

The Beautiful Green-winged Dove

by John Pire
Texas City, Texas

As it's name suggests, the bird has a rich emerald green on the wings. Hence this species is also known as the Green-winged Pigeon, Emerald Dove or the Emerald Pigeon.

The Green-winged Dove is found throughout India, Ceylon, Indochina, Australia and New Guinea. With such a wide range there have been a number of different races described. I will not go into the different races. The differences are minute and the fanciers will not concern themselves with them.

The Green-winged is commonly kept by aviculturists around the world. The bird is fairly common, easily maintained in a mixed aviary, reasonably priced and is easily propagated.

Obtaining a true male and female Green-winged Dove is no great problem. This species is dimorphic. The sexes have different plumage patterns. This dimorphism also extends to the juvenile green-wings. Read the following descriptions for the male, female and juvenile to learn how to sex your Green-winged Doves. Yes, even while the young are being brooded by their parents. You will

never again have to sell or purchase unsexed birds. Put your knowledge to the test the next time you see Green-winged Doves.

The adult male Green-winged Dove has a white forehead and white stripe above and extending beyond his eye. The top of the head and back of the neck are blue-grey. The sides of the neck, front throat and chest are a purple wine color. The lower dark rump and lower back are crossed by two greyish bands. The wings and upper back are emerald green with a white shoulder stripe. The bill is red with a purple base. The lower rump and tail coverts are blackish. The outer two tail feathers on each side of the tail are blue-grey with black tips. The remaining tail feathers are blackish.

The adult female has a brown coloration where the male is purple. Most hens show no white shoulder patch, forehead or eye stripe. This is not to say that some individuals cannot show these characteristics or, at least, an indication of them. The dark lower rump and back are also crossed by two pale greyish bands. The upper back and wings are green.

The bill is red with a purple base. The rump and tail coverts are dark with chestnut (reddish-brown) tips. The two outer tail feathers on each side of the tail are similar to the male's. The central tail feathers are also similar to the male's. The remaining tail feathers are chestnut with black tips.

The juvenile feathering is quite different from that of the adult. The juvenile has a reddish-brown (chestnut) and black barred plumage pattern. This barred plumage is soon molted for that of the adult coloration. After the young have hatched and they have attained their first set of feathers, you can sex them.

I have recorded and documented two sexing techniques to sex juvenile Green-winged Doves. Both techniques are proven to be 100% accurate.

The easiest method involves looking at the tail feathers. As in the adult birds, if the tail feathers are dark, the bird is a male; if there is a chestnut color in any tail feather, the bird is a female. There is no deviation in this fact!

The second method takes a bit more close comparison. While looking at the chest feathers of two young, look closely at the chestnut-tipped chest feathers. Do you see a difference in the width of the chestnut tips? If the birds are of different sex, there will be a difference! If you can detect no difference, then you have two birds of the same sex. There is also no deviation from this fact. What sex has the wider or thinner tipped feathers?

To find out which bird has which tipped feather, turn the bird around to see what color the tail feathers are. As you practice this method, you will soon be able to sex the young by this method. There may be times when the bird you are looking at doesn't have any tail feathers for you to look at. Knowing these methods will let you obtain the birds you need now, instead of waiting for them to grow in new feathers or obtain adult plumage. If you can't wait to put your newly gained knowledge to work, jump to the end of this article for the answer to which sex has the wider tipped chest feathers.

Housing for a pair of Green-winged Doves is pretty much left up to each fancier. The size aviary depends on how much space the fancier wants to or can give to the birds. I recommend an aviary three feet by six feet by six feet high or larger. Anything smaller

