

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*



Folk Name: Mourning Dove

Status: Vagrant

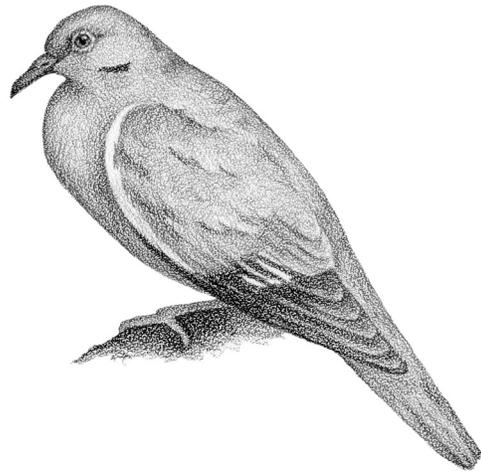
Abundance: Casual

Habitat: Fields, open land, bare ground, with few small scattered trees

The White-winged Dove is about half an inch smaller than a Mourning Dove, but it has a larger, chunky overall silhouette. It gets its name for its bold, white wing patch that is visible both in flight and at rest. The White-winged Dove is a species that historically was limited to its breeding range in the Southwest, but it has now been found in the East. Will Post, ornithologist with the Charleston Museum, has speculated that this dove expanded into the Carolinas from Florida, where it was introduced repeatedly in the 1960s and 1970s instead of straying from the native southwest population.

The first South Carolina specimen of a White-winged Dove was collected on James Island on December 6, 1965. The first specimen collected in North Carolina was found at Cape Lookout on Core Banks on October 11, 1966. Sightings slowly increased over the next two decades. By 1991, both Carolinas had about a “half-dozen” records each. Reports of White-winged Doves have been submitted annually since then, and this species has been seen with increasing frequency. Most are found along the coast, but there are multiple reports from inland locations.

There are a handful of sightings from this part of the Piedmont. A single White-winged Dove was reported at a feeder in Shelby in Cleveland County on April 15, 2004. This bird was a one-day wonder and never reappeared. A White-winged Dove was seen and well photographed by Sharon Freedman at her backyard feeders at home in Charlotte on April 24, 2004. Ms. Freedman found one there again one year later on May 9–12, 2005. Many observers were able to visit her house to see this bird.



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Two “probable” sightings were reported in 2011. Unfortunately, neither observer was 100% confident of their identification. One observer reported seeing an unusual pair of doves which he observed in flight for several days in the Town of Pineville around April 19, 2011. He remained “95% certain of his ID,” but he was not able to get a photograph for confirmation. That fall, another observer reported one in Cabarrus County behind the Starbucks in Concord. He saw the bird on 4 November, but it was not relocated. Both are experienced observers, and while the likelihood of their identifications is good, the identity of these birds must remain unconfirmed.

Linda Long reported a White-winged Dove in Union County on July 29, 2013. Ms. Long noted she had lived in Arizona for many years and was quite familiar with this species. She carefully observed the “long white band on the wing edge.” Clair Dayton photographed a bird at her feeder in Lilesville in Anson County in early July 2016. Ms. Dayton reported this bird stayed for 2 days.