

THE BIRDS OF KENYA AND UGANDA.

PART VI.

By

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FAMILY *COLUMBIDÆ*.

GENUS **COLUMBA**, Linn.

INTRODUCTION.

The Columbidae of Kenya and Uganda are from a popular point of view divisible into three main groups: true Pigeons, Doves, and Green or Fruit Pigeons. The Doves are usually further sub-divided into groups according to their natural habitat or some pronounced characteristic. They have several features and habits common to all; thus in the matter of nest building, all adopt a fixed pattern, viz., an open platform of twigs loosely laid together, with little or no lining; further the eggs of all species are uniformly coloured, white or cream, and one or two eggs form a normal clutch.

They have a wide distribution, being found from sea level up to 10,000 feet, inhabiting forest, plain and desert country.

They are of considerable economic value, as devourers of seeds of obnoxious weeds, but it must also be laid to their charge that they do considerable damage to, and feed largely on cultivated grain; the balance however is decidedly in their favour.

Columba unicincta, Cass. Grey Forest Pigeon.

Ref. Cassin, Proc. Acad. Philad. 1859, p. 143.

Type locality: Ogowe River Gaboon.

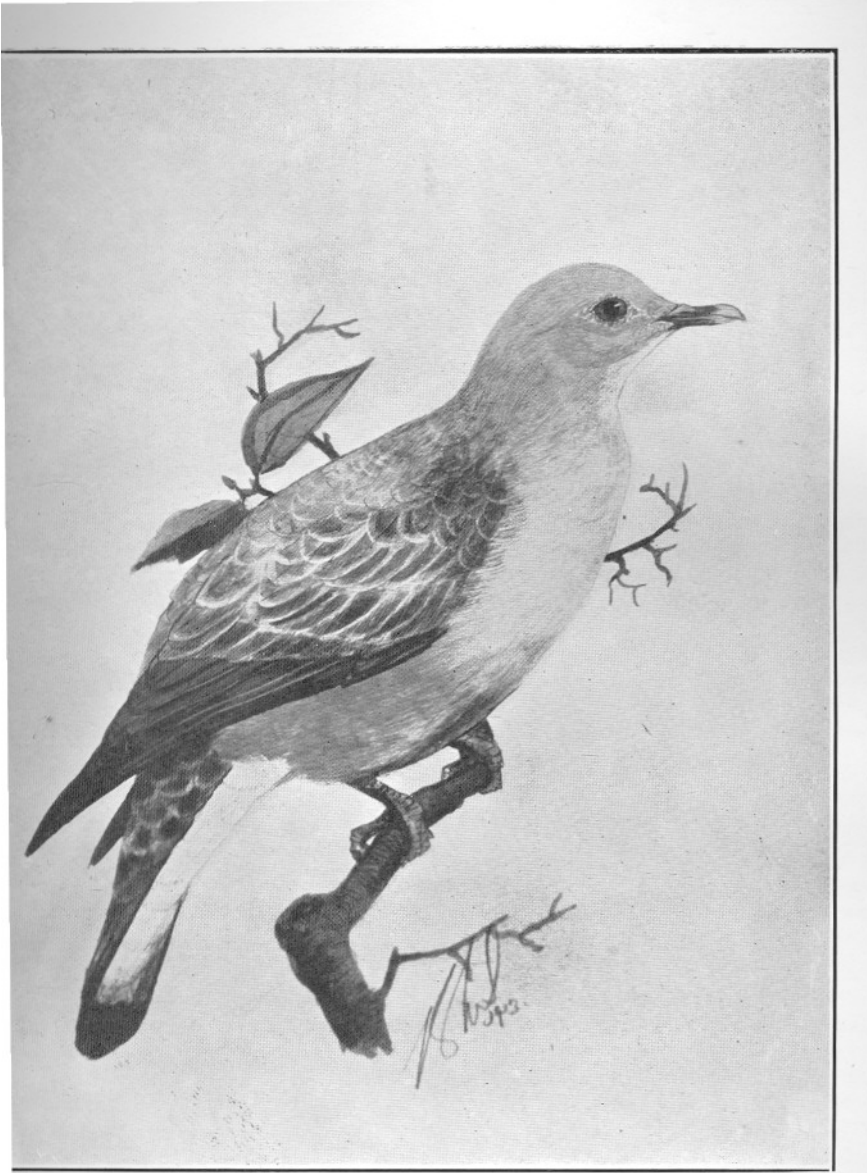
DISTRIBUTION:

The great forests of Uganda.

DESCRIPTION. MALE ADULT:

Head neck and upper part of mantle pearly-grey, with a slight pinkish wash on the lower neck; chin and throat pure white, or with a slight greyish tinge. Upper breast greyish-pink, lower breast a delicate vinous pink, gradually fading into the white of the abdomen and grey of the flanks.

Thighs pure white. Undertail coverts white. Mantle scapulars and lesser wing-coverts lead-grey, with bluish-grey margins to each feather imparting to these areas a scaly appearance. Greater coverts and outer-webs of secondaries uniform leaden-grey; primaries dark greyish black with leaden-grey edging. Back, rump and upper tail-coverts bluish-grey with lighter grey margins. Rectrices dark greyish-black with a diffuse pearly-grey or white band crossing each feather about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. from tip; the band on the central pair always pearly-grey.



GREY FOREST PIGEON.

(*Columba uncinata*.)



YELLOW-BILLED SPECKLED PIGEON.

(*Columba arquatrix arquatrix*)

Cere round the eye, dark red, slightly mottled; eyes crimson, or ruby; bill horn grey paler at tip of lower mandible; feet dull bluish-crimson or greyish-red. Wings 210-215 mm.

FEMALE:

Very like the male but the vinous blush on the breast not so marked; size slightly smaller.

JUVENILE:

This is unknown to us; nor is there any published description.

