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COVER PHOTOS

FRONT COVER — Plate-billed Mountain Toucan. Photo furnished by Los Angeles Zoo.

BACK COVER — Cape Dove Male. Photo by Mel Ellett.

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Cape Dove Youngsters

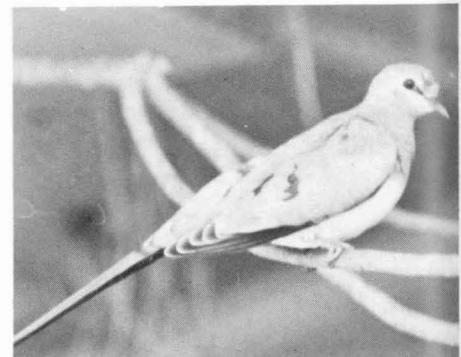
A fine collection of birds is not complete without at least one pair of Cape Dove! This small dove (approximately 9 inches in length) has a beauty that grows on the Aviculturist. Their docile nature and disposition brings their beauty to the surface.

The Cape Dove is an African species thought by many to be confined strictly to South Africa but which is found in West Africa around Senegal, East Africa in the Sudan, and Lower Arabia around Aden bordering the Red Sea. The theory is that the Cape crossed the Red Sea at about Assab, Ethiopia, the narrowest point of the Sea, populating Arabia around the Gulf of Aden.

The male Cape has a black face, throat and chest distinctly defined against a very soft grey on the head and neck. The belly is white while the back and wings are a brown-grey, flight feathers are rust brown with a dark margin. There is a beautiful metallic blue-green spot on the wings and

the undertail coverts are black.

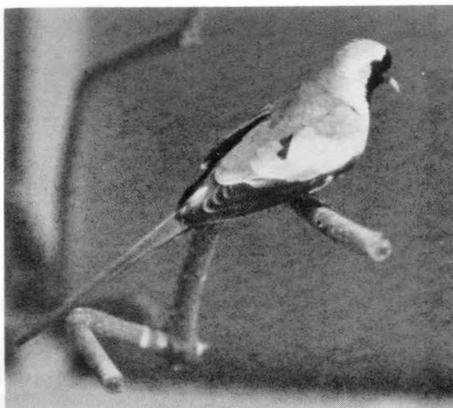
The hen is a very smooth brown-grey but the face, throat and chest is lacking the black of the male. The lower frontal area is light beige to white. Most females also have the metallic blue-green spot on the wings.



Female

The Cape is only found in tropical areas and since the Equator divides the range of the Cape, there is little temperature variation. Even though they have wet and dry seasons, the temperature seldom falls below 50°F. This even temperature creates one of the biggest hazards to the breeder of Capes. Adult Capes adjust very well to our climate in California but the young are not so fortunate.

Both Cape parents take turns sitting the eggs tightly; nothing seems to shake them off the nest. The young are well taken care of until time to leave the nest. From the time they fledge for a period of about 6 days, the young have a slim chance of survival during winter and early spring when temperatures fall into the mid 40°F or lower. At about 6 to 10



Male

Photos by Mel Ellett

the Cape Dove

(OENA CAPENSIS)
THEIR RANGE & BREEDING HABITS

by Joseph M. Crosby

days after fledging, the young Cape appears to double in size even though most of the growth is in the tail. If they reach this point in development, their chances for survival increase. In the late spring and summer, there is very little problem raising Cape Dove.

Cape Dove feed in the wild primarily on seed. Their territory, the Equatorial Belt running on both sides of the Equator, is made up of grassland districts where Capes can nearly always be found on the ground amongst the grass and shrubs searching for seed or grubbing the soil for insects, ant eggs, and green food.

Aviary breeding requires a diet of various millets, canary, some oats, green food and very importantly large proso millet. A diet of the Dove mixes and heavy milo mixes does not seem sufficient for successful breeding.

The nesting sight and the nest leave much to be desired. The nest is usually very flimsy, built on a narrow ledge or on a broad leaf of a plant. After they choose a sight it is best to help them by building around their nest. Keep wire baskets around with the hope they will choose one.

The male will court the hen by dancing around her, tail extended straight up and cooing the whole time. She will lay one or two small cream colored eggs. Incubation is 13 days from the time she sets them and there are usually several broods in a year.

I highly recommend the keeping of Cape Dove in a Finch Collection or they do well in a mixed Dove Collection. Planted aviaries are most desirable ■



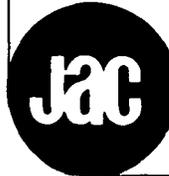
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