

INCA DOVE

Columbina inca



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Range

Inca doves are common visitors to bird feeders. Their melodious “hoo hoo” repeated up to 30 times a minute fills the air during early summer. These doves are almost always seen in pairs. Their scaly appearance sets them apart from other small doves.



Birds

INCA DOVE

Columbina inca



Appearance

Length: 9 inches
Wing span: 11 inches
Weight: 1 3/4 ounces

Inca doves are tiny gray pigeon-like birds with long tails. Their outer tail feathers are white. They have rusty wing patches easily seen when they fly. Inca's have a distinctive fish scale pattern on their breast, head and back feathers.

Behavior

Habit: Diurnal, altricial, granivore
Diet: seeds
Breeding territory: 1 pair per 37 acres

During courtship, the male inca dove bows, coos and struts in front of the female, fanning his tail feathers. Males battle furiously for females.

Habitat

Inca doves are found in urban and suburban settings, woodland edges, savannahs, thickets and around cultivated fields in south-central Texas, Arizona and New Mexico as well as old Mexico and as far south as Costa Rica.

Now You Know!

- › Dove and pigeon nestlings are fed "pigeon milk" a high protein milky substance produced and regurgitated by their parents.
- › Dove nests are a flimsy basket of sticks barely woven together.
- › In the winter, inca doves gather in flocks of up to 50. On cold winter days they have been known to form pyramids 2 or 3 tiers high in order to stay warm.

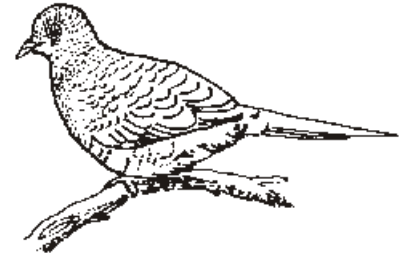
Life Cycle

Sexual maturity: Less than one year.

Mating season: Spring and early summer. Inca doves usually nest 2 to 5 times during a season.

Gestation: Eggs hatch in 14 days, young fledge 14 to 16 days after that.

Number of young: Usually 2. Eggs are white and 9/10 inches long.



Legend Has It ...

This common Southwest species is one of the most desert-adapted of the family. Its plump body can survive both extreme heat and cold. They can go four or five days without drinking, and fly 10 or more miles to reach a water hole. Because they fly directly to water, with no searching about, early west Texas travelers would often watch doves to locate water holes.

Inca Doves & Man

With their soft cooing calls, males strutting for females and their regular use of bird feeders, Inca doves quickly become backyard favorites.

Inca doves seem to be increasing in areas of human disturbance.