

RING-NECKED TURTLE DOVE

updated March 2017



Range	Domestic bird that has escaped and been introduced everywhere; originally found in east and southern Africa
Habitat	Trees in urban areas, residential areas, and parks
Diet (wild)	Seeds and fruit
Diet (captivity)	Dove food mix
Description	Length: 10 inches. Head and underparts are a pale, creamy-buff. Upper parts are grayish with a thin black collar. The long, squared tail has an underside of a black base and white tip with an upper surface of gray with white tips. Sexes are similar. Ours are of uncertain origin, but most closely resemble the ring-necked turtle dove (or Barbary dove, <i>Streptopelia risoria</i>).
Lifespan	Unknown
Reproduction	The female lays a clutch of usually two eggs. Both male and female share incubating duties for about 18 days. Chicks are altricial and require attentive care and feeding. Both sexes produce “pigeon milk,” which is a secretion of the crop that is regurgitated and fed to the hatchlings. Young can fly when they are three weeks old. In beginning stages of courtship, males coo loudly, displaying before the females. At a more advanced stage, the movements become more like a bowing to the female. These displays sometimes go on for days, followed by nest building. The male chooses the nesting site, in shrubs and trees, and gathers twigs, roots, and other materials, which are set in place by the female. These birds are monogamous and tend to mate for life.
Behavior	Pigeons and doves are strong fliers; their wing muscles can make up 30 percent of their body weight. Unlike most birds, which have to gather water in their bill and tip their head backwards to drink, pigeons and doves are able to drink by immersing their bills in water up to their nostrils and sucking, without raising their heads. Despite being domesticated, ringed turtle-doves will freeze in place if a large shadow overhead appears to be hawk-like. They are fond of bathing and will lay on one side in a shallow pool of water with the wing on the other side of the body extended upward.
Our animals	2 females. Born: 2012
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doves are in the same order and family as the common pigeon (aka rock dove, homing pigeon, carrier pigeon, “rats with wings”; <i>Columba livia</i>). The extinct dodo bird is also classified in the Columbiformes family. • Their coo is created by muscles that vibrate air sent up from the dove’s lungs. These muscles belong to the fastest known class of vertebrate muscles, contracting as much as 10 times faster than muscles used for running. This class of muscles is usually found in high-speed tissue such as a rattlesnake’s tail. • Pigeons can distinguish identities and emotional expressions on human faces, letters of the alphabet, even paintings by Monet vs. Picasso. Pigeons can also be trained to distinguish between malignant and benign breast cancer tissue on mammograms. • The common pigeon delivered the results of the first Olympics and news of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo. • Pigeon droppings were considered so precious in the 16th century that all pigeon droppings in England were declared property of the English crown to make gunpowder. • The common pigeon can fly 500+ miles in one day at over 60 mph with just one ounce of seed and no water. • In WWII, carrier pigeons flew through artillery, poison gas and rifle fire and made it to their destination 98 percent of the time.

Phylum
ChordataClass
AvesOrder
ColumbiformesFamily
ColumbidaeGenus
Streptopeliaspecies
S. risoria