

THE BARBARY DOVE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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The long-domesticated fawn Barbary Dove, sometimes given specific status as *Streptopelia risoria*, is considered by Goodwin (1970) to have been derived from the African Collared Turtledove *S. roseogrisea*, which is one of the superspecies of ring-necked turtledoves. Another member of this particular superspecies is the Eurasian Collared Turtledove *S. decaocto*. Long (1981), in his treatise on *Introduced Birds of the World*, has considered the African and Eurasian Collared Turtledoves and the Barbary Dove together. They look alike, they interbreed and, in some cases, there are difficulties in establishing the identity of introduced populations.

The African Collared Turtledove is found in north Africa south of the Sahara, and in central and southern Arabia, in arid country with thorn scrub, acacias and other trees, usually close to water. They feed on seeds of grasses and other plants and on cultivated grain (Goodwin 1970).

The Eurasian Collared Turtledove occurs naturally in Asia from the Red Sea to Korea, in woods and open arid regions with trees, in parks and gardens, farmyards and cultivated areas (Long 1981). Its principal foods are small seeds, grain, fruit and grasses. By the beginning of this century it also had a restricted distribution in south-eastern Europe. It has shown itself to be a very effective colonizer. Between 1930 and 1967 it successfully colonized most of mainland Europe and the United Kingdom. In Britain it increased from a pair in 1955 to 19,000 in 1964 and may rear four to five broods in a year (Hudson 1969). It is now considered a pest in some cherry orchards and market gardens in Europe (Long 1981).

Collared turtledoves have been introduced into north China and Korea, Japan, the United States and New Zealand. In Australia, a single Barbary Dove was seen in Sydney in 1946 and a feral population of about 15 was found in Perth in 1975. The latter was destroyed by the Western Australian Agricultural Protection Board (Long 1981). Storr (1984) notes two reports of "Collared Doves" from far south-east Queensland.

In South Australia the Barbary Dove has been seen from time to time in the Adelaide metropolitan area but there have been few

published reports. Brooks (1981) recorded one at Parkside on 25 December 1980, and Harper (1981) recorded one at Para Hills on 1 September 1981. The South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service received a report of one in the Brighton area in 1983 but the bird could not be found. On 17 February 1984 a Barbary Dove was reported from Para Vista. An officer of the National Parks and Wildlife Service found two adults and a juvenile there on 22 February 1984, and these were shot. A nest with one dead nestling was found nearby. In inner eastern suburban Adelaide, D. Paton (pers. comm.) saw single Barbary Doves at St Peters on 23-29 June and 22 December 1984, and M. Reid (pers. comm.) saw a pair at College Park in late June and early July 1984. The latter were eating berries of Lily Pilly *Acmera smithii* and were very tame. Another bird was seen near College Park on 15 and 16 October 1984.

On Eyre Peninsula W. Matheson (pers. comm.) saw about a dozen Barbary Doves on 26 September 1978 on the outside of an aviary at Roopena Station near Whyalla. They had been deliberately released because of overcrowding in the aviary. On his suggestion these birds were shot.

The Barbary Dove is a common aviary escapee and is capable of surviving and breeding in the wild in South Australia. It is considered a potential pest in Australia for several reasons. Firstly, feral populations are known elsewhere and appropriate semi-arid habitat is found in Australia. Secondly, one notes the success of feral populations of other *Streptopelia* doves in Australia (Spotted Turtledove *S. chinensis* and Senegal Turtledove *S. senegalensis*) and thirdly the capacity of the Eurasian Collared Turtledove to colonize new areas. The presence of any aviary escapee(s) should therefore be viewed with concern and every effort made to locate and eradicate the bird(s).

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