

Common Ground Dove

Columbina passerina

A dove the size of a sparrow, the Common Ground-Dove forages in dusty open areas, sometimes overshadowed by the grass clumps it is feeding beneath. Its dusty plumage is easy to overlook until the bird springs into flight with a soft rattling of feathers and a flash of reddish-brown in the wings. These small, attractive doves are common across the southernmost parts of the U.S. from California to Florida.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

Common Ground-Doves are tiny doves with short, round wings, short tails, and short, thin bills. They are stocky, with short legs, and they shuffle as they walk.

Color Pattern

Common Ground-Doves are sandy brown overall, with large, dark spots on the wing coverts. In flight the wings show rich rufous patches. Males have a pinkish wash on the head, neck, and chest, and bluish crowns; females are duller. Both sexes have fine, dark scaling on the neck and chest, and pinkish-red bills with a dark tip.

Behavior

Common Ground-Doves are relatively retiring, and usually hide in grasslands and small groves of trees. Males sing a series of quiet, moaning coos. Frequently seen on the ground at backyard bird feeders, Common Ground-Doves eat seeds and grains, along with some insects.

Habitat

Common Ground-Doves live in open or shrubby areas with tall grasses or groves of trees, including riparian corridors and open savannas. They also live in towns and suburbs, where they frequent yards and hedges.

Cool Facts

- It's estimated that a Common Ground-Dove has to eat more than 2,500 seeds every day to meet its energetic demands. It can store hundreds of seeds in its two-lobed crop, an enlarged pocket of the esophagus.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 5.9 - 7.1 inches
- Wingspan - 10.6 inches
- Weight - 1 - 1.4 ounces