HABITS:

The Grey Forest Pigeon is an inhabitant of the great tropical rain forests of Uganda, and although its range extends from Uganda to the forests of Congo and Gaboon, it is not common anywhere. We have never encountered the bird in flocks, the largest number seen at one time being four. Indeed it is seldom that one actually sees the birds; their presence is only made known by the deep penetrating "coo" coming from the topmost branch of some commanding sentinel of the forest. The top strata of the forest seems to be their favourite habitat, but they will descend to the mid strata when certain fruit bearing trees prove an attraction. Like most pigeons, these birds lie up during the heat of the day, and are most active during the early morning and after four in the evening. Just before sunset, when the sun's rays lie parallel with the tops of the trees, one may see a male bird performing aerial evolutions which are remarkable as showing the wonderful powers of flight and control. The usual manoeuvre consists of a rapid "take-off" from the topmost branch in an upward direction, a full application of brake force brought about by fanning and depressing the tail and depressing of wings, causing a sharp vertical ascent, followed by a complete turn, and a gentle glide down to the starting point. The downward glide is preceded by a clapping of the wings above the back. This display is more frequent during the mating season than any other. As regards the actual nesting of this bird nothing is known. The mating call is soft and carressing in tone.

Columba arquatrix arquatrix, Temm. & Kp. Yellow-billed Speckled Pigeon.

Ref. Temminck & Knip. Colombes, p. 11, pl. 5, 1809.

Type locality: Knysna, Cape Colony.

DISTRIBUTION:

The forested regions of Kenya and Uganda above 4,000 feet.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Fore part of the head, cheeks and neck purply-grey, with a vinous bloom; hind part of crown to nape, pale grey. Feathers of the lower

neck with dark triangular subterminal mark and purple-grey tips, those of the hind-neck being pointed and hackle-like; and those bordering the upper breast delicately shaded with pink and forming a breast band. Upper part of mantle, scapular and lesser coverts deep purple-maroon with a greyish bloom and white marginal spots on outer webs; rest of mantle purple maroon shading into dark leaden grey on the back and rump and lighter grey on the outer wing coverts. The long scapulars are purple-brown with a greenish sheen. Primaries and secondaries blackish, the former with very narrow pale edges. Lower breast, and upper abdomen leaden-grey with wide purple chestnut to maroon ends and one or two terminal triangular white spots; flanks and belly leaden-grey with purple brown margins; under tail-coverts lead-grey with paler margins. Upper tail-coverts and rectrices dark brownish-black with slight green reflections.

Bill and feet lemon-yellow; bare skin round eye pale yellow with orange dapplings. Eyes grey or yellowish-grey. Length of wing 215-235 mm.

FEMALE:

Very like the male but less spotted and more greyish. Eyes brown or grey-brown.

JUVENILE:

The nestling plumage is dull brownish, each feather tipped and margined with rusty brown. This dress gradually merges into that of the first year in which the fore part of the crown is dark greyish with rusty-brown tips, shading into dull greyish on the rest of the crown and nape. The rest of the head and neck are greyish with the chin washed with brownish. The neck feathers are dull hair-brown with tips of dirty whitish or ochreous. The mantle, scapulars and wing coverts are brownish, the feathers on the latter area with rusty edges and white tip, giving a barred appearance to the bend of the wing. Primaries and secondaries dull brownish; rump blackish; rectrices blackish-brown. Breast and abdomen dull greyish with slight purple wash and rusty-brown tips. A few whitish spots are present on the breast. Bill and feet dull yellow. Bare skin round the eyes dull yellow with greenish tinge; eyes greyish-pink or brown.

HABITS:

The Yellow-billed Pigeon is common and widely distributed over the highland forests of Kenya and the higher forests in Uganda; it apparently does not occur in the central province of Uganda though well timbered areas exist in this part. It is however plentiful in the western forests round Toro and Ruwenzori. The stronghold of the species is undoubtedly the alpine forests of the Mau and Kikuyu Escarpment and Kenia. One has to witness a flight of these birds in order to appreciate the immense size of the flocks which move about

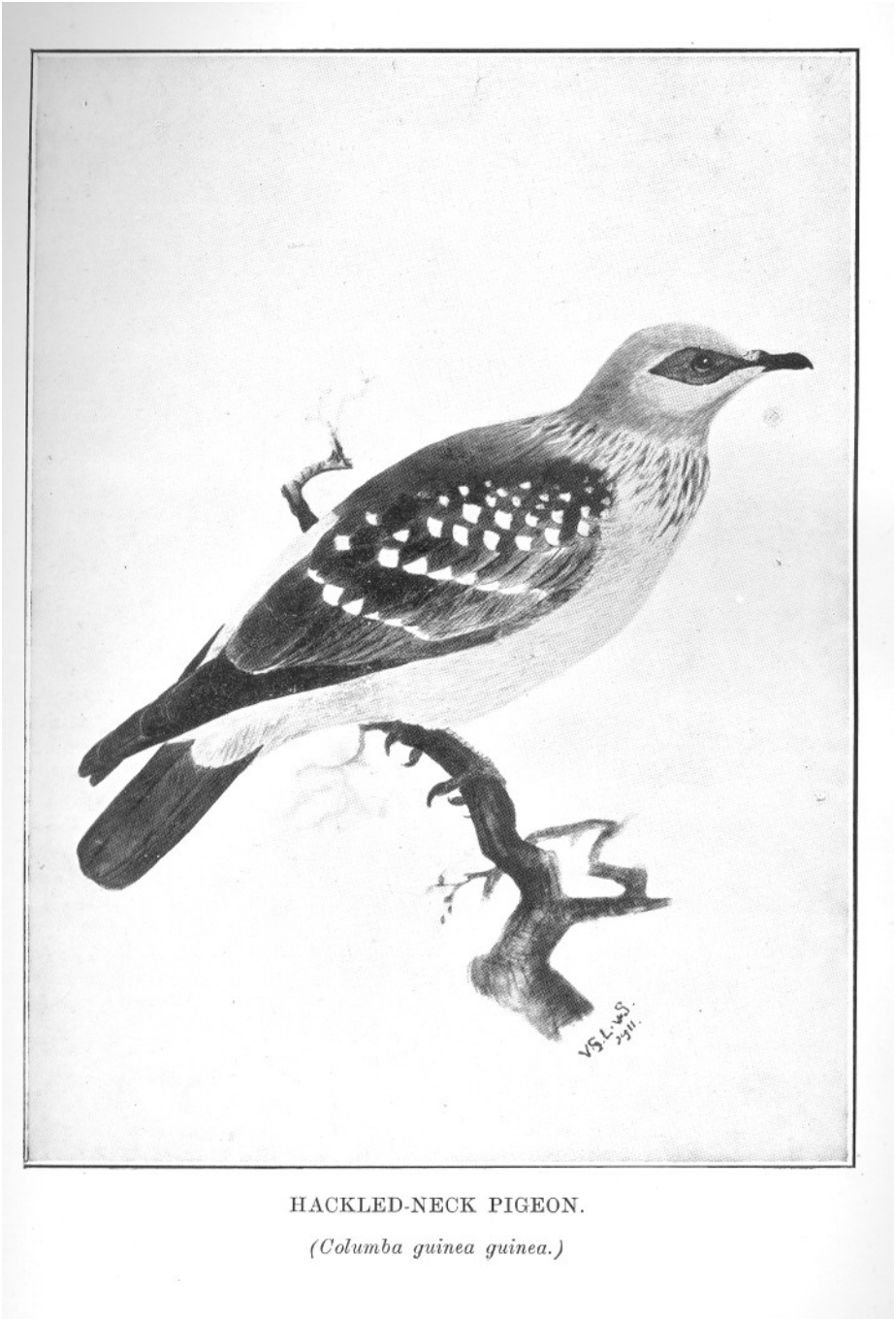
from forest to forest as successive crops of fruit-bearing trees come into season. A certain number are permanently resident in a forest but their numbers are periodically augmented by the incursion of local migratory birds.

