

Ringed Turtle Doves at Illinois Feeders

by Sue Friscia

I was birding with Cindy Alberico one day when she mentioned that Ringed Turtle Doves are regular visitors at her feeder. Cindy was sure that they nested in the area because each year the population was increasing. My first reaction was, "I want to see them. NOW!" She assured me, however, there was no need to rush since this species, which is not native to Illinois, has not been accepted by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. In other words, I couldn't count them on my life list.

Ringed Turtle Doves, from either Africa or Eurasia, were first recorded in Los Angeles in 1909 (Bohlen 1989). Established populations can now be found in California, Florida, Texas, and Alabama. The native origin of this species is not known, although it is domesticated almost throughout the world (Terres 1991). Even so, it may be worth noting that this species seems to be establishing a breeding population in an area famous for its cold, windy winters.

Adult Ringed Turtle Doves are slightly larger and paler beige than Mourning Doves, have rounded tails with white in the corners, and a narrow black band on the hind neck. Their appearance may vary because different plumage types have been released. I enjoy their light-hearted "coo-ca-roo" which is quite different from the call of the Mourning Dove.

The following feeder watchers have reported Ringed Turtle Doves:

Joliet: Cindy Alberico has been feeding Ringed Turtle Doves since 1982. The population has grown to 50 or more. In 1991, she found a nest in an evergreen in her yard. One parent and fledgling appeared at the feeder.

Brookfield: Nancy Bent, an animal keeper at Brookfield Zoo, told me that doves have been there for 10 years and they are breeding. Last summer (1992) a pair used an old robin's nest, but the species is now being discouraged from nesting on zoo grounds.

Romeoville: Joan Ordowski saw her first dove in 1987. She has seen as many as 22 at her feeders. Fledglings have been observed even though she has found no evidence of nesting on her property.

Downers Grove: Sharon Tharp has had doves at her feeder since May 19, 1988, but hasn't noticed any evidence of breeding.

Downers Grove: During the summer of 1992, the Kummery family watched a nest in their yard, but the eggs never hatched.

Chicago: Dennis Lane observed one dove at his southwest side feeder for a few days during the summer of 1992.

Ringed Turtle Doves are becoming more common at Illinois feeders. Sharon Tharp photographed the species visiting her feeder at 4937 Woodward Ave. in Downer's Grove on 3 May 1992.

Please continue to send information on new sightings and updates on established areas. Send comments and questions to:

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Literature Cited

Bohlen, H. D. 1989. *The Birds of Illinois*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

Terres, J. K. 1991. *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*. Wings Books, New York. ♪

