

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS
RED COLLARED DOVE ON JAVA

by
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On 3 November 1995, on the Pulau Dua nature reserve in West Java (6°01'S, 106°12'E), a group of four to five Island Collared Doves *Streptopelia bitorquata* was observed in the *Diaspora maritima* woodland about 50m from the north coast of the island. Among these was a smaller, more stocky dove that, seen from behind, had a uniform grey head above a black collar, rufous brown wings and an entirely grey upper tail (when closed). It flew off with the other doves after about 20 seconds.

The combination of small size, stocky body, shorter tail, and grey and rufous brown plumage are diagnostic of the male Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* (King *et al.* 1975). More birds, *e.g.* females, may have been present, but overlooked as their appearance would have been similar to the locally common Island Turtle Doves with their dull brown plumage.

The Red Collared Dove occurs in India, China and the Philippines, and is common in SE Asia (King *et al.* 1975), where it often joins feeding flocks of other species of collared dove (Roberts 1991). The only other known locality in Indonesia for this species is Central Sulawesi, where a feral population survives (Escott & Holmes 1980, Andrew & Holmes 1990). However the population of this species has grown rapidly in Singapore recently (Ollington & Loh 1996), apparently benefitting from developments that are creating more open country (Strange & Jeyarajasingam 1993), but it is unclear whether the first birds in Peninsular Malaysia (since 1933) were wild visitors or cage escapees (Medway & Wells 1976).

The most likely explanation for the occurrence of this species on Java would be an escapee. The

species is listed as commercially traded in Indonesia (Nash 1993) and there are many imported species on the local bird markets from countries such as Thailand and China. However this species is seen only very rarely in cages in Java. On the other hand, the Red Collared Dove is known to be migratory in the northern parts of its range (Goodwin 1983), *e.g.* India (Roberts 1991) and Hong Kong (King *et al.* 1975), and capable of flying large distances, and the possibility of a naturally occurring straggler cannot be ruled out. Its occurrence on Java and ecological relationship with the Island Collared Dove requires monitoring.

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