The species is very conservative in the matter of roosting places, and although the feeding ground of the moment may be some considerable distance away the birds will flight there in the early morning, returning to roost an hour or so before sunset. There are several trees which furnish heavy crops of berries beloved by these birds, the commonest ones being the Wild Olive, *Olea chrysophylla*, *Podocarpus gracilior*, various species of *Todalia* and *Teclea* especially *T. trichocarpa*, *T. viridis*, and *T. stuhlmanni*, and the minute black fruit of *Trema guineensis*, F'ha. It is of interest to note here that the last mentioned tree grows largely in the open country either self-sown or cultivated, and although this Pigeon is a forest one it will frequent the open cultivated country to feed on this fruit. They also feed on certain wild figs.

One's attention is frequently attracted to these birds by the noise they make when feeding; although a heavy bird, they do not hesitate to reach for and secure some tempting berry growing at the extreme end of a slender twig; they sidle along the twig until it bends almost to breaking point, but with the aid of flapping or outstretched wings they preserve their balance until the fruit is secured. The noise they thus make is audible at quite a long distance.

Like many other forest species this pigeon builds its nest in quite low trees; we have found them at heights varying from six to twenty feet up. The nest is usually composed of the minimum number of slender twigs placed across each other calculated to support the eggs and the sitting bird; so flimsy is the structure, that more often than not, one can see the eggs quite plainly from below. Though the nest itself is so flimsily built, it is usually placed on some strong horizontal fork, with a fair canopy of leafy branches above. The number of eggs laid is not constant—we have frequently found nests with only one egg, occasionally two—but I am inclined to think that the former is the normal. The egg is a pure semi-glossy white, and measures 40-40.5 x 30 mm. Eggs kept under observation hatched in 16 days. Both parents share in the brooding of the egg and the young. They are close sitters, but reckless in the way they leave the nest if disturbed; I have more than once seen the egg knocked out of the nest as the parent has hastily left it. Nests have been found from March to August and November.

The call is very like that of the Wood Pigeon in England, consisting of two long drawn-out notes followed by two shorter ones, thus, wh-o-o wh-o-o hu hu. They also have a whistling note which is made under stress or excitement.



HACKLED-NECK PIGEON.

(*Columba guinea guinea.*)

The courting habits are difficult to follow as what little display there is takes place in the tops of high trees.

From the sporting point of view these birds take a high place. They are swift and strong fliers and are amenable to being driven over guns if these be correctly placed between feeding grounds. To the single gun considerable sport can be obtained by taking the birds as they flight to the food tree in the early morning or about four in the afternoon. A more difficult type of shooting, and one which calls for accuracy and quickness, is walking through a forest and taking the birds as they fly from the tree. They make off with a clatter of wings which unfortunately frightens most of the birds in the immediate vicinity. Another method is "snap shooting" as the birds are driven across the narrow "rides" or fire breaks.

***Columba guinea guinea*, Linn. Hackled-neck Pigeon.**

Ref. Linnaeus, Syst. Nat. 10th ed., p. 163, 1758.

Type locality: Guinea.

DISTRIBUTION:

In suitable localities in Kenya, through Uganda to western Ankole.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Head and upper neck light grey, paler on the throat and above the bare patch round the eye; darker, more ashy on the hind part of the crown. Neck feathers curiously bifid, exposed part orange chestnut at base shading to iridescent greenish-grey at the forked ends. These forks are stiff and give the appearance of hackles. Breast, flanks, abdomen, vent and back, light grey, the latter shading into very pale grey or almost white on the rump, which in turn shades into the darker grey of the upper tail-coverts. Under-tail coverts as upper.

Mantle, scapulars, and most of the wing-coverts bright reddish-chestnut with a decided "bloom," the feathers of the last with conspicuous triangular white terminal spots; rest of the wing-coverts grey, those at the bend of the wing with terminal spots. Primary coverts and outer webs of secondaries grey; primaries and remainder of secondaries ashy-grey with narrow white margins at tips. Rectrices ashy-grey with a wide black terminal band and a less distinct narrow dark band at the line of the longest tail-coverts.

Bare skin round the eye carmine, slightly mottled; eye with double ring, outer red to crimson, inner ochre to pale yellow. Bill black or grey, cere and nostrils white. Feet light purple-grey to pinkish with a bluish tinge. Length of wing 215-235 m.m.

FEMALE:

Very like the male but smaller.

