

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

The Ruddy Ground-Dove is following in the footsteps of its relatives the Common Ground-Dove and Inca Dove, spreading north out of Mexico to colonize the southwestern United States. Since the first in 1984, the California Bird Records Committee has archived close to 100 occurrences in the state, with up to ten individuals at a time in Death Valley, a site of probable nesting. The species was confirmed nesting for the first time in California in the Imperial Valley in 2003 (McCaskie 2003). In San Diego County there are six accepted records.

Migration: Five of the San Diego County Ruddy Ground-Dove reports accepted by the California Bird Records Committee are from the Tijuana River valley in fall: one from 12 to 20 October 1988, up to two from 14 to 31 October 1989 (G. McCaskie, K. A. Radamaker; Patten and Erickson 1994), one on 8 September 1990 (G. McCaskie, Heindel and Garrett 1995), one on 23 October 1992 (Heindel and Patten 1996), and one on 18 October 1997 (G. McCaskie, T. R. Clawson, Rottenborn and Morlan 2000). The only spring record is of one photographed at



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

Santee (P12) 16 May 1999 (M. B. Mulrooney, Rogers and Jaramillo 2002). A few other reports were rejected or not submitted.

As with almost every bird originating from mainland Mexico, there is a possibility that some of these Ruddy Ground-Doves were escapees from captivity. But the species' surge north and west—even across the Gulf of California—is so well established that some of the San Diego County records must be part of this pattern.