

Tribe PTILINOPODINI Selby

Pigeons and doves belonging to this tribe are arboreal, forest-dwelling frugivores. They have a soft-walled gizzard, so are capable of digesting only the fleshy pericarps of fruits, the hard seeds being voided, and by distending the gape and throat widely they can swallow quite large fruits. They have short, thick tarsi, often partly or well feathered, and strong feet well suited to climbing among foliage.

Genus *Ducula* Hodgson

Ducula Hodgson, *Asiatic Researches*, **19**, 1836, p. 160. Type, by monotypy, *Ducula insignis* Hodgson.

Goodwin (1983) notes that the term ‘imperial pigeons’ applied to the long-tailed fruit pigeons in this genus presumably derives from their impressive and majestic-looking, if somewhat ponderous, appearance. They are large heavy birds, lacking the brilliant plumage colouration that characterises closely allied *Ptilinopus* species. Subtle greys, browns, pinks and maroons feature prominently in their plumage, with iridescent greens or blues often present on the wings, mantle and tail, and conspicuous head markings or prominent tail-bands identify some species. Goodwin (1960) points out that this general lack of variegated plumage, at least in comparison with *Ptilinopus*, can be explained by the relative paucity of species in any one area and the larger size. Over much of the range, only one or two *Ducula*

Subgenus *Ducula* Hodgson

Species now included in the genus *Ducula* have been placed in as many as five separate genera, but I agree with Schodde (1997), who points out that, of seven species groups defined in *Ducula* by Goodwin (1960), only the highly distinctive *D. bicolor* warrants

Only single-egg clutches have been recorded.

Schodde (1997) points out that distribution is centred in archipelagos of the south-western Pacific, with an outlier in the *Alectroenas* blue pigeons of Malagasy and the Seychelles. Of five genera recorded from Australia, the highly distinctive *Lopholaimus* is endemic and *Hemiphaga* formerly occurred on Norfolk Island.

species are sympatric, or potentially so, and these often differ in colour and ecology. In New Guinea and the Philippine Islands, where a number of *Ducula* pigeons do coexist, selective pressure for specific recognition has resulted in ornamentation and specific variation comparable to that present in *Ptilinopus*. Conversely, *Ducula* species that lack conspicuous markings are isolated on islands or overlap only with the very differently coloured *D. bicolor*, and one of these dull-coloured species is *D. whartoni* from Christmas Island. There is little or no sexual dimorphism, and juveniles resemble adults.

This genus is distributed from the Indian subcontinent, southern China and Indochina through South-East Asia to the Indonesian Archipelago, New Guinea, northern Australia and Polynesia.

even subgeneric differentiation. Differences between other species groups are less pronounced, making recognition of further subgenera difficult.