JUVENILE:

The first full feathered plumage is very similar to the adults, but the speckling on the wings is not so extensive and is tinged with ochreous; the feathers of the crown, nape and mantle are grey with rusty-brown tips, while the feathers of the lower neck are dull grey with rusty-brownish ends, not bifid. The rump and under-side are as in the adult but duller; the primary coverts, the secondary coverts, primaries and secondaries are broadly tipped with rusty-brown. Eyes pale brown; bill blackish; feet flesh-brown. Wings 200-215 mm.

HABITS:

This is one of the most conspicuous Pigeons in Eastern Africa, and certainly one of the most interesting, as it is easily domesticated and breeds freely in captivity and hybridises well with the domestic Pigeon.

Although widely distributed, these birds keep to certain types of country; the requirements seem to be a rocky sandy bush-veldt in the vicinity of cliffs or broken larval country such as is found in the Northern Guasso Nyiro country. The birds are thus fairly plentiful in northern Ukambani; Donyo Sabuk, on the rocky sparsely tree-clad sides of the Escarpment down into the Kedong; extending along through Naivasha and Gilgil scarps, to Baringo and South Rudolf, Suk, Turkana, and the Maragoli Escarpment, and Kisumu, and in suitable localities in Uganda, more especially the western districts. So far as I have been able to observe, these birds appear to take all their food on the ground, thus resembling the "Rock Dove" of Europe. In many other respects there is a close similarity. These birds are usually met with in pairs or small flocks of half a dozen, rarely more. They are remarkably confiding and allow one to come to quite close quarters before taking wing; even then they only fly a short distance before settling to feed.

Several pairs frequent the township of Naivasha, and the railway yard of Kisumu; these latter flight down from the Maragoli Scarpe with great regularity every afternoon about 4 p.m. They feed round the outspans on the edge of the Bazaar and then visit the railway loading sheds, the attraction in both places being the grain and simsim which has escaped during the handling of the bags.

The usual nesting site of this bird is in a cliff side or deep railway cutting, occasionally in the banks of a deep water-worn course of a river. Of recent years they have taken to nesting under railway bridges and in crevices in the walls of outhouses. Two eggs form the normal clutch, pure white in colour and measuring 24 x 32 mm. The breeding season is uncertain, but we have taken eggs in February to July and in November and December.

The courting habits of this species are almost identical with those of the domestic pigeon. When the breeding season is on, the males become pugnacious and defend their respective nesting sites with great vigour. During June of 1912, when camped on the Maragoli ridge above Kisumu, I witnessed a tussle between two cocks. They were sparring on a dead branch of a tree which overhung the cliff; neither would give way but clung to the branch and buffeted each other with the hard bend of the wing to such an extent that feathers flew in all directions. When one seemed to loose its foot hold, and overbalanced, the other attacked it with vigorous pecks of the beak accompanied by much wheezing and cooing. The usual line of defence seemed to be to lie on one side and raise the near wing to its fullest extent, and to bring it down half closed on to the aggressor's head when opportunity presented. This fight lasted fully ten minutes until the birds were exhausted, and they sat panting about six inches apart, neither being capable of striking another blow. They remained thus for quite a long time until the female, who had been sitting on a nearby tree, sailed out leisurly over the valley as though nothing untoward had been taken place near her. Her departure was the signal for a truce as both males followed in her wake to the feeding grounds below.

The call of this pigeon is rather a harsh, semi-guttural "coo," mostly uttered at dawn and before sundown during the off season, but at any time during the day when they are nesting. I have not heard them cooing when on the ground. These birds keep to the ground as much as possible, and even when frightened, they prefer to fly a short distance and alight on the ground rather than to perch on a nearby tree. On the Northern Guasso however, they perch on the Dom Palms as readily as on rocks. Jackson suggests that they nest on these palms; any way the point is worth investigating. Owing to the smallness of the flocks these birds do not offer a great deal of sport.

GENUS **TURUROENA**, Bp.

Turturoena delegorguel sharpei, Salvad. Kenya Bronze-naped Pigeon.
Ref. Salvadori, Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus. xxi.,
p. 329.
Type locality: Mt. Elgon.

DISTRIBUTION:

The forests of Kenya from the Coast to Mt. Elgon.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

There would appear to be two distinct adult plumages *not* referable to age. Forehead, cheeks, crown and earcoverts ashy-grey, the

latter two areas with metallic green reflections; nape and neck except at the front, metallic green with pronounced violet reflections, followed by a band of enamel white feathers in the region of the lower neck and interscapular area; the lower margin of this band with violet-bronzey iridescence. Chin and front of throat grey, merging into the purply-chestnut of the lower throat and chest, these latter with a distinct greyish bloom. Mantle, scapulars, inner wing coverts and outer webs of inner secondaries coppery-chestnut with some greenish reflections; rest of wing slatey-black, slightly brownish on the inner webs of the primaries. Rump, upper tail-coverts and rectrices deep slatey-black with greenish iridescence; the tips of the rectrices slately-grey. Lower breast, flanks, abdomen, and under tail-coverts ashy-grey. Eyes yellow, reddish-yellow or licac-red; bill blackish at base shading to bluish-horn at tip; legs and feet, red, purple-madder, or crimson.

The second marked plumage is as follows: Forehead and crown to posterior angle of eye, cheeks and throat ashy blue-grey; hinder part of crown and nape metallic green shading into violet and green on the lower hind neck. White band as in the other form but shot with green or violet according to light; interscapular region, scapulars and wings rich greenish-black, or dark slate-black with green reflections; rump, upper tail-coverts and rectrices greenish-black. Chest and upper breast delicate vinous-grey shading into grey on the flanks and abdomen. Length of wing 175-185 mm.

