

## Status and Occurrence of White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) in British Columbia.

By Rick Toochin and Don Cecile.

### Introduction and Distribution

The White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) is a small dove found in the deserts of the southwestern United States from southeastern California, extreme southern Nevada, extreme southwestern Utah, the southern half of Arizona, southern New Mexico, and southern half of Texas (absent from eastern quarter of state, except locally along coast), south to Mexican border; also found in southwestern Louisiana, and in southeastern Florida (Schwertner *et al.* 2002, Dunn and Alderfer 2011). The population is currently expanding, and the species is regularly observed outside its core range limits (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). South of the U.S. border, the White-winged Dove is found throughout Mexico to southern Baja California, central Veracruz, Michoacán, and Guerrero; northern Yucatán Peninsula; Pacific slopes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico (Howell and Webb 2010). This southern range extends into the southern half of Guatemala, El Salvador, western and central Honduras (except absent from Caribbean coast), Pacific slope of Nicaragua, northwestern Costa Rica (south to about Jacó and up to 500 m), and along Pacific slope of Panama in Herrera and southwestern Coclé provinces, mainly around the Gulf of Parita (Schwertner *et al.* 2002, Howell and Webb 2010). This species is also found on several islands in Gulf of California, Is. Tres Marias, and I. Cozumel (Howell and Webb 2010). It is found in the Bahamas, eastern Cuba, Grand Cayman Is., San Andrés and Providencia, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and it is rare on St. John (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). The range of the White-winged Dove is currently expanding eastward and northward in the Great Plains (Schwertner *et al.* 2002, Dunn and Alderfer 2011).

The White-winged Dove winters throughout its breeding range, except the breeding range in California, Nevada, Utah, and western Arizona which is largely abandoned during the winter (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). It also winters outside its breeding range in southwestern California and along the California coast from San Diego County, north to Santa Barbara County, and rarely north to Humboldt County (Small 1994). The White-winged Dove also winters in its breeding range in north and through north-central Texas, in southern Louisiana, along the Gulf Coast from Mississippi to Florida, and throughout the central and southern Florida Peninsula (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). It also winters along the Atlantic Coast from North Carolina to southern Georgia, where it is rare, but increasing, each year (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). In Mexico, the White-winged Dove winters from central Veracruz, Michoacán, and Guerrero east to northwestern Oaxaca, Tabasco, and western Campeche (Howell and Webb 2010). It also occurs further south into central Belize (Howell and Webb 2010). Individuals from the United States and northern Mexico migrate as far south as Costa Rica and Panama (Schwertner *et al.*

2002). In many tropical areas, migration may occur attitudinally, although this has not been definitively established (Schwertner *et al.* 2002).

Along the west coast, the White-winged Dove is a casual vagrant north of its breeding range (Roberson 1980). There are 23 accepted records by the Oregon Bird Records Committee (OFO 2012). In Washington, there are only 9 accepted records by the Washington Bird Records Committee (Wahl *et al.* 2005, WBRC 2013). In British Columbia, the White-winged Dove is an accidental species with just over a dozen Provincial records (Campbell *et al.* 1990b, Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). In Alaska, the White-winged Dove is an accidental species with only 1 State record (West 2008). The White-winged Dove is an accidental species in the rest of Canada with records from northern Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland (Godfrey 1986, Schwertner *et al.* 2002). It is a casual species in the rest of the United States outside of its breeding range (Dunn and Alderfer 2011).

### **Identification and Similar Species**

The identification of the White-winged Dove is covered in all standard North American field guides. In the context of British Columbia, the only similar looking species is the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) which lacks the broad white stripe along the folded wing and has a rather long pointed tail (Sibley 2000, Dunn and Alderfer 2011). The following description is taken from Schwertner *et al.* (2002).

