

NEW RECORDS OF MOURNING DOVES IN SOUTH-CENTRAL AND INTERIOR ALASKA

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Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) are uncommon but regularly seen in southeastern Alaska, and probably breed in at least a few localities in that region (Gabrielson and Lincoln, *Birds of Alaska*, Stackpole Co., Harrisburg, Pa., p. 521, 1959). Records from the rest of the state are scarce. Gabrielson and Lincoln report a specimen taken 9 October 1916 at Fort Yukon (66°35' N, 145°15' W; this is the northernmost record of the species in Alaska) and another captured at Clear (64°15' N, 149°10' W) on 30 September 1947. Williamson et al. (*Condor*, 67(1):73, 1965) list four observations in the Anchorage-Kenai area. Weeden (*Bull. Alaska Ornithol. Soc.* 1:27, mimeo; also cited by Williamson et al., *op. cit.*) saw one on 13 June 1961 at Circle Hot Springs, 100 miles NE of Fairbanks.

We have compiled 17 additional records of Mourning Doves from Alaska outside of the southeastern region. Four of these, plus one from Yukon Territory, were first reported by various observers to Dr. Brina Kessel, University of Alaska, who generously gave them to us for publication. The others were original observations of the authors or second-person reports accompanied by photographs, specimens, or suitable observational detail.

The most westerly North American record of the Mourning Dove was submitted by Richard T. Wallen of Juneau, Alaska, who found a decomposing specimen 13 June 1965 in beachgrass 150 ft from the Bering Sea at Wales Village (65°35' N, 168°00' W). The bird may have died the previous autumn. The carcass was lost in shipment to the senior author.

Two doves taken farther west than previously published records are in the University of Alaska Biological Collections in College. Both were taken in the Bristol Bay area in autumn. One, an adult (UA No. 1626), was collected 10 October 1954 at Kvichak River (59°15' N, 156°50' W). The other, an adult male (UA No. 2040), was caught 7 November 1961 at Dillingham (59°05' N, 158°30' W) and was kept alive until 24 May 1962.

Four observations of Mourning Doves have been made and reported to us from the Anchorage-Kenai Peninsula area. On 29 June 1968, David Chesmore, University of Alaska, saw a dove sitting on a wire beside the Seward Highway 6 miles S of Anchorage. Later that year (24 October), Dimitri Bader, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, photographed a live Mourning Dove in Anchorage. James Rearden, also of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, observed a single bird of this species 3 November 1969 in Homer, at the south end of the Kenai Peninsula. John Oldemeyer, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (Denver Wildlife Research Station), saw a Mourning

Dove at Kenai on 18 September 1971. The bird was killed when it hit a window in Oldemeyer's house, but the specimen was not saved.

A surprising number of Mourning Dove sightings—considering the scarcity of observers in comparison with the Anchorage-Kenai area—has come from lower Prince William Sound, bordering the central Gulf of Alaska. On 12 October 1964, Edward Klinkhart, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, found a fresh dove carcass in beachgrass at Constantine Harbor, Hinchinbrook Island (60°20' N, 145°40' W). A wing of this bird is in the University of Alaska Biological Collections (UA No. 3230; adult). Another wing in the UA collections (No. 3236) is from an immature dove found dead 15 October 1968 at Boswell Bay, Hinchinbrook Island, by Leslie Maxwell of Cordova. Ray Gutoski, a Cordova resident, saw a Mourning Dove at Cordova on 28 October 1968. Cliff Collins reported a Mourning Dove at his home in Cordova in the fall of 1951, and another in the fall of 1968. (The latter could have been the same bird seen by Mr. Gutoski.)

[Mr. Collins, whose identifications are believed accurate but who did not recall specific observation dates when interviewed by the junior author, also reported Mourning Doves in the Chitina area N of Cordova (60°29' N, 144°27' W) in late summer 1942 or 1943 and in the summer of 1967 or 1968. Williamson et al. (*op. cit.*) mention unconfirmed reports of doves calling in spring in this same area.]

The remaining Alaskan records are from the interior. Throughout the period from late August to 17 September 1965, Mrs. Mary Warren of Circle City (65°50' N, 144°05' W) saw a single dove near her home and took several color photographs of the bird. The senior author and his wife saw a Mourning Dove 9 June 1966 near College (64°50' N, 147°55' W). On 1 August 1969, the senior author saw three doves flying across Fairbanks International Airport, less than 5 airline miles from the 1966 sighting. William Griffin, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, saw a single bird 2 miles NE of the Fairbanks Airport on 30 May 1971. Lastly, the junior author's sons picked up a decomposing specimen along the Richardson Highway at Gakona Junction (62°15' N, 145°15' W) on 5 September 1971.

Larry Bidlake and Grant Lortie, then students at the University of Alaska, reported seeing a Mourning Dove at mile 1001 Alaska Highway (60°45' N, 137°25' W) in Yukon Territory on 3 September 1963.

The total of 21 records of Mourning Doves in southcentral, interior, and western Alaska (excluding reports of decomposing carcasses) spans the period 30 May to 7 November. A monthly tally shows one observation in May, four in June, none in July, two in August, three in September, nine in October, and two in November. Although we do not reject the possibility that the species breeds in this region, all records to date could have involved nonbreeding adults or postbreeding doves moving northwest from known breeding localities, the nearest being central British Columbia.

We believe that the sharp rise in frequency of Mourning Dove sightings in the 1960s is largely a result of an increased number of ornithologists and competent birdwatchers in the state. Nevertheless, an increase in transient doves in Alaska cannot be ruled out altogether.

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