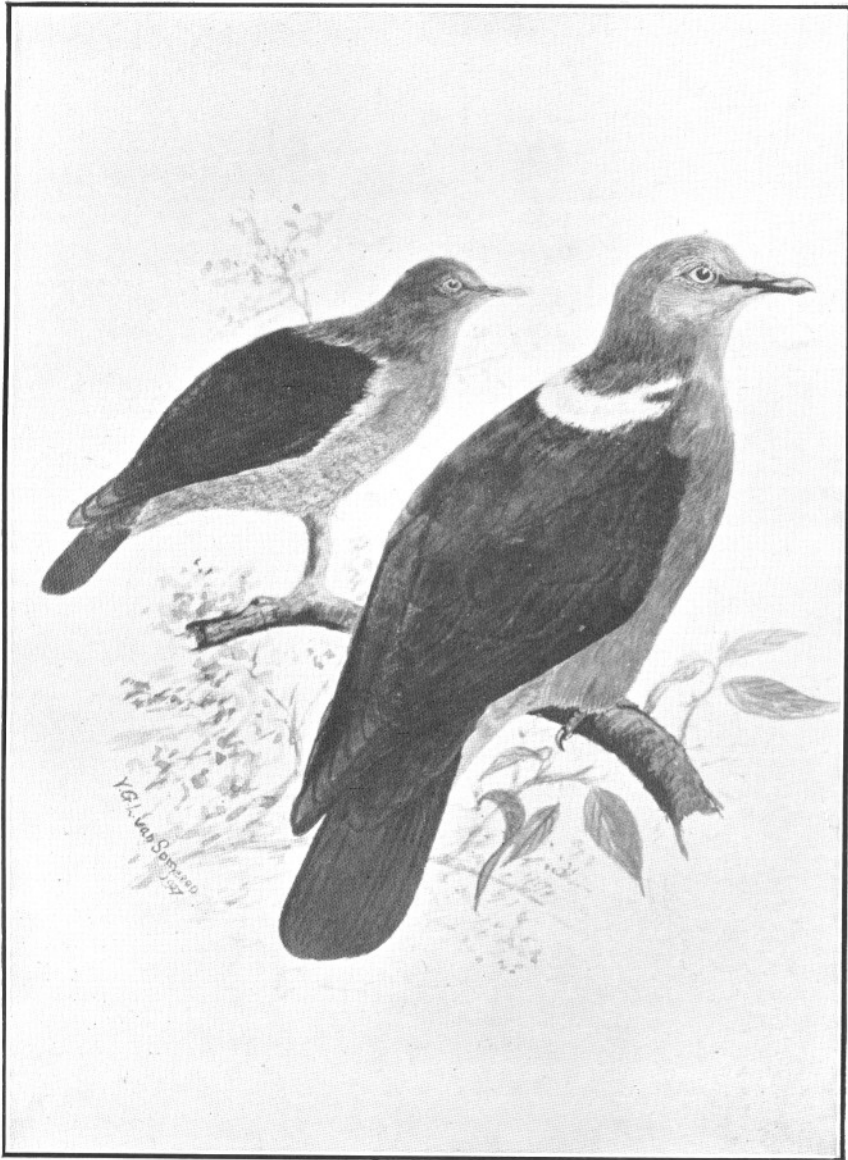
FEMALE, ADULT:

Forehead chin and throat, ashy-grey; crown, nape and hinder neck rusty-brown, the last shading into iridescent green shot with violet on the upper mantle. Cheeks and side of neck rusty-grey shading into slate-grey on the breast, flanks and abdomen; the feathers of the lower breast and abdomen with very fine ochreous freckling at the tips. Mantle, wings, scapulars and rectrices as in the second type of male. Length of wing 160-175 mm.

A second type of adult female occurs which differs in having the iridescent hind-neck band entirely violet; the upper breast tinged with brown, while the lower breast and abdomen are ochreous-grey finely freckled with lighter ochreous. The whole of the feathers of the upper surface are strongly edged with bluish and green reflections.

JUVENILE:

The nestling plumage is a dark brownish above, each feather with a wide terminal border of rusty brown bordered internally with a blackish bar. The head is greyish-brown with paler rusty tips to each feather. The undersurface is ochreous-grey with rusty terminal edges to the feathers of the abdomen and breast.



KENYA BRONZE-NAPED PIGEON.

(*Turturoena delegorguei sharpei.*)

The first full feathered plumage is as follows: Head ashy-grey with rusty tips; neck and throat greyish with broad terminal bars of rusty-brown; breast and abdomen rusty-ochreous with faint greyish barring; flanks and under tail-coverts slate-grey with wide terminal rusty-ochreous freckling. Mantle, scapulars, and wing-coverts, blackish-brown with marked rusty-brown tips and slight freckling. Rump and rectrices as in the female. If the young bird is a female the difference is in the head, which is greyish-brown with rusty tips, and the throat is a dirty whitish.

HABITS:

The Bronze-naped Pigeon is an inhabitant of the forests, in which it remains unless on local migrations in search of food.

This species is essentially confined to the forests of the higher altitudes, ranging from Kilimanjaro to Mt. Elgon, but I have both seen and obtained specimens in the coastal belt in the Sekoke Forest and on the Rabai Hills, but in these localities they are not permanently resident, though they visit these areas when a particular tree is heavy in fruit.

It is a species which is easily overlooked, and indeed were it not for its distinctive call, one might quite easily pass under the tree where the birds are perched without being aware of their presence. During the greater part of the day these birds "lie up" in the tops of the tall trees and are remarkably silent, but in the early morning they are active and take short flights over the tree tops, and give out their curious mournful call which is quite unlike that of any other pigeon or dove. It consists of two low coos followed by a shorter one and this, by one five notes higher, followed by five coos in rapid descending scale and diminishing volume with two long coos to end up. The only time when these birds are seen in numbers is when they leave the forest to feed on the small black fruit of the "Sandpaper" tree (*Trema guineensis*, Ficalho: Kikuyu name, *Muhethu*; *Ulmaceæ*). These berries are produced in clusters at the axils of the leaves, in quantities so that quite a small branch may be weighted down. They are highly attractive to all fruit-eating pigeons and most frugivorous birds.

I have frequently counted more than twenty pigeons on quite a small tree; the fighting and scrambling which goes on to reach some special bunch of berries at the end of a slender twig is most ludicrous to watch. They come to feed in the early morning and late evening.

Owing to their rather scattered distribution and the fact that they do not go in very large flocks, these birds offer little or no sport to the gunner; one can of course get in a few shots as they either come to or leave any particular feeding tree, but as a game bird they are poor sport. Like most pigeons, the flight is rapid and direct. During

the courting season the male indulges in a mild aerial display which usually takes place of an evening.

