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#### **Eurasian Collared-Dove on the Outer Banks of North Carolina**

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On 31 July 1994 the senior author was riding with Derb Carter and Merrill Lynch along NC 12 just south of Salvo, NC, when he observed a somewhat stocky-looking dove perched on a telephone wire. Carter turned his vehicle around, and the observers were able to view the dove closely, within 75 feet, for about 10 minutes.

The dove was a medium buff color on the head and entire underparts, with the belly the same color as the rest of the underparts. The back and mantle were slightly darker buff. The folded primaries were dark brown and contrasted with the rest of the plumage. In flight, the primaries contrasted with the buff of the rest of the plumage.

The bird had a distinct black collar that covered the back half of the neck. Otherwise, the head was immaculate buff. The eye was dark red-brown, and the bill was black. The feet were red-purple.

The tail was moderately long but was square to slightly rounded. The tail shape helped to give the bird a slightly huskier appearance than that of a Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*), though none of the latter were present for comparison. From below, the outer tail feathers (one or two) were white on the lower one-third to one-half, but the others in the center were brown to the tip.

The bird remained on the telephone wire for about a minute or two, and it then flew to shrubs along a canal just north of the Salvo Campground. Carter obtained photos of the bird when it perched in the open in the shrubs. The bird then flew toward the town of Salvo, and the observers were unable to relocate it.

Based on the overall pinkish-buff color of the bird, it was identified immediately as a Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocta*). The very similar-looking Ringed Turtle-Dove (*S. risoria*) was eliminated because this latter

species is a very pale buffy color that appears almost whitish on the head and underparts.

A second observation of a Eurasian Collared-Dove was made by B. J. Rose and the junior author at the Falcon Motel in Buxton, NC, about 18 miles south of Salvo. They observed it on 5 August 1994 at a feeder at the motel, and Rose obtained several photographs. The dove was bulkier than Mourning Doves feeding with it, though it was not longer in body size. Its tail was proportionally shorter than that of the Mourning Doves. The dorsal ground color of the Collared-Dove was a warm sandy brown (with the rump noticeably grayer), and the head and body feathers were a paler tan, with a gray-rose cast in certain light. A dark collar on the back of the neck stood out at all times. The bill was dark, and the legs and feet were reddish-pink. The folded wings showed some gray in the secondary coverts and the distinctly darker brown primaries. The bird showed no signs of molt and no signs of cage wear.

This Buxton bird was also observed in flight by the junior author. The dove showed a very pale whitish underwing with some darkening on the borders of the primaries. The upperwing showed dark primaries, a grayish carpal area, secondaries, and secondary coverts, and a brownish innerwing. The rump and undertail coverts were gray; the bases of the rectrices were darker brown; and the ends (from 20–50%) of all but the central two rectrices were white. The central rectrices were uniformly brown.

There is no certainty that these two observations concerned the same individual. However, because of the closeness of the dates and locations, the N. C. Bird Records Committee considered that these observations may well have been of the same bird and voted on the two as a single record. Late in 1994, the Committee accepted both the written descriptions and the photographs of the bird; the Committee also considered the bird to have been wild, with no votes for Unaccepted Origin (N. C. Bird Records Committee, 1995, Chat 59:87). Thus, these two observations are considered as a single record, and the voting by the Committee places the Eurasian Collared-Dove on the Official List for North Carolina.

This species has spread rapidly in the southeastern United States from the Bahamas, where it was introduced from Europe. These doves moved to Florida in the early 1980s and have spread to Georgia in recent years. Thus, its occurrence in North Carolina was anticipated in the mid- or late 1990s.