

White-winged Dove

Zenaida asiatica

Originally a bird of desert thickets, the White-winged Dove has become a common sight in cities and towns across the southern U.S. When perched, this bird's unspotted brown upperparts and neat white crescents along the wing distinguish it from the ubiquitous Mourning Dove. In flight, those subdued crescents become flashing white stripes worthy of the bird's common name. Take a closer look and you'll see a remarkably colorful face, with bright-orange eyes and blue "eye shadow."

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

White-winged Doves are plump, square-tailed doves with relatively long, thin bills and small heads.

Color Pattern

White-winged Doves are brown overall, with a dark line on the cheek. A white stripe at the edge of the folded wing becomes, as the bird takes flight, a bright flash in the middle of a dark wing. The tail is tipped in white and set off with black stripes from the gray underside. Their faces are ornately marked with a black streak on the cheek, and blue skin around the red eyes.

Behavior

White-winged Doves forage on waste grain and seeds on the ground, or take to trees to eat berries. In the Sonoran Desert, they eat many saguaro cactus fruits. They often gather in huge flocks for trips between roosting and foraging areas, as well as during migration. Their long, hooting "who-ooo-oo, ooo-oo" calls are an increasingly common sound in the southern U.S.

Habitat

Look for White-winged Doves in desert habitat in the Southwest and in cities and suburbs of Texas and the coastal Southeast. They often visit backyards, especially those with birdbaths and feeders. Individuals wander widely and irregularly across the continent after the breeding season ends.

Cool Facts

The oldest White-winged Dove on record was 21 years and 9 months old. It was banded in Arizona and later recovered in Mexico.

