

Occurrence of the White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) in South Carolina and Neighboring Regions, and its Relation to the Florida Population

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In South Carolina, the White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) is a rare transient on the immediate coast (40 reports), and a very rare transient in the interior (four reports from the coastal plain outside the tidal zone, and one within the Blue Ridge province). This dove was unknown in the state before 1965. The purpose of this note is to review the occurrence of the White-winged Dove in South Carolina and nearby regions, and to discuss how its pattern of occurrence may be related to growth of the Florida population.

This dove was first recorded in South Carolina on 6 December 1965 when W. D. Bootle shot a male while hunting on James Island, Charleston County (Chamberlain 1966). G. B. Saunders identified the specimen as *Z. a. asiatica*, the subspecies breeding as far east as southern Texas. The next White-winged Dove was also shot during a hunt, on Wadmalaw Island, 1 January 1968 (specimen photographed, carcass not preserved). There was not another verified report until 1990, but through 2009, 45 state reports have accumulated (Fig. 1), including six specimens and seven photographs (Table 1). From 1989 to 2009, this dove was recorded every year but three (1997, 2001 and 2007).

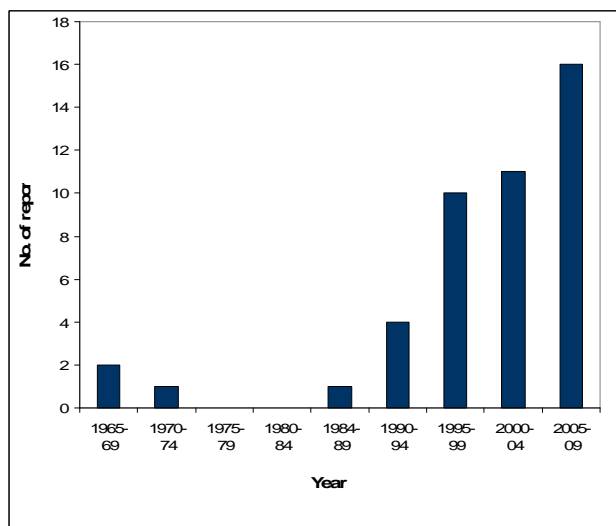


Figure 1. Number of reports of White-winged Doves in SC, 1965–2009, by 5-year intervals.

Table 1. Verifiable records of White-winged Dove in SC. South Carolina Bird Records Committee: SCBRC.

Location	Date	Documentation	Observer	Reference	Comments
James Island	6 Dec 1965	Specimen	W. D. Bootle	Burton 1969; Chat 30:52,	Male; 1st state record; during dove hunt
Wadmalaw Island	"December" 1968	Photograph	Farley Smith, Jr.	Burton 1969	male; during dove hunt
Charleston	11–13 Nov 1990	Photograph	S. Compton	Chat 55:93–101	
Sullivan's island	15 Nov 1993	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	male; at feeder
S. Aiken Co	15 Apr 1994	Photograph	K. A. Buhlmann <i>et al.</i>	Buhlmann <i>et al.</i> 1995; SCBRC 04-94-1	at feeder; first inland record
Johns Island	30 Dec 1995	Specimen	W. Gibbs	this paper	female, during dove hunt
Harbor Island	28 Jun–10 Jul 1996	Photograph	J. Halleron	Chat 66:153; SCBRC 04-96.2	at feeder, remained 13 days
Sullivan's Island	18 Nov 2000	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	at feeder, with collared-doves
Sullivan's Island	1 Dec 2000	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	male; at feeder
Sullivan's Island	30 Nov 2002	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	female; at feeder with collared-doves
Huntington Beach	27 Jul 2005	Photograph	P. Turner	this paper	
Garden City Beach	30 Dec 2008	Photograph	D. Forsythe	this paper	
James Island	6 Apr 2009	Photograph	B. McCord	Chat 73: 105–106	
James Island	29 Nov 2009	Photograph	N. Dias	NAB 64:61	at feeder

Most (40 of 45) of the South Carolina reports are from the immediate coast, and 63% of the coastal reports were in November–February. White-winged Dove has been found on the coast in every month except August (Fig. 2). In contrast, most interior sightings (four of seven) were in April. The dove was first recorded in the interior on 15 April 1994, when one was photographed in southern Aiken County within the Savannah River Site (Buhlmann *et al.* 1995). The earliest fall appearance in the interior was at Columbia, on 16 September 2006 (C. Eastman. Chat 71:22, 2007). In addition to this sighting, it was seen in Columbia on 20 December 1998. A sighting from Columbia on 6 June 1989 was not verified; it was reported to involve six birds, an unusually high count, and possibly entailed Eurasian Collared-Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*).

