

THE PEACEFUL DOVE

AN INTRODUCTION



Photo: "Fir0002/Flagstaffotos"

The Peaceful Dove, *Geopelia placida*, a native of Australia and New Guinea is a small sturdy dove 19-21cm (7.6-8.4 inches) in length.

This delightful little dove can be found all over Australia with the exception of Tasmania, southern Victoria and south-western Australia (from the Pilbara, Western Australia to the Nullarbor Plain in South Australia).

Unfortunately, their range is reducing due to competition with the introduced Lace-necked Dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*. In New Guinea they are mainly found in the south of the island but also occur at a few sites in the north and on the Aru Islands.



Lace-necked Dove
Photo: J.M. Garg

It is predominately grey-brown on the back and wings and grey-pink on the underside, with bars of black across the wings and back. The most notable feature is the "zebra" stripes from the chin to the upper-breast and around the back of the neck. The sexes are monomorphic, and they can be difficult to sex. However, males tend to have a brighter iridescent blue eye-ring than the females. During the breeding season, the colour of the eye-ring skin may become a more intense blue. The tail is relatively long and tapered. Juveniles are paler with less striation, and a less intense eye-ring. Semi-matured males are paler than the adults and can be mistaken for mature females. The most reliable way to sex these birds is by observation; the males display, and the hens don't.

The Peaceful Dove is a ground feeder and, throughout their range, are commonly seen in streets and gardens*. They also frequent scrublands, woodlands, watercourses, rail yards and rainforests edges.

Flight is a rapid, undulating motion, with the wings making a whirring "frrrrr" sound. Peaceful Dove vocalisation consists of high-pitched "doodle-doo", "co-co-coo" and "croorrr!" sounds.

The breeding season is from October to January in southern Australia and from March to June in northern Australia and New Guinea. The Peaceful Dove can be very aggressive to other birds when breeding. A flimsy nest is usually built on a horizontal branch, and the customary dove/pigeon clutch of two white eggs laid.

R.V.C. with a little help from Wikipedia

*when resident in Port Moresby, the Peaceful Dove was the most common garden bird I observed. Ed.