

Genus *Geopelia* Swainson

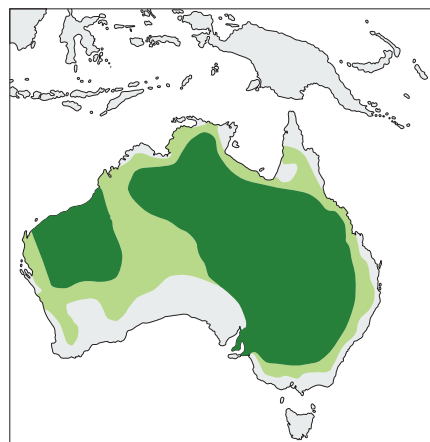
Geopelia Swainson, *Classif. Birds*, 2, 1837, p. 348. Type, by monotypy, *Geopelia lineata* Mus. Carl. pl. 67 = *Columba striata* Linnaeus.

Doves belonging to this genus are small to mid-sized birds with long, strongly graduated tails and a predominantly barred or spotted greyish plumage pattern. The sexes are alike and in all, except the Diamond Dove *G. cuneata*, juveniles resemble adults.

McGill (1968) questioned inclusion of the Bar-shouldered Dove *G. humeralis* in this genus, and suggested that it should be moved to *Streptopelia* or placed in a separate monotypic genus. Goodwin (1983) agreed that *Geopelia* doves in general, and the Bar-shouldered Dove in particular, do bear a considerable superficial resemblance to *Streptopelia* turtledoves, but concluded that this resemblance is due to convergence, and *Geopelia* doves are most probably an offshoot of the Australian bronzewings. They share with the bronzewings many behavioural characters: a tendency to loquacity, and an Australasian distribution. An attenuated outermost primary is not shared with either the turtledoves or the bronzewings and, like the Crested Bronzewing *Ocyphaps lophotes*, they lack the striking head patterns present in most bronzewings. Goodwin notes also that in plumage pattern and colours the Bar-shouldered Dove resembles the Crested Bronzewing, especially when juvenile plumages are compared. Frith

(1977) points out that there are strong differences in the courtship displays of *Geopelia* and *Streptopelia*, but marked homogeneity within each genus, and a long-standing concept has been that the bowing display of *Geopelia* sets it apart from *Streptopelia*, but could indicate a relationship with neotropical *Scardafella* doves. Although a relationship with *Scardafella* is now generally disregarded, Goodwin suspects that, although no direct connection is likely, their similarities are not due entirely to convergence, and the groups to which they belong are related, with ancestral stocks of both probably having had rather similar genetic potentialities. Molecular analyses confirm an alliance with the bronzewings (Pereira *et al.* 2007).

The natural range of *Geopelia* extends from Burma and Thailand to New Guinea and Australia, but one species, the Zebra Dove *G. striata*, has been introduced widely outside the natural range in South-East Asia, the Philippines and the Indonesian Archipelago, and to St Helena, Madagascar and the Isles Glorieuses, Seychelles and Cosmoledo and Farquhar Islands, the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, Réunion and Rodrigues, the Chagos Archipelago, Tahiti and the Hawaiian Islands (see Long 1981).



DIAMOND DOVE *Geopelia cuneata* (Latham)

Columba cuneata Latham, *Index Orn.*, suppl., 1801 (1802), p. lxi. (New Holland = Sydney, New South Wales *apud* Mathews.)

OTHER NAMES

Turtle Dove, Little Turtledove, Little Dove, Red-eyed Dove.

DESCRIPTION

Length 21 cm.

ADULT MALE

Head, neck, breast and flanks bluish-grey, paler on chin and sometimes suffused brownish on crown to nape; hindneck and mantle to upper tail-coverts brownish-grey; scapulars and upper wing-coverts brownish-grey prominently spotted with small irregular white spots with black edges; tertials brownish-grey with narrow white margins and poorly defined white spot on outer webs near tips; secondaries brownish-grey with narrow white margins; primary-coverts chestnut-brown; primaries chestnut-brown, darker on outer webs that have narrow buff-white margins and buff-white tips; underwing-coverts silvery grey; abdomen to under tail-coverts

cream-white; central four tail-feathers brownish-grey, lateral tail-feathers white with grey at bases; bill grey-black; iris orange-red; prominent bare eyering pink-red, darker in breeding season; legs and feet pink; weight 26–37 g.

31 specimens: wing 86–99 (94.1) mm, tail 92–105 (98.1) mm, bill 12–14 (13.0) mm, tarsus 14–16 (14.5) mm.

ADULT FEMALE

Like male, but upperparts slightly more brownish; occiput and nape with a slight brownish tinge; narrower bare eyering slightly paler pink-red; weight 25–37 g.

36 specimens: wing 90–100 (93.2) mm, tail 87–106 (99.5) mm, bill 11–13 (12.5) mm, tarsus 14–15 (14.4) mm.

JUVENILES

Crown to mantle and upper wing-coverts greyish-brown, feathers with terminal fawn edges and subterminal black bands giving a barred appearance; little or no white spotting on scapulars and upper wing-coverts; back and rump greyish-brown, feathers with narrowly

OPPOSITE:

Diamond Dove
Geopelia cuneata

Upper: ANWC B05527 adult ♀
Undoolya Gap, Alice Springs, NT,
14 March 1967

Lower: ANWC B28946 adult ♂
Noonbah Station homestead, Qld,
27 January 1997.