

Invasion of the doves: Illinois and regional patterns in a national context

By Steven D. Bailey

The Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) has successfully spread from its introduction site in the West Indies and Florida across most of the United States from Illinois westward and is now common enough that birders pay little attention to it in many areas, including Illinois where it is a relatively common breeder and resident species. No attempt will be made here to document this species' extensive increase in range and numbers, other than to say that it seems to be making a much slower and more reduced penetration into areas north and east of Illinois, such as Ohio where incredibly, birders recently just recorded the second and third state records for this species (Whan 2006). Instead, I will mainly focus on two other species which are steadily increasing in number and range.

The 2004 Carbondale Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) (see article on page 42) will undoubtedly not be the last one of its kind to appear in the state, and had been anticipated for some time by many Illinois birders (see Walters and Engel 2000). Also anticipated for some time, Illinois's first White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) showed up relatively recently as well, in the summer of 1998 (Smith 1999), followed quickly by two more records in 1999, including Illinois's only fall record to date (Stotz and Johnson 2000). In fact, White-winged Dove has become a virtual yearly vagrant since the initial record for this species in the state. Of the 14 published records for White-winged Dove, four appeared in 2003 and three in 2005, indicating that the species has experienced a marked increase within a few short years.

While some vagrant species that appear in Illinois (e.g. Say's Phoebe, Varied Thrush) may show a pre-



dictable pattern and timing of occurrence, it is not necessarily true nor even likely that these appearances are due to an increase in those species' populations, or a spread in their distribution. Records of White-winged and Inca Doves however, will assuredly increase in the years to come as their continental populations increase, although if current patterns in other areas of the United States hold true, the Inca Dove will be at a much slower pace and extent. Sensitivity to cold should eventually limit both species' range expansions. A good example of a dove's susceptibility to cold weather is the fact if



Inca Dove at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, Michigan. These photos taken 10 October 2004 represent the first record of this species for the state of Michigan and for the Great Lakes region. The bird was seen from 7 October through at least 11 October 2004. Interestingly, Illinois had its first record for Inca Dove in fall 2004 as well. Photos by Steve Pike. Visit his Web site at www.stevepike.com.