The nesting season appears to start in March and extend to June, followed by a second breeding season in December. The nest is of the usual pigeon type, a shallow platform of twigs placed in some horizontal fork about 15 to 20 from the ground. The eggs are pure white with a slight gloss and measure on an average 30 x 22 mm. Two eggs form the clutch. Both parents take part in incubation and feeding the young.

GENUS **STREPTOPELIA** Bp.

Streptopelia lugens funebrea, van-Som. Dusky Turtle Dove.
Ref. van Someren, Bull. B.O. Club xl., p. 21,
1919.
Type locality: Mt. Elgon.

DISTRIBUTION:

The Highlands of Kenya to Kilimanjaro.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

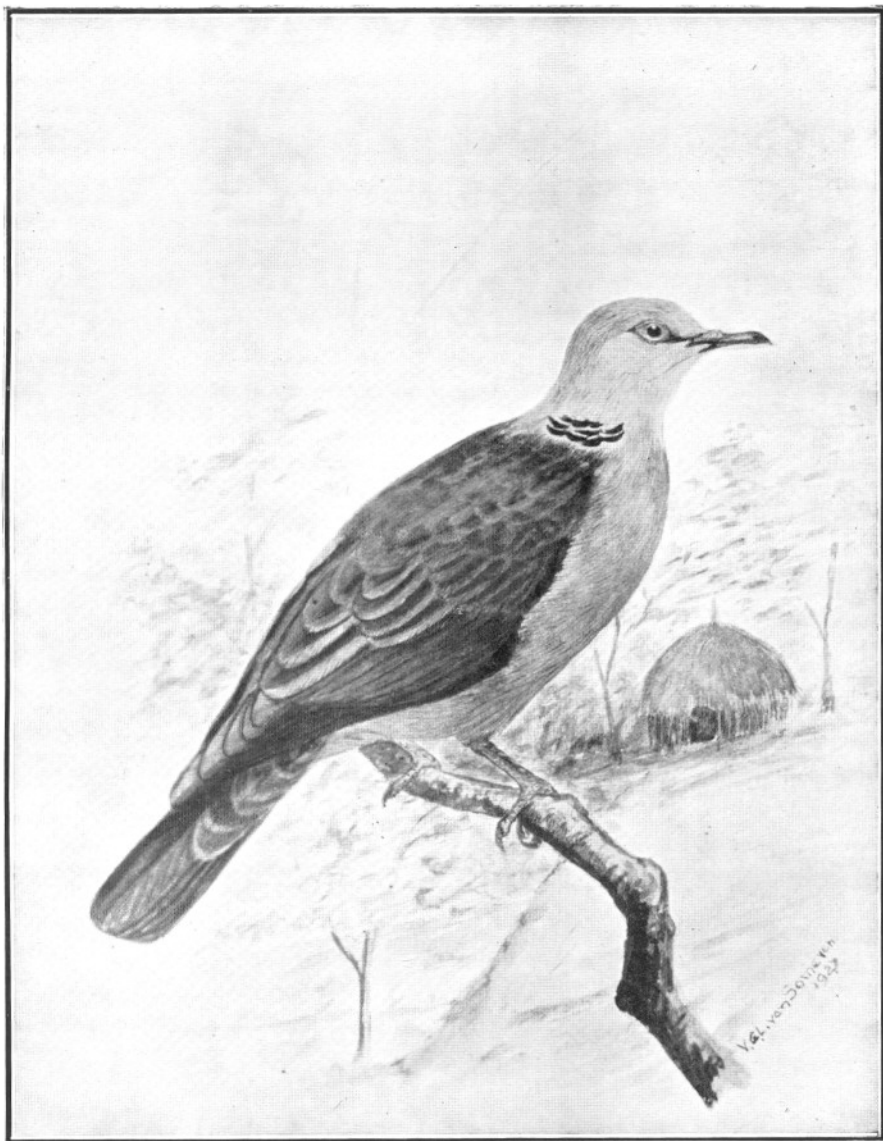
Forehead, cheeks, chin and upper throat pale pinkish buff shading into the grey of the crown, nape and neck; the first area shaded to dark grey on the hinder part of the crown. On either side of the neck a transverse patch of black feathers with narrow grey edges. Lower neck and upper chest grey shading into an area of vinous pink on the lower chest, this in turn shading into the pale grey in the abdomen and darker grey of the flanks, vent and under tail-coverts. Mantle and lesser scapulars ashy-brown with pale edges, merging into ashy-grey on the rump, followed by ashy-brown on the upper tail-coverts. Median and inner lesser coverts ashy-brown; marginal lesser coverts ashy-grey, all with pale edges giving a scaly appearance; tertials and longest secondary coverts ashy-brown broadly edged on the outer web with rufous and tawny-orange. Primaries and secondaries brownish-black with paler edges; all rectrices, except central pair which are ashy-brown, black with terminal grey bar; eyelids dark crimson; eyes golden-yellow, reddish-yellow or burnt-sienna. Bill blackish, nostrils madder; legs bright purple madder or reddish-lilac. Wings 175-180 mm.

FEMALE, ADULT:

Very like the male but smaller and paler below. Wings 165-175 mm.

JUVENILE:

The nestling plumage above, generally greyish-brown, each feather broadly tipped with buffy-grey; the under-surface buffy-grey paler on the throat and abdomen, barred with buff.



DUSKY TURTLE DOVE.

(*Streptopelia lugens funebrea.*)

The first full feathered plumage is somewhat like that of the female, above and below, but duller, with all the feathers tipped with buffy-grey especially those of the wings and scapular regions. The tertials are outwardly edged with rusty-brown while the primaries and secondaries are shaded with this colour on the edge of the outer webs and tips. The rectrices are coloured as in the female, but the tips are pointed, not rounded. The black feathers on the side of the neck are absent or very few in number.

HABITS:

The Dusky Turtle Dove is a bird of mixed habitat, that is, at certain times it is found in forest, at other it frequents the more open park country, and cultivations. The habitat is influenced by season, thus we find it in the neighbourhood of forest or wooded cultivations when the nesting season is on, but at other times it is seen in the open country. These birds are most in evidence when they flock during the "off" season; they then occur in large numbers, sometimes as many as forty to sixty individuals. They are essentially ground feeders, being especially partial to the seeds of a leguminous weed which grows up in fallow land. These flocks are composed of adult and young birds of the season; in many cases the latter predominate.