The White-winged Dove is a medium-sized, rather heavy-bodied and square-tailed dove. This species is 29 cm in length and about 150 g in mass. The adult's coloration is mainly grayish-brown, with a prominent white wing-patch across the outer wing-coverts (not including primary-coverts) that contrasts with the blackish upper surface of the flight feathers and is easily visible when the wing is folded or spread. The under wing has medium-gray coverts with brown remiges. There is a black streak across the lower ear-coverts. The tail is rather square-tipped to slightly round in shape and the central rectrices are brown. The lateral rectrices have broad white tips subtended by a narrow black band and gray bases. The feet are bright pinkish-red in adults, becoming more brilliant during breeding season. The bare skin surrounding the eyes is bright blue. The iris is bright orange. The juvenile birds resemble adult birds, but lack a black cheek-patch. The feet are dull reddish-brown, the head is smaller, and the iris is brown to light orange.

### **Occurrence and Documentation**

The White-winged Dove is an accidental species in British Columbia with 16 Provincial records (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1). The vast majority of the records come from Vancouver Island with 12 records (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1). There is a photographed record from

Vancouver (R. Cannings Pers. Comm.). Although it appears to be a valid record, there is no clear date or information associated with this observation (R. Cannings Pers. Comm.). There are 3 records for the interior of British Columbia (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1). The timing of the records is interesting in that there are two distinct periods when this species occurs (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). The first is in the summer between June and August (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). These are likely non breeding adults that end up wandering north (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). The other time period is in the fall between October and November (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). These birds are likely lost immature birds that headed north instead of south (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). The records for these periods is relatively even with no one month standing out (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). The occurrences definitely point to the fact that this species is possible at any time of year since there are documented winter records for the Province (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1 and 2). The White-winged Dove has gone under a large range expansion over the past few decades (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). This expansion northward has been along both Pacific and Atlantic Coasts (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). Expansion and post breeding season dispersal may be associated with moderate climates and food sources such as back yard feeding stations (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). Many of the records for British Columbia and other extralimital records come from backyard bird feeding stations (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1). It is believed by some authorities that the concentration of human urban areas, supplemental fossil-fuel heat sources, the absorption and radiation of solar energy from asphalt and concrete, and backyard bird feeding stations may account for the expansion of the White-winged Dove up to 650 km north of its known nineteenth-century range (Schwertner *et al.* 2002). This species in British Columbia has steadily increased in the past 20 years and shows no sign of stopping with birds turning up as recently as September 20, 2014, with a photographed bird in Shirley on Vancouver Island (Toochin *et al.* 2014, see Table 1). Despite Vancouver Island having the bulk of the Provincial records, this species is likely to occur again in the interior, especially in desert areas that are similar to its home range in the southern United States. Observers and feeder watchers alike are likely to find future records because the White-winged Dove has a habit of using bird feeders on a regular basis (Schwertner *et al.* 2002).



Figure 1: Record #:6: February 9, 2001. Photo © Jo Ann MacKenzie





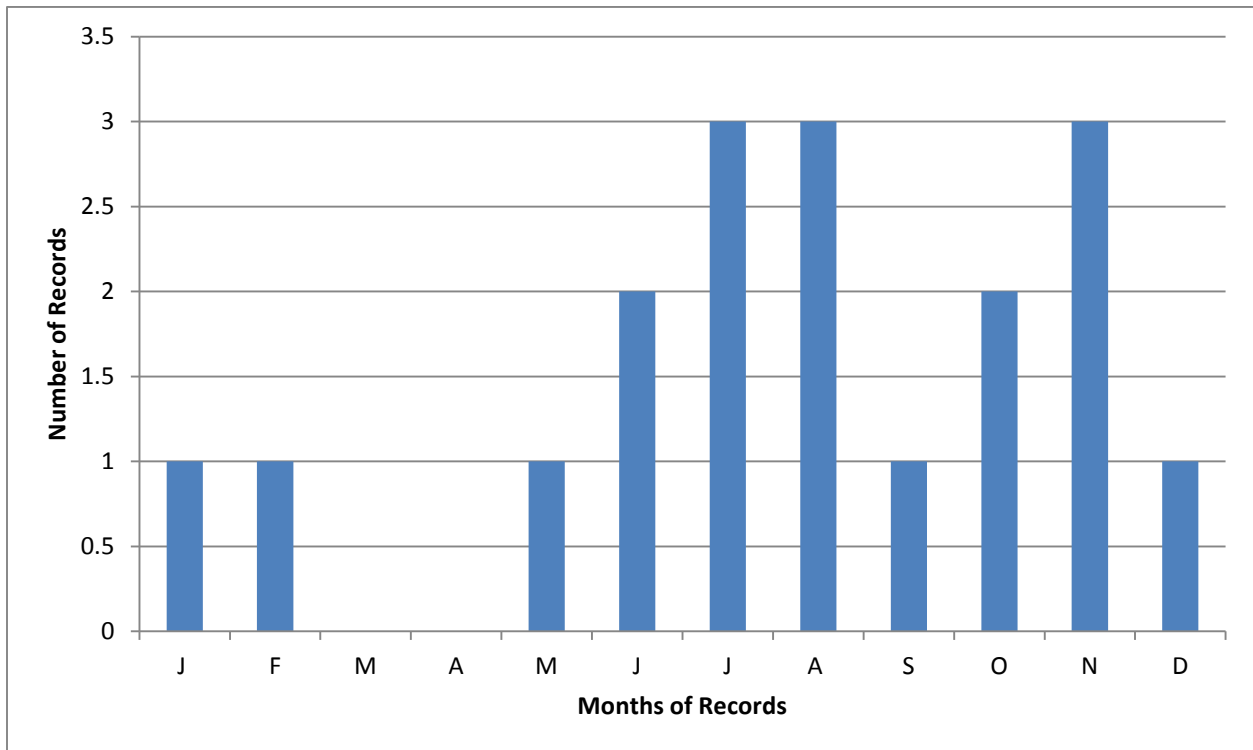
Figures 2, 3, 4 & 5: Record # 16: White-winged Dove in Shirley on September 20, 2014.  
Photos © Cathy Carlson.

