

the Sulawesi Ground Dove

Gallicolumba tristigmata

Text and Photo by Warren Myers,
San Bernardino, California



A young male Sulawesi Ground Dove.

This dove was formerly called the Celebes Quail Dove. When the Celebes Islands became part of Indonesia the name was changed.

It is a large dove about the size of a feral pigeon but much more solidly built.

The overall color is a rich brown on the back, the underparts alight gray with a golden wash on the upper breast. The hind neck and head are iridescent green. A maroon spot appears on each side of the neck, and the forehead is bright orange-yellow.

Three subspecies are recognized. The main difference is the amount of yellow on the breast and the extent of the neck-ring or spots.

The female is much duller and slightly smaller.

The Sulawesi Ground Dove is well established in U.S. collections.

I keep one of my pair in a well planted aviary 20 feet long, 10 feet wide, and eight feet high. The aviary also contains Bar-tailed Cuckoo Doves, Emerald-spotted Wood-doves, some finches, and south china Bamboo Partridges.

The Sulawesi Ground Doves are ground dwellers as the name implies but there is no aggression from the partridges which also dwell on the ground. An open

sandy area is important to these doves as they love to sun bathe.

Being in a mixed collection, the doves have access to a variety of seeds which include a dove mix to which I add pigeon mix and some safflower. The birds become very tame and will take mealworms from my hand. Clean, fresh water is always provided.

I use a 10 X 10 inch nest box with a covered top. Like all doves, they are poor nest builders.

I place alfalfa and tobacco stems in the nest which is always located in a secluded spot about three feet above the floor of the pen. All my pens have a sandy dirt floor.

The male will call the hen to the nestbox. He displays by raising both wings in a "V" position and then bowing, at the same time making a hoarse gurgling sound like that of the Bartlett's Bleeding-heart Dove (I'm sure all of you are familiar with *that* sound).

The hen lays one light tan egg and both parents incubate it for approximately 16 days. Once hatched, the chick is fed in the nest and on the ground but must be removed when the parents start a new nest.

The Sulawesi Ground Dove is a beautiful and interesting dove for a large aviary. ❖