On one occasion during August when on safari in the neighbourhood of Lake Narasha, I saw an immense flock of these birds feeding on a small area of ground from which Sunflower had just been reaped; they were feeding on the fallen Sunflower seeds (crop examined). In the same district I obtained birds which had been feeding on wheat from a nearby field. Their staple diet however consists of seeds of no economic value, and bulbous roots; these latter are obtained in the dry veldt country and are actually dug up by the birds themselves. A few odd insects and molluscs enter into their diet. One frequently sees these birds in pairs out on the plains beyond Nairobi. They come to drink at about the same time each day; thus at one drinking place within the environs of Nairobi one may find these birds quenching their thirst at about 11 am. and at 3-30; between these times they roost in the trees surrounding the drinking pool. Quite a number take a final drink before settling for the night, that is after their return from foraging for their evening meal. This bird is fond of bathing, and at the above indicated spot one may see individuals taking a dip after their morning drink. If undisturbed they will sit on the rocks round the pool preening themselves, after which they lie on their sides with out-stretched wings and indulge in a sunbath. Their call consists of four coos, the first short, followed by a long one, four notes higher, and ending with two short coos two notes lower than the first. The notes are rather harsh, not rounded.

The nesting season is rather irregular, but at practically any time during the rains, either long or short, nest of this species may be found. My records show that eggs were found from March to June and in November. The nest is a frail structure of twigs rather loosely put together, but resting on some substantial platform, such as a horizontal fork, or where two or three slender branches cross each other.

I have frequently watched a pair nest-building; both birds collect material, but the bulk of the work is done by the male. On every occasion the dead twigs have been broken off by the birds themselves from trees in the immediate vicinity; on no occasion did they come to ground to collect material, though plenty of apparently suitable twigs lay about. The usual procedure was for the female to stand by the nest while the male brought the twigs and handed them over to the hen who placed them in position. If a twig fell to the ground while being manipulated, no attempt was made at recovery. Two eggs are laid, pure white in colour, measuring 23 x 32 mm. The young are fed until long after they have assumed full feather.

The only time when these birds offer any sport is when they are flocking at some favoured feeding ground. The shooting is however rather intermittent, for after the birds have been driven off and returned two or three times they become shy and refuse to flight.

I have had these Doves in my garden in a semi-domesticated condition for many years. They become very tame and stand capavity well if kept in a large aviary.

Streptopella semitorquata semitorquata, Rupp. Grey-vented Ring Dove.

Ref. Ruppell, N. Wirbelth, Vog. p. 66, 1837.

Type locality: Taranta Mts, Abyssinia.

DISTRIBUTION:

Through Uganda and Kenya, except the coastal belt.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Forehead pinkish-buff shading to pearl-grey on the fore part of the crown and grey tinged with vinous on hind crown. Chin creamy-pink shading into pinkish-buff with a vinous tinge on the upper throat, cheeks and ear-coverts; nape, lower neck, the whole of the breast and banks, rich vinous-pink with a grey bloom; abdomen, thighs and under tail-coverts leaden-grey. A half collar of black feathers on the back of the lower neck edged above and below with grey. Mantle, scapulars, back and inner wing-coverts ashy-brown with an olive tinge; marginal wing coverts shading to slate-grey. Primary coverts, primaries and secondaries blackish-brown with narrow paler edges to the tips and outer webs. Rump slate-grey shading into ashy-brown



GREY-VENTED RING DOVE.

(*Streptopelia semitorquata semitorquata.*)

on the upper tail-coverts. Rectrices, except the central pair, basal two-thirds blackish, shaded with greyish basally, thus forming a black bar before the terminal third which is dirty bluish-grey; the central rectrices are ashy-grey. Bill slaty-black; eyes usually with two rings, brown and red, brown and orange or yellow, brown and blue, crimson and orange, crimson and red. Bare skin round eye crimson; feet purple madder, crimson, or plum. Wings 175-192 mm.

FEMALE, ADULT:

Very like the male but smaller and with less vinous wash to the breast. Wings 166-180 mm.

JUVENILE:

Head, neck and breast sandy brown with broad paler tips to each feather; back and wings earth-brown with buff or ochreous tips. Wing feathers with rusty tips and edges; belly greyish sandy with rusty tips.

HABITS:

The grey-vented Ring Dove as represented by the two races inhabiting Uganda and Kenya, is one of the commonest species and is found from sea-level up to 10,000 feet. They are more of a forest species than most Ring-doves, but the bulk of their food supply is obtained in and around cultivations and settlements. I have on more than one occasion flushed a pair of these birds feeding in some open patch of forest land, or along a cleared firebreak. The presence of trees appears an essential feature of their habitat, but they are seldom found in the "thorn bush" country. They are found in practically all the larger settlements in Kenya and Uganda where trees have been planted up. They are essentially ground feeders, and when out foraging they frequent cultivations and gardens, not to destroy or pick up cultivated plants and seeds, but they feed almost entirely on seeds of noxious weeds and small land snails. It is true however, that when the native crops of Mtama, Whimbi and Mwele are ripe, and when they have been reaped and threshed in the native manner, dozens, sometimes hundreds of these birds flock to these threshing grounds and feed on the grain which has been scattered about. They drink and feed in the early morning and late afternoon. During the heat of the day they lie up in some shady tree and either sleep or attend to their toilet. At such times the birds are silent. They call most frequently just at dawn and at sunset but on bright moonlight nights I have heard them about eleven o'clock. There are two distinct calls, one a long low c-o-o c-o-o repeated several times; the other a repetition of this double coo followed by two shorter coos and ending with two notes like "did du." When the bird calls he sits in a huddled up position with the head drawn in and depressed; and

during the breeding season when courting is in full swing the calls are accompanied by simultaneous movement of the wings and spreading of the tail. The Grey-vented Dove becomes very pugnacious as the breeding season approaches; at such times one may often witness a couple of males in full battle, beating each other with uplifted wings with tremendous force; feathers fly in all directions but the combatants will not give in until entirely exhausted. Courting takes place either on the ground or in a tree; if on the ground, the cock chases the hen about and gives her little chance of feeding; actual pairing takes place either on the ground or in a tree. The nest is of the usual form, a frail platform of twigs placed on some horizontal fork or where two or three branches overlap. It is seldom placed high, usually 6-10 feet from the ground. The eggs are white and glossy, two in number measuring on an average 29 x 23 mm. Nests have been found in every month of the year, but the principal nesting seasons are from April to July, and again in November to January.