**Table 1: Records of White-winged Dove for British Columbia:**

- 1.(2) adults July 1918: J. G. French (specimen: RBMC 4744) French Beach, Shirley (*Z. a. mearnsi*) (Brooks and Swarth 1925)
- 2.(1) immature November 18, 1982: A. Ford: Victoria (Hunn and Mattocks 1983, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 3.(1) immature October 23 - November 5, 1994: The Jorgensen's, and other observers (photo) Ucluelet (Bowling 1995a, Davidson 1995, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 4.(1) immature November 17-26 & Dec 1, 1997: Adrian Dorst, Aurora Paterson, and other observers (photo) Tofino (Bowling 1998a, Davidson 1999, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 5.(1) adult May 29, 1998: C. Bull : North Naramata, Okanagan (Bain and Holder 1998c, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 6.(1) adult January 10-February 19, 2001: D. Meads, and other observers (photo) Victoria (Cecile 2001a, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 7.(1) adult *circa* Spring 2002: Alan Moat (photo) Steveston (R. Cannings Pers. Comm.)
- 8.(1) adult July 12, 2004: John Coulson (photo) Brooks Peninsula, Vancouver Island (Cecile 2004d, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 9.(1) immature October 7, 2004: Guy Monty, Pierre Geoffray: Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Metchosin (Cecile 2005a, Toochin *et al.* 2014)

- 10.(1) adult June 7-13, 2005: Valerie Geist, and other observers (photo) near Stamp Falls Provincial Park, north of Pt. Alberni (Cecile 2005d, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 11.(1) adult August 8-22, 2005: Les and Joanne White: Puntchesakut Lake (Cecile 2006a, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 12.(1) immature August 17, 2005: Jerry Etzkorn, Nathan Hentze (photo) Carmanah Lighthouse (Cecile 2006a, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 13.(1) adult June 23-25, 2006: Vanessa Johnson, mobs (photo) visited feeder in Castlegar (Cecile 2006d, Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 14.(1) adult July 29 & August 1-3 & 29, 2009: Rick Toochin & Denise Gubersky , and other observers: Sooke (Toochin *et al.* 2014)
- 15.(1) adult August 14, 2014: Tom Johnson (photo) Wickaninnish Center, Pacific Rim National Park (D. Cecile Pers. Comm.)
- 16.(1) immature September 20, 2014: Cathy Carlson (photo) Shirley (C. Carlson Pers. Comm.)

**Table 2: Seasonal distribution of White-winged Dove records in British Columbia:**



**Table 2:** Note the sharply defined occurrence in the summer of this species with July, August and November having the highest number of records.

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