 in recent years. I see Ringed (or Barbary as we tend to know them) at least once a week as a friend has them in captivity and I have been through the skins in the British Museum looking at African Collared Dove, the wild species from which Ringed derives.

I too have responded to Chris privately about the white undertail coverts. They really do need to be grey(ish) for ECDO, at least from the many thousands I have seen over here. The photo in October 2001's Birding Quiz (repeated with the answer in Dec 2001) is spot on in tone. Interestingly at least one correspondent on another e-mail list thought they were white rather than grey. That photo also shows the pattern of the outermost tail feather very well, though not all are quite as well marked as that one. Hybrids are not an issue over here as there are hardly any places where Ringed has established any toehold as a feral species and the only hybrids I have ever seen were three or four, unfortunately rather briefly, in Majorca in 1997 (they never called, so I don't know what they would have sounded like).

I have looked at the photos referred to by Don Gurney at
<http://www.indianaudubon.org/gallery/eucdindy.htm>

I doubt whether anyone would have given it a second look as anything other than ECDO over here. I take it that there was independent evidence apart from the photos that the undertail coverts were white as I am having some difficulty making them out reliably from the photos. On the top one, there is just a hint of them, but they look grey on my screen; on the second, third and fourth the white looks as though it may be an

artefact of the photography and on the fifth photo they look pale but not the really contrasting white one might expect. Overall the bird is certainly not a standard Ringed, which would be much paler. I have read that breeders have managed to get Ringed to look like its original parent, African Collared, but have never seen one. From the skins, wild African Collared are very similar in colour on the upperparts to ECDO, but with paler pinkish underparts turning to white, which runs to the undertail coverts; structurally, they are noticeably smaller and daintier. This bird looks a trifle slimmer than most ECDO (though not in the fifth photo), but it is always difficult to tell from photos.

Very occasionally ECDO throws a pale fawn sport (I've banded two – for one of them we got a captive Barbary out of its cage to compare! – and seen a third, but that's in over forty years). That's a spectacular bird! They are certainly worth looking at.

Peter Wilkinson
Wheathampstead, Herts, England

Date: Sun, 17 Feb 2002 19:37:14 -0800
From: Don Cecile <dcecile@SD22.BC.CA>

I had an opportunity today to see the Doves that have been reported from the Similkameen Valley. Based on the birds that I was able to see and hear well, I could see no reason for not arriving at a Eurasian Collared Dove ID. However a few interesting questions do remain.

Key features noted: the birds do call in a manner that matches descriptions I have available for the species. The primaries are noticeably darker than the rest of the body. The undertail pattern shows blackish outer webs to the bases of the tail feathers and the undertail coverts are gray and blend very nicely with the rest of the body. (white undertail coverts would contrast significantly) On the few birds (of 50-60 total) that I was able to see well, the undertail coverts were gray.

Specimen: while I was collecting feathers for possible DNA testing that could help lead to definitive ID, I discovered a dead bird. This specimen does have gray undertail coverts. I would like to make the specimen available to a researcher/museum for a more thorough identification.

lingering questions: 1. why do some of the birds in this population have white undertail coverts?
2. if indeed this is a Eurasian Collared-Dove population that is 30 yrs old, why have they not spread in a fashion similar to the Florida birds?

If you would like to point me in the direction of a researcher that could make use of the specimen (or some of its feathers) for ID, please respond to me privately. --Don Cecile

Date: Tue, 19 Feb 2002 18:34:02 -0500
From: Bruce Deuel <bkrdeuel@SNOWCREST.NET>

Sorry to take so long responding, but I had to find the reference. McLandress and McLandress 1979 (Auk 96:544-550) is the definitive paper on the question of whether blue morph Ross's Geese exist.

They do, as we have known in California since that time. Most blue morph birds we see here are no different in size or bill characters than white morph. Hybrids do exist, also. McLandress addresses this issue, too.

Bruce Deuel
Red Bluff, CA

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Date of Sighting: 18 April 1998 to 18 April 1998

Location: HIDDEN VALLEY GOLF COURSE

County: SCHUYLKILL

Observer(s): Ann Marie Liebner

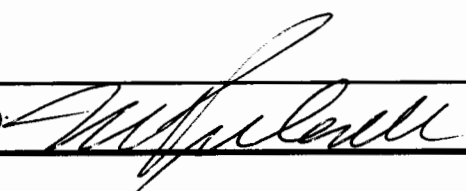
Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Scott Weidensaul

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO YES SPECIMEN NO REWRONG NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman							X	
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes	X							
J. McWilliams	X							
B. Reid	X							X
P. Rodewald	X							
TOTALS	4			1			1	1
DECISION								

Comments: 4/2/7 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 9/28/00

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round Two

Species: Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaoto*)

Date of Sighting: 18 April 1998 to 18 April 1998

Location: HIDDEN VALLEY GOLF COURSE

County: SCHUYKILL

Observer(s): Ann Marie Liebner

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Scott Weidensaul

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

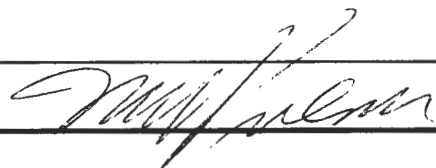
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman	X							
G. Armistead							X	
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes				X				
J. McWilliams				X				
B. Reid							X	
P. Rodewald	X							
TOTALS	2			3			2	
DECISION				X				

Comments: 2/5

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

10/1/98