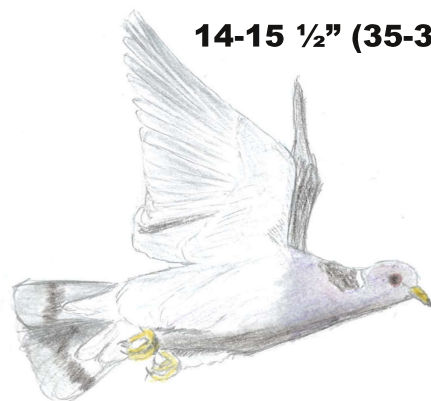


## Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*)



**14-15 ½" (35-39 cm)<sup>1</sup>**

The band-tailed pigeon is a large, heavily built woodland and mountain pigeon.<sup>1</sup> In San Diego County, it is found year round in the mountains.<sup>4</sup> It feeds on the elderberries and acorns found in abundant oak habitats, relying on different foods for every season.<sup>4</sup> It is especially abundant in Palomar Mountain, a place named after the pigeons (paloma is Spanish for pigeon or dove).<sup>4</sup> The band-tailed pigeon is both migratory and nomadic<sup>4</sup>, often flying in compact groups.<sup>3</sup> In California, its population was decimated by over-hunting in the early 20th century.<sup>4</sup> It is particularly difficult to find the nests of the band-tailed pigeon, often on a tree branch high in a conifer.<sup>4</sup> It only lays one egg per clutch, but has a long breeding season (March – October).<sup>4</sup>

## Spotted Dove\* (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

**13" (33 cm)<sup>1</sup>**

The spotted dove is named after its broad collar of black and white spots, although juveniles don't have a spotted collar.<sup>1</sup> In 1915, the dove was introduced from Asia to Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> By 1950, it arrived in San Diego County as an uncommon and local species.<sup>4</sup> However, its population decreased and died out completely with the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup>

## Eurasian Collared Dove\* (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

The Eurasian collared dove was originally introduced from the Old World to the Bahamas before spreading to the entire United States within 20 years.<sup>4</sup> The urban bird has established local populations in Southern California and will inevitably colonize San Diego County in the near future.<sup>4</sup>

**11 ½" (29 cm)<sup>2</sup>**

## Ringed Turtle Dove\* (*Streptopelia risoria*)

The Ringed Turtle dove is pale beige and has a narrow black ring on its hind neck.<sup>1</sup> It is a domestic bred variant of the African Turtle-Dove.<sup>1</sup> Only individual escapees can be seen from time to time in San Diego County.<sup>4</sup>

**12" (30 cm)<sup>1</sup>**

## Create a Nature Journal

Creating a nature journal allows a deeper connection with nature and more in depth observations.

Observe pigeons and doves carefully to learn more about them and make new discoveries. Notice the number of doves in an area. To start, answer these questions about their behaviors: Where are they perching? What are they doing? How do they move?

Record the information in a journal. Write down the date, time, and location of your observations. Write notes and describe the behavior and surrounding habitat. Draw simple sketches of what you see, a simple outline of the birds or description of movement.

Ask your own questions. Maybe there are no answers to them, but one can make experiments to try to find explanations or be left in wonder of nature. Ask questions about their behaviors and write them down. Make guesses that may explain the behaviors. Here is an example: Why do all the pigeons and doves take flight at the same time? Did a predator spook them? Is it safer to fly in a group? Did any of them not take flight?

# The Pigeons and Doves of San Diego County



*A guide to all 10 doves and pigeons found in San Diego County including native and introduced species. Pigeons and doves belong to the order Columbiformes and family Columbidae. The larger birds of the Columbidae are generally called pigeons, and the smaller birds are called doves. Their diet consists of seeds, waste grain, fruits, and insects.<sup>1</sup> They are plump birds that nod their heads as they walk and also fast-fliers.<sup>1</sup> Pigeons and doves are known for being able to drink without raising their heads after each sip unlike most birds.<sup>3</sup> They often construct flimsy nests out of twigs.*

\*introduced species

1 Peterson, Roger Tory. A Field Guide to Western Birds: A Completely New Guide to Field Marks of All Species Found in North America West of the 100th Meridian and North Of. 3rd ed., Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

2 Admin, Aab. "Online Bird Guide, Bird ID Help, Life History, Bird Sounds From Cornell." All About Birds, 28 Sept. 2022, [www.allaboutbirds.org/news](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/news).

3 The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds: Eastern Region. Knopf, 1977.

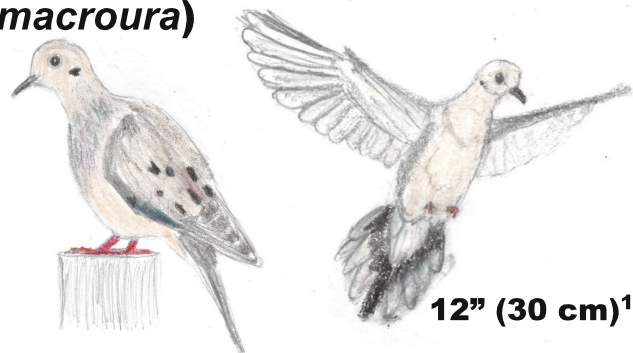
3 Hoffmann, Ralph. Birds of the Pacific States. Eleventh Printing, 1955.