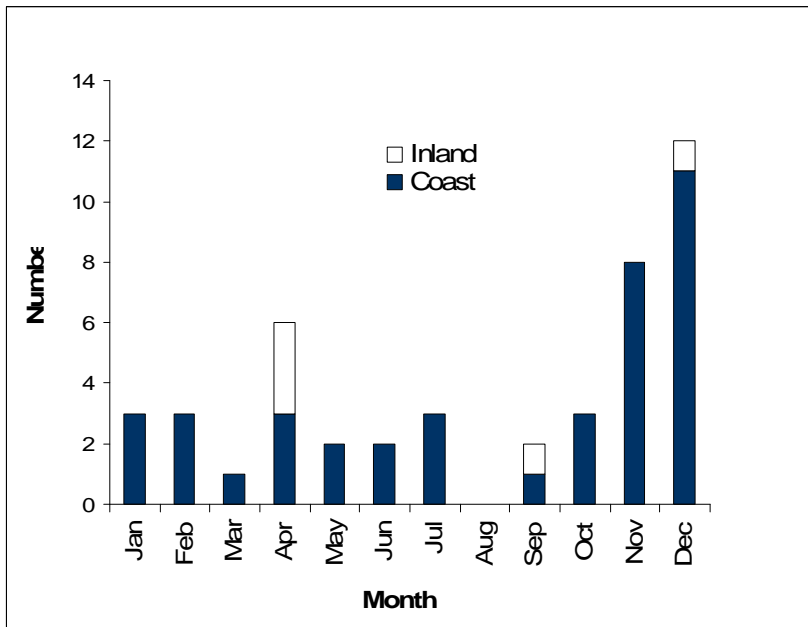


Figure 2. Seasonal and regional distribution of White-winged Doves in South Carolina. Coast refers to outer coastal plain (tidal zone).

Since the late 1990s, this species has often been seen at bird feeders (>20 reports). By 1995, White-winged Doves were seen associating with Eurasian Collared-Doves. One stayed with a flock of collared-doves “several months” in fall 1996 at Bennett’s Point, Colleton County (G. Beaton and B. Wood). A male collected 30 November 2002 on Sullivan’s Island was at a feeder with a flock of 35 collared-doves (Table 1). Most (25 of 31) doves have been reported lingering two days or less. Others have remained at one site for extended periods (14–60 days). Two is the largest number confirmed at one site (31 Dec 2005, Charleston; 23 November 2000, Edisto Island). The

White-winged Dove has been seen most often at feeding stations on James Island (nine reports) and on Sullivan's Island (four).

Based on 50 reports, the occurrence pattern in North Carolina mirrors that of South Carolina: 80% of NC doves were seen on the immediate coast, and 40% of sightings have been in November–December. North Carolina, unlike SC, has reports from the piedmont (five), but none from the mountains. A pair producing two young in June–July 1998 in Beaufort, NC, was thought to have been locally released, as one bird was banded (presumably a non-government band; F. A. Enders *in* Davis 1998. Chat 63:40).

Chandler and Lewis (2001) listed 25 reports from Georgia through 2001, all but three occurring since 1972. As in the Carolinas, a high proportion of sightings (13 of 22) have been from the immediate coast. Unlike SC, a relatively large number of Georgia reports (10 of 22) were from the interior coastal plain, primarily in the spring (eight of 14 spring reports). None was reported from the piedmont or mountains. It has not been determined whether birds seen in Georgia originated from Florida, or from the SW North American population, but Chandler and Lewis (2001) suggest that birds seen in the spring and early summer are from western North America, while birds occurring in the winter originate in Florida,

Until the 1960s, White-winged Doves were a rare, regular transient in Florida, believed to have originated in the western Gulf coast (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). G. B. Saunders (in litt., Charleston Museum) believed that during the 1960's, birds breeding in southern Texas regularly wandered along the Gulf coast as far east as Florida, and some turned northward rather than southward along the west coast of Florida. This hypothesis may apply to the two collected in South Carolina in 1965 and 1968, and perhaps to the two Georgia specimens, collected in 1959 and 1962 (Chandler and Lewis 2001).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the White-winged Dove population in Florida grew rapidly, primarily as a result of introductions (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In 1959, ten pairs were released near Homestead, Dade Co. The species began breeding there (Fisk 1968), and eight years later the population was estimated to contain 200 birds (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In the late 1970s, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission began capturing birds from southern Florida, introducing them to central Florida, as far north as Alachua Co (L. E. Williams *in* Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). In April–July 2002, twenty-two were counted at four locations in Columbia County, Florida, on the border of southeastern Georgia (Florida Field Naturalist 31:14, 2003). Such large numbers near Georgia suggest that the doves recorded there and in the Carolinas since the 1980s originated in Florida. In addition, as these doves have appeared in northern Florida in spring and summer, it is more likely that those sighted in the Carolinas and Georgia during that period are from also Florida, rather than southwestern North America, as suggested by Chandler and Lewis (2001).

In summary, South Carolina now has 48 reports of White-winged Doves (41 from the coast; seven from the interior). This includes six verifiable by specimens, and eight verified by photographs. On the outer coastal plain, the species occurs mainly in late fall–winter (November to February; 26 of 40 reports). Inland birds have tended to occur in April (three of six reports). It is likely that the increase in reports from the Carolinas and Georgia since the 1990s is associated with the rapid growth of the Florida population, and in the future the species should be recorded with greater frequency in the Southeast.

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