

What's the difference between a Mourning Dove and a Turtle Dove?

Doves are among the most common birds in the world today. There are many types of doves: Rock Pigeons, Collared-Doves, Spotted Doves, White-winged Doves, and many others. A dove is a type of bird that is classified under the bird family of Columbidae, which includes approximately 300 subspecies all over the world. Generally speaking, the words "dove" and "pigeon" are interchangeable. Bird enthusiasts and ornithologists refer to the larger ones as pigeons and the smaller ones as doves.

The Mourning Dove

The Mourning Dove is a North American species, common throughout the United States and parts of Canada. This dove has a long tail that has a pointy end instead of the usual straight flappy tail end. Mourning Doves reach a maximum of 12 inches in length and have wingspans averaging 15 inches. The doves are famous for the soft, gentle, mournful cooing sound they make, especially when seeking a mate. The sound is similar to the call of an owl. Mourning Doves breed from Bermuda to southern Canada, as well as in Central America and the Caribbean.



Mourning Dove

Mourning doves usually lay two white eggs on a flimsy platform built in a tree or shrub, or sometimes on a building. These birds may raise six or more broods in a season. Eggs take approximately two weeks to hatch, and the young chicks typically fledge after only two weeks in the nest, making a complete cycle in approximately 28 days. Mourning doves are the most plentiful game bird in North America and are in the top ten

of the most populous birds in the United States.

The Turtle Dove

The Turtle Dove is an Old World species, common in Europe and Russia, wintering in Africa. They are actually quite similar in appearance and behaviour to Mourning Doves. Turtle Doves normally do not live in the wild in North America, but are commonly kept caged. There are actually more than one species of Turtle Dove. The Ringed Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*) is a domesticated variety of dove which is very similar to Eurasian Collared-Doves. One might find Ringed Turtle-Doves in the United States that have escaped from their cages or that were released at weddings or other ceremonies. Ringed Turtle-Doves are smaller than Mourning Doves, and can be easily distinguished by their overall white color with a distinctive black ring that looks like a collar on its neck.



Ringed Turtle-Dove

The Turtle Dove has a distinctive song of purring, unlike other doves. The Turtle Dove gets its name from the "turr, turr" sound it makes. It is a large, black and white bird. The bird has checked upper parts and dark under the wings. It has a white border around its checked tail. The dove also has black and white patches that resemble gills on its neck.

Eurasian Collared-Doves

Another dove species has recently been expanding its range in the U.S. Unlike the smaller Mourning Dove, the Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) is not native to North America. It is an Old World species, originating from India. It was introduced to the Bahamas, then spread to Florida in the 1980s, and afterward expanded west and north throughout the United States.



Eurasian Collared-Dove

Like the Mourning Dove, the Eurasian Collared-Dove is mostly a pale grayish-tan color, with a pigeon-shaped head and bill. A notable feature of the Eurasian Collared-Dove is a black partial collar on the back of its neck.

Mourning Doves and Eurasian Collared-Doves both have long tails, but the tail of a Mourning Dove in flight appears pointed, with white-tipped outer tail feathers forming an obvious white "V" shape, while the Eurasian Collared-Doves have a broad square tail with large white patches on the end.

Behaviour of Doves

Doves build nests out of sticks and other debris. Their nests can be found perched in a tree or on any sort of shelf. Doves usually lay two eggs, but sometimes only one. Both parents protect and care for their babies for up to 28 days. Doves mainly feed on seeds, fruits and plants, and can be found almost anywhere on earth except in harsh environments such as the Sahara Desert, the Arctic, and Antarctica. Doves prefer warm, tropical climates, but they can adapt to almost any.