

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

INCA DOVE

Columbina inca

Family: COLUMBIDAE
B256

Order: COLUMBIFORMES

Class: AVES

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon, local, yearlong resident found in California along the Colorado River. Found almost exclusively in urban habitats, primarily from Parker Dam south to Blythe. Occasionally found as a casual vagrant elsewhere in arid southern California. In other parts of the arid southwest, often seen in open ground or among scattered bushes and cacti. May be locally common in urban habitats (Terres 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Granivorous; eats seeds of forbs and grasses, including wheat and other small grains. Usually gleans seed from ground (Bent 1932).

Cover: Perches on fences, clotheslines, branches of trees; frequently in rows. Often roosts in groups, especially in winter when individuals may perch 2 or 3 on top of another, apparently for thermoregulation (Bent 1932, Terres 1980). Evergreen trees are preferred for roosting and perching (Johnston 1960).

Reproduction: Nest rarely found except in urban habitats. Usually nests in tree fork or on flattened branch of a shade tree, but may nest on beam of open shed, or other suitable structure. Nest is small, compact platform of thin twigs, stems, grass roots. May build nest on top of old nest (Bent 1932, Harrison 1978, Terres 1980).

Water: Essential; drinks frequently. Field and laboratory data indicate that this small dove is restricted to urban habitats in the desert because it requires a readily available water supply (MacMillen and Trost 1966).

Pattern: Found in urban habitats with adequate fresh water supplies.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity. Can experience nocturnal hypothermia if deprived of food and water (MacMillen and Trost 1967).

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Not migratory.

Home Range: No data found. Winter flocks may number 50-100 (Johnston 1960, Terres 1980).

Territory: Territorial when breeding. Along Rio Cuchujaqui in Mexico, territory was linear, and 0.2-0.5 ha (0.5-1.3 ac). Territory may be smaller in urban habitats (Johnston 1960). Solitary or in pairs in summer, but gathers in flocks in winter.

Reproduction: Monogamous, solitary breeder. Prolonged breeding, often from February to October. Typically raises 2-3 broods; in Arizona sometimes raises 4-5 when winter is warm (Phillips et al. 1964). Clutch size typically 2, incubated by both parents about 14 days. Young tended by both parents, fledged at 14-16 days and independent at 21-23 days (Harrison 1978). Young presumably fed crop milk initially (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Niche: Competes with other granivores, including other doves, and sparrows. Range has been expanding northward from Mexico for past 50 yr, apparently in response to urbanization.

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