

## White-winged Dove (WwD)

**I HAVE ONLY ONCE SPOTTED** the white winged dove (WwD) at my house in the far western section of Eldorado, but this lovely bird can be easily found in spring and summer around the ECIA buildings and grounds. At first glance, the



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WwD is very similar to our Mourning Dove. Its body is 11.5 inches long and its wing span is 19 inches. The color is a dull brownish gray, changing to light gray on the belly and under tail coverts.

Most notable are large white areas on the upper side of the wing contrasting with very dark outer wings. When perched, the outer edge of the wing appears to be lined with white. The WwD's wings produce a slight whistle on takeoff and while flying, but the noise is much less pronounced than the Mourning Dove's distinctive whistling wings. The WwD has a very small range in the United States, and birds migrate to Central America as far south as Costa Rica.



WwDs are found in thickets in arid areas. They perch high in trees but are found feeding on the ground, consuming grain, cactus fruit, berries and acorns. Food is stored in a

“crop” and is later ground up with grit in the gizzard to a digestible size. The male courts by bending low, spreading his tail and wings

to show off the white area. Pairs are monogamous during the breeding season. Females select the nest site and construct a flimsy nest of materials brought by the male. Nests are usually off the ground 5 to 20 feet. The female usually lays two eggs and may have multiple broods. The male incubates the eggs during the day, and the female incubates during late afternoon and night. Eggs hatch into helpless chicks in 13 to 14 days, and babies fledge in 13 to 16 days. Both parents feed the young. Young get crop milk followed by seeds as they grow in the nest. Outside of breeding season, WwDs are social and may be found in medium-size colonies. A breeding colony was found in Texas with 200 to 400 nests per acre!

### INTERESTING FACTS

- ▼ Many perching birds immerse their bills in water and then lift their heads to let the water slide down their throat. WwDs just put their beaks in the water and suck the liquid into their throat.
- ▼ The WwD is related to the extinct flightless Dodo. The common pigeon is also related and technically called a Rock Dove.

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From the Eldorado website [www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org), point to “General Info” and pull down to “Bird Articles.” This will take you to an index of articles. Clicking on the date column will take you to a copy of the *Vistas* which contains the article.

—Pam Henline