

Notes based on Joe Morlan's Ornithology class lecture February 25th, 2009.
Joe Morlan is not responsible for these notes, any errors or omissions in them are mine.

Scutes: external plates or scales. The pattern of scutes on a bird's leg is called **scutellation**. In some birds there is one row on the front of the leg, in others there may be two rows. The scutes may be very small and form a beading effect on some birds. Other birds have what is called a **booted tarsus** in which there are no visible separate scutes, e.g. the American Robin and most thrushes. This term is mostly used in handbooks that use dichotomous keys to identify specimens or for bird banding.

Inca Dove

Related to the ground-doves, about the same size, also showing a lot of red in the wings.

OCCURRENCE

Seems to be expanding slowly in southern CA.
More widespread than either of the ground-doves, but not in Florida.
Much less tendency to vagrancy than Common Ground-Dove
No records in northern CA.

FIELD MARKS

Size of a ground-dove.
Long tail.
Long, thin dark bill.
A lot of dark scaling on the whole body, formed by dark edges to the feathers.
(The scaling of juvenal Mourning Doves consists of pale edges to the feathers.)
Females have less scaling on the underparts than males.

VOCALIZATIONS

Quite persisting double hoot "no hope".

Zebra Dove

Total ringer for Inca Dove
Not in our books, should be in Hawaiian field guides, introduced there.
Numerous subspecies all throughout east Asia.
Very common cage bird.
Long tail, barred all over.
Stripes straighter, more barring than scaling.
White unbarred belly (but Inca Dove female has very little scaling on the belly).

White-tipped Dove

“White-fronted Dove” old name of the subspecies that occurs in south Texas which has a white forehead. The name was replaced when it was lumped in with the White-tipped Dove.

OCCURRENCE

Permanent resident in the lowlands of Mexico.

Northern limits in Sonora, Mexico and in extreme southern Texas.

Occurs throughout the tropics in numerous subspecies.

In southern Texas reasonably common, but shy and difficult to see.

Primarily a bird of the woodlands, prefers deep shade and leaf litter, tends to walk on the ground very slowly, does not attract attention. As soon as you see it, it flies directly away from you, showing white corners to the tip of the tail.

Generally very difficult to see, but comes to the DeWind's feeders in Salineño, between Falcon Dam and Bentsen at the lower Rio Grande in Texas.

There are records for the Dry Tortugas in extreme southern Florida.

Took a little white to get it identified because there are other species in the Caribbean, they are mostly identified by different colors of the iris or the eye ring.

There is a whole assemblage of similar looking *Leptopila*-doves with similar habits in the tropics and in the Caribbean region

FIELD MARKS

About the size of a Mourning Dove, but plumper with a shorter tail.

Overall plain appearance, no dark markings on wings or scapulars.

Coloration recalls Mourning Dove.

Bill thin and pretty dark.

Eye yellowish.

Tail square tipped, white corners.

VOCALIZATIONS

Like blowing across a soda bottle, very low pitched like Great Gray Owl or Blue Grouse.

Quail-Doves

Even more compact and plumper than *Leptopila* doves.

Even more secretive and difficult to see than *Leptopila* doves.

Extremely shy, extremely secretive, finding them is a project.

Throughout the tropics there are localized endemic species.

Usually seeing them involves getting up at three o'clock in the morning, driving some huge distance and climbing a mountain, hoping to see the bird on the trail at the crack of dawn.

Have a subocular stripe (transverse stripe below the eye).

Key West Quail-Dove

Named by John Audubon, he found it breeding in Key West. Nobody else has ever found it breeding anywhere in Florida or the Keys.

Essentially confined to Hispaniola, Cuba and a few other islands in the Caribbean.

White subocular stripe.

Ruddy Quail-Dove

Smaller and brighter in color than Key West Quail-Dove.

Parrots and allies

Basically no difference between a parrot and a parakeet. Parakeets are smaller and have pointed tails. Parrots are bigger and have square tails. There are lots of exceptions to this.

Florida has more parrots than any other place in NA. At Fort Lauderdale there are parrot roosts with hundreds of parrots of various species. Similar situation locally in southern Texas. One thing that happens is that a hurricane blows up the cages in a theme park in Florida and the birds escape and get established.

Carolina Parakeet

Extinct. Was a native species, widespread in the southeastern US.

Became extinct in the early part of the 20th century, largely due to shooting. The birds were agricultural pests coming into orchards and feeding on the fruit. The farmers shot them. In those days there was not a lot of protection available for native birds.

White-winged Parakeet and Yellow-chevroned Parakeet

Used to be one species called "Canary-winged Parakeet", has been split.

OCCURRENCE

From northern South America

These are the wild parrots of Mission Dolores in SF, established in that area since the 1950s.

Originally there were mostly White-winged Parakeets, now there are mostly Yellow-chevroned Parakeets.

A pretty confined little population which is why even though the birds have apparently been breeding for many, many years it has never been added as an established introduced population on the CA list, the population is simply too small.

It is not easy to identify the birds in those flocks down in the Mission. They come into their roost trees in the evening and disappear into the trees. Their green coloration makes it extremely difficult to pick them out.

FIELD MARKS

Small, rather short-winged and long-tailed.

White-winged Parakeet:

In the folded wing the white does not show up very well, can be concealed.

Monk Parakeet

Were sometimes called "Quaker Parrot".

OCCURRENCE

Native to southern South America, which is temperate.

Became introduced in the eastern seaboard and established themselves rather quickly in the eastern US. Not legal to sell as pets in the US any more. Quickly expanded from Florida all the way up the eastern seaboard into Canada, west to Chicago. Survive the winters.

Could these birds become the next Starling? What would their impact be here? In Argentina they are a huge agricultural pest.

There is a population in a park in Chicago because the mayor likes them. The situation changes year by year. Last time Joe was in Florida he did not need directions to find them, they were basically beyond control in Florida. Populations elsewhere have been controlled, the birds have disappeared from most of the New England area. The birds build big communal nests, so there is a possibility to control them.

Listed as occurring in CA, Joe has never seen it here.

FIELD MARKS

Green on the back, white underneath

Blue-crowned Parakeet

Has never been established. There has been one in the Telegraph Hill flock.

Mitred Parakeet

Have been seen in SF with the others and have hybridized.

A little bit bigger, less red on the face, otherwise rather similar to Red-masked Parakeet.

Red-masked Parakeet

Sold under the name "Cherry-headed Conure".

OCCURRENCE

From South America.

The famous parrot of Telegraph Hill (book and motion picture). Range all the way over to the Presidio, but mostly in the northern part of the city.

Not on the CA list. Does nest, but the population is probably based on recruitment from continued escapes rather than self sustaining. People feed them also.

Quite popular, maybe third or fourth most commonly sold parakeet in the pet shops.

Probably the parrot which is most likely to escape from captivity. Not a good pet, very noisy. Not very expensive, often bought as present, looks more spectacular than a budgerigar.