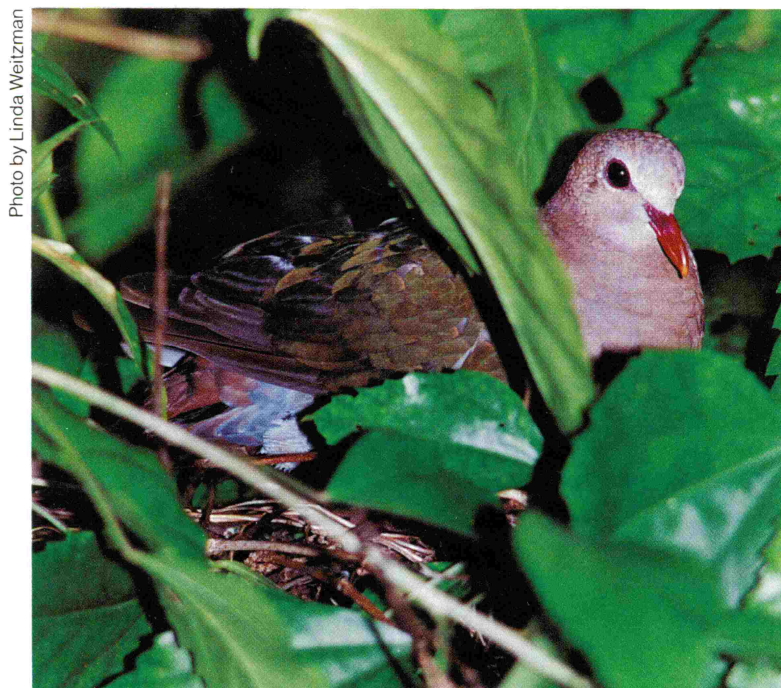


Photo by Linda Weitzman

Adult Green-winged Dove on nest. This bird is an ideal subject for the aviculturist. It is fairly common and is easily maintained in a mixed collection. It's usually reasonably priced and reproduces well when the right conditions are provided.

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* Position open — contact regional vice president if interested

** Indicates 2 year term has been fulfilled. If no new interested party comes forward and indicates a desire to serve, incumbent remains in position.

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Miami, Florida
August 2 - 6, 1992

AFA Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, August 1
6 p.m. - 12 midnight
Imperial Room IV

AFA House of Delegates Meeting
Sunday, August 2
6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Champagne Room

can lead to different problems such as: no breeding, aggression between birds, deserted eggs or young, etc.

I also recommend housing a single pair of birds to a single aviary. In the 15 years I've kept and raised foreign doves/pigeons, this system has worked for me. Of the forty-plus species in my collection, I was successful in propagating 35 species using this system.

My breeding pair of Green-winged Doves is currently housed in a large, planted aviary housing single pairs of the following species: Celebes Quail Doves, Tambourine Doves, Diamond Doves, Vinaceous Ringdoves and my newest addition — Pinon Imperial Fruit Pigeons.

With the addition of six species of fruit doves/pigeons to my dove collection, I've had to alter the feeding requirements. I still offer a quality seed mix to each aviary. I also add a dry pellet (Purina Pigeon Pellet - Gold) and a fruit and vegetable diet. The fruit/veggie mix is coated with powdered pigeon pellets and Vionate. Powdered, dried dog food is also mixed with the fruit/veggie mix. Coating the soft mix makes less mess for the birds.

Given time, all of the birds begin eating the coated fruit/veggie mix. In fact, I feel that many of the birds' colors have been enhanced by the addition of the other diet.

Now that you have obtained a true male and female Green-winged Dove and have set them up in an aviary they feel secure in, will they propagate? Yes. Given the right conditions, the pair will go to the nest and raise young.

What are the right conditions? Well, there are no hard and fast rules for enticing foreign doves to breed. The "golden rule" of foreign dove/pigeon keeping states that when the birds feel secure in their surroundings they will propagate their species.

If, after a suitable period of adjustment for the birds to their surroundings, they still don't show any indication of nesting you can move them into another aviary. Many times changing aviaries stimulates the pair into nesting. If moving the birds to another aviary is impossible, try changing something inside the existing aviary. Move the nest container, perches, etc. Watching your birds will give you valuable information as to what your birds want. Sometimes the smallest change can stimulate the

birds.

After the pair has bonded and selected a nest site, the clutch of two creamy white or buff colored eggs is laid. The first egg is laid approximately seven to 12 days after copulation. The second egg is laid within 24 hours of the first egg. The parents share the 14 day incubation period.

Rule has it as such: the hen bird sets the eggs and young from late evening (about 5:00 p.m.) through the night and up until about mid morning (10 a.m.). The male sets the remaining time. Basically this is accurate, although I've recorded the "female to male switch over" during the daylight hours as many as six times. You don't have to be concerned with which bird is setting on the eggs or young at any time of the day. What should concern you is when both birds are not setting the eggs or young.

After the eggs have hatched, it takes about two weeks for the young green-wings to leave the nest. It will be another two weeks before the young are independent from their parents. These times are approximate and can vary either way.

As long as the young do not interfere with the parents when they go back to the nest, I leave the young in the same aviary. If there are signs of the young interfering with the adults or the adults showing aggression to the young, I remove the young to another aviary. Before moving any young, make sure they are eating on their own. Many a young bird is lost because it was moved before it could feed itself.

In closing this article I would like to recommend that everyone give the Green-winged Dove a try. They are a beautiful and peaceful addition to any mixed aviary.

Can't wait? Well the answer to the question is: the bird which has the wider chestnut tipped chest feathers is the female. The male's is the thin tipped feathers.

To learn more about the beautiful Green-winged Dove and other foreign doves and pigeons, join the International Dove Society. The yearly membership dues for members within the United States are twenty dollars (\$20.00). For memberships outside the United States, add fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for postage. Send your check or money order to: International Dove Society, 3013 Tarpey Avenue, Texas City, TX 77590. ●