

New Ohio Record: Common Ground-Dove

by Jared Mizanin

We present what we hope will be a frequently-seen feature on accepted records of birds new to Ohio. Here we offer some of Jared Mizanin's excellent documentation of his discovery, followed by a few remarks. We hope this will exemplify the procedure by which this species has come to be the 406th on the Ohio list. —Ed.

RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION

Species: Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)

Location: Brecksville Reservation, near the Jaite National Park Service headquarters.

Date: Friday, 5 Nov and Saturday, 6 Nov 1999.

Time seen: Friday—afternoon/evening, between 3-5 pm; Saturday—morning, from 8:30-9:30 am, but still present when I left Saturday morning; it was the last time the bird was seen.

Bird description: Tiny, plump, short-tailed dove with strong scaling on the breast. Bicolored bill—pink at base, with a black tip. Short, pink legs. Nape was bluish-gray (indicating a male). A seemingly good photo of this may be Picture #3 (the bird is centered—he may be hard to find!). Most noticeable characteristic, however, was the bright chestnut primaries and wing linings (VERY obvious in flight, moderately when feeding). Small black spots on wings. Overall pinkish below.

Voice: Never vocalized.

Behavior: I first noticed this dove as it flew to a wooden fence, when the diagnostic wing-color attracted my attention. It then landed on the ground, where it fed warily. I had been able to get within close range; usually, however, mourning doves allow a closer approach. The common ground-dove did not associate with mourning doves. A few times it retreated to seek refuge in nearby cover: a few times in a spruce tree, once to a small deciduous sapling, and several times to brushy areas in the fields.

Habitat: General: gravel/grassy parking area. Specific: fairly large brushy field with deciduous forest at its outskirts. Single spruce tree nearby. Fed in parking area—probably rich in weed seeds.

Similar species eliminated: Mourning dove *Zenaida macroura*—large in comparison, no reddish in wings, all black bill, long pointed tail.

Distance: Average distance was between 20 and 30 feet.

Optical equipment: Swift Audubon 8.5x44 binocular; photos with Canon 200 mm lens.

Light: Fair skies. Lighting just right.

Previous experience with this and other species: 1) little with common ground-dove. I've been to Florida in 1994. I believe I saw a few, but I am far more interested now than I was then. 2) Inca dove *Columbina inca*—brief experience from 16-19 Oct 1999 (suburban area near Lk Mead, NV); this species similar, but with long tail, all-black bill, and scaled nearly everywhere.

Other observers: After discovering the bird, I brought two non-birders along to witness the miracle, my dad (John Mizanin) and my cousin (Dave Hunter).

Did others agree with my identification: I showed them the ground-dove in a field guide, and they agreed; however, they weren't really serious birders.

Books, illustrations, advice consulted, and how these influenced your description:

Didn't need anything to be 100% sure of identification...The description I've written hasn't been changed by the field guides I read; what I saw is what I wrote, and that is it.

How long before I wrote this description: Three or four hours.

SOME ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Mizanin sent the OBRC 17 photographic prints as part of his documentation. The bird's image is small and not always optimally in focus in these images, but they were nevertheless important to the acceptance of the record. We reproduce here enlargements of some images of the bird; in the originals, colorations of a few plumage and bare parts characters were discernible. The bird's size is determinable by comparison to the fence-rails. The dove family has many wandering species; although a report, regrettably undocumented, of the Eurasian collared-dove *Streptopelia decaocto* was recently made in Ohio (and another just received by the OBRC), as has one, unfortunately insufficiently documented, of white-winged dove *Zenaida asiatica*, the common ground-dove is the first vagrant columbid to be accepted for Ohio's state list.

The OBRC's deliberations went through two rounds, a recirculation resulting in unanimous acceptance. Concerns centered around the photos, which failed to show the color of the wing linings or scaliness on the breast, but these details are stressed in the written details. Taken by itself, the written documentation seems adequate to verify the species, but in the case of a first state record, especially with but a single informed observer, additional material such as photographs is very welcome, and in this case made acceptance much easier, as did an established pattern of vagrancy for this species.

The common ground-dove, while reportedly diminishing in numbers in its eastern range, has nevertheless made the record-books well north of its range. While never acceptably recorded in West Virginia or Kentucky, it is on the official lists of Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, and as far north as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, as well as in many states along the eastern seaboard. A good treatment of this species can be found in: Dunn J., and K. Garrett. 1990. The Identification of Ruddy and Common Ground-Doves. *Birding* 32:138-145. —Ed.



These two photographs represent only a portion of the documentation submitted by Jared Mizanin after his discovery of Ohio's first common ground-dove on 5 November 1999. Some salient field marks can be distinguished in these photos such as body size and shape, tail shape, bill proportion and wing covert markings.