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ACCEPTED (7-0)

RARE BIRD REPORT--SIGHT RECORD

REPORT FILED BY: Alan E. Versaw
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SPECIES: Inca Dove
DATE(S): September 22, 1998
OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: Indeterminate PLUMAGE: Indeterminate
LATILONG: 19 ELEVATION: 6050
TIME OF DAY: 18:00 LOCALITY: Colorado Springs
NEAREST TOWN: in city COUNTY: El Paso
DURATION OF OBSERVATION: roughly 2-3 minutes total
OTHER OBSERVERS: none that could identify the bird, my wife saw a "dove" but could not identify

✓ rec'd 10-1-98

LIGHT CONDITIONS: late evening light, somewhat blocked by trees. Not bright sunlight but still plenty bright enough to see the bird well

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: Bushnell 8X42 Natureviews

DISTANCE: 15-30 feet

PHOTO DATA: none, bird left before I could get the camera

BIRD BEHAVIOR: The bird was first seen flying across the yard. It perched, somewhat precariously, on our clothesline and soon departed (after 30 seconds or so). About 10 minutes later I saw it fly into a neighbor's maple tree and then onto our back fence (wooden). It stayed there for about 2 minutes before it flew away and was not seen again.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: The bird was slightly smaller than a mourning dove. It had a soft pale brownish-gray color. On the first sighting (before I had identified the bird), I took the scalloping of its head, chest, and back feathers to be an effect caused by a breeze blowing up its backside. When I saw it on the fence, with no discernable breeze, it was obvious that the scalloping (or scaling) was caused by the coloration of the feathers. The bill was short, fine, and made an abrupt angle with the forehead. The forehead was slightly set back from the "chin" below the bill. There was a definite flash of red in the wings as it flew. I observed this effect two of the three times I saw it fly—the other time, its flight was mostly out of view. When I saw it land on the clothesline, I noticed white flashes going well up the side of its tail. Finally, when I saw it sitting on the fence, I could discern some color to its eye, but not the sort of red and blue detail shown in the Natl Geo guide.

SONG AND/OR CALL: No vocalization given

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: Urban backyard. Mostly deciduous trees, bushes (lilacs, etc), grass and decorative rocks

ELIMINATION OF SIMILAR SPECIES: The Common Ground Dove would probably be the most similar species but could be eliminated by the long tail, considerable white up the sides of the tail, and the scalloping or scaling effect in the feathers—especially on the wings and back. Also the wings showed no spotting. Mourning Dove is eliminated by size, the red in the wings shown in flight, lack of any facial spot, and the scaling effect (I saw the tail well enough in flight to see the flashes of white up the sides, but not well enough to say for certain if the bird had a pointed or more-or-less rectangular tail). The coloration in the eye would also be a minor point of separation from Mourning Dove as well. Yellow-billed Cuckoo was my first thought because of the red of the wings, but once I got a decent view of the bird, that possibility was clearly eliminated.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR BIRDS: Very little experience with both Inca Dove and Common Ground Dove (although I have seen both). Mourning Dove, needless to say, is almost a daily spectacle this time of year.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: Natl Geo, Peterson's Western Guide (3rd edition—lousy for small doves)

DATE OF REPORT: September 22, 1998

SIGNATURE:

Alan Tiesau

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