4 Unitt, Philip. San Diego County Bird Atlas. 1st ed., Sunbelt Publications, 2004.

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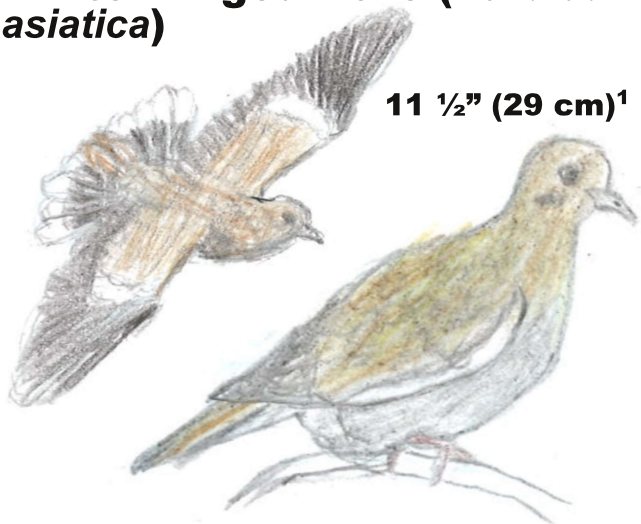
## Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)



12" (30 cm)<sup>1</sup>

The very common mourning dove is named after its unique cooing call. Its scientific name "macroura" is Greek for "long-tailed"<sup>3</sup> after its long, pointed tail. It lives in the area year round and can usually be spotted on the ground, on telephone wires, and in flight. When mourning doves take off, their wings produce a unique whistling sound. Mourning doves may breed up to 6 times each year<sup>2</sup> and most nesting occurs from March to July.<sup>4</sup> The female mourning dove lays 2 white eggs per brood.<sup>2</sup> The dark gray fledglings generally hang around nearby for a few more days after leaving the nest. The mourning dove is highly migratory, so large winter flocks may consist of northern visitors.<sup>4</sup>

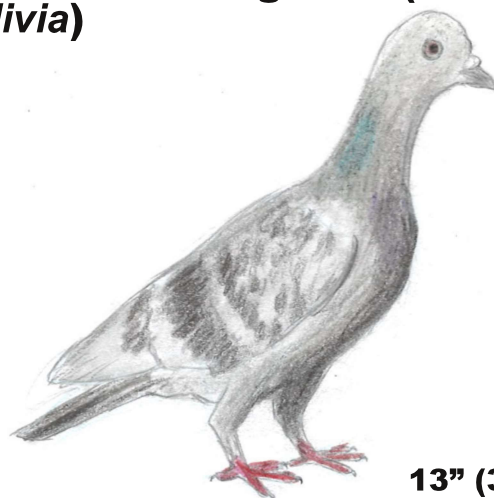
## White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)



11 1/2" (29 cm)<sup>1</sup>

The white-winged dove is a dove of the Desert Southwest.<sup>4</sup> In San Diego County, it is found in the Anza-Borego Desert.<sup>4</sup> Its numbers are increasing, and it is a common sight at oases and human settlements.<sup>4</sup> It is similar to the mourning dove, but has white wing patches and a broad tail with white corners.<sup>1</sup> The white-winged dove was formerly a summer visitor, although it is losing its habit of migration and becoming a year round resident.<sup>4</sup> In Arizona, the dove drinks from the native saguaros, but in San Diego County, the dove must travel to drink free water daily.<sup>4</sup> It can be heard producing a hooo-hooo-ho-hooo (who-cooks-for-you) call and lays 2 cream-buff eggs in loose twigs in bushes.<sup>3</sup>

## Domestic Pigeon\* (*Columba livia*)



13" (33 cm)<sup>1</sup>

The domestic pigeon is typically bluish gray, although there are many color variants. It is an old world bird that has been domesticated for millennia.<sup>4</sup> Domestic stock and feral birds have become established as city birds.<sup>1</sup> There have been many attempts to eradicate them from cities.<sup>3</sup> They lay 2 white eggs and exclusively nest in buildings and bridges from March to July or sometimes even year round.<sup>4</sup> They are nonmigratory, although they may be seen flying over native habitats.<sup>4</sup>

## Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*)



6 1/2" (16 cm)<sup>1</sup>

The common ground dove is a very small, sparrow-sized dove.<sup>3</sup> It has a scaly breast, stubby black tail, and its rounded wings flash rufus in flight.<sup>1</sup> The dove requires extensive open ground for foraging, so it inhabits open areas: principally orchards, nurseries, and rural ranchettes in San Diego County.<sup>4</sup> The common ground dove began colonizing San Diego County in the 1950s, and is now common and increasing in the Anza-Borego Desert.<sup>4</sup> It may nest and lay 2 white eggs in a palo verde, California fan palm, or buildings.<sup>4</sup> Nests are also often on or close to the ground, hidden in a tuft of grass or among weeds.<sup>3</sup> When not breeding, the doves gather in small flocks.<sup>4</sup>

## Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*)

Only a few pioneers have been noted in San Diego County, but the Inca dove is likely to colonize the Anza-Borego Desert in the near future.<sup>4</sup> It is a small, slim dove, similar to the common ground dove, although it has a longer tail with white sides unlike the common ground dove.<sup>1</sup>

7 1/2" (19 cm)<sup>1</sup>

## Ruddy Ground Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)

The Ruddy ground dove is spreading north out of Mexico like the other ground doves, although not yet established in San Diego.<sup>4</sup> It was first seen in California in 1984, and there are 6 accepted reports of it in San Diego County.<sup>4</sup>

7" (17 cm)