The coastal race has similar habits to its inland cousin. They frequent the cocoanut plantations, and frequently build their nests at the base of a branch. I have sometimes taken their nests in the low mangrove trees growing right out in the water.

Streptopella semitorquata minor, Erl. Coast Grey-vented Dove.

Ref. Erlanger, Journ. f. Orn., liii., p. 125, 1905.

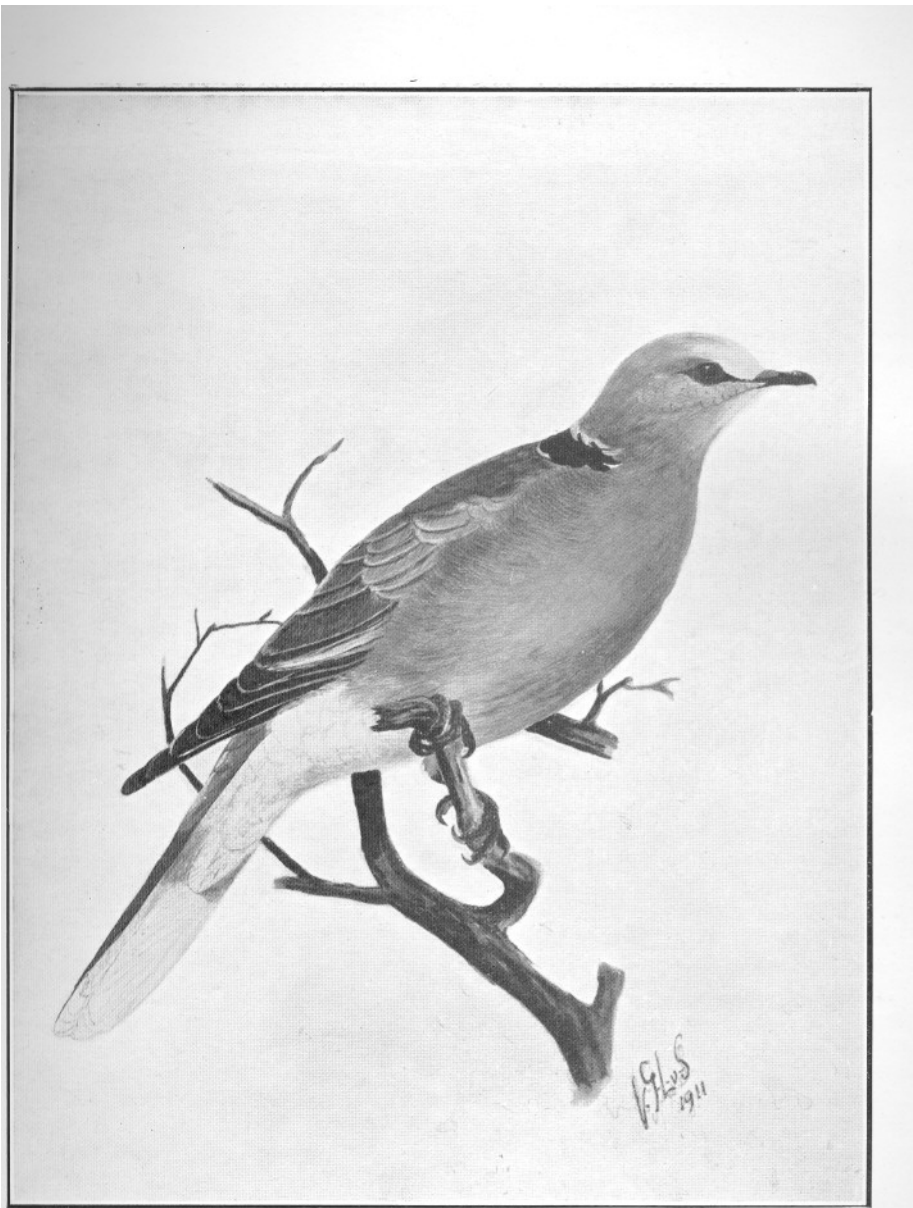
Type locality: Umfudu, Gobwen.

DISTRIBUTION:

The Coastal belt of Kenya.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

In general type of plumage this race resembles that inhabiting the inland districts. It differs however in having the forehead and chin, white or cream, the former shading into the delicate pearly grey of the crown, the latter into a delicate rosy-grey of the cheeks and upper neck; the nape and the rest of the neck are a vinous pink with grey bloom, deepening in colour on the whole of the breast, but becoming a light pearly-grey on the flanks and abdomen, delicately washed with pink. Vent and under tail-coverts very pale grey. The mantle, scapulars and wings are much lighter in colour than in the typical form, with a decided greyish bloom over all; while the back and rump are light grey. The upper tail-coverts are a light greyish-brown as are also the central rectrices; the remainder of the tail feathers are greyish at the basal half, shading into black which forms a bar before the light greyish white tips. Eyelids, madder; eyes red and orange, or crimson and orange or yellow. Feet madder or plum. Wings 165-175 mm.



MASAI PINK-BREASTED DOVE.

(*Streptopelia decipiens perspicillata.*)

FEMALE:

Like the male but smaller; wings 160-170 mm.

JUVENILE:

As in the typical form but paler.

HABITS:

See previous race.

Streptopella fulvopectoralis, Granvik. Nyanza Fulvous-breasted Dove.

Ref. Granvik, Journ. f. Orn., 1923 p. 54.

Type locality: Kendu Bay.

DISTRIBUTION:

South eastern shore of Victoria Nyanza.

DESCRIPTION. FEMALE:

This species has recently been described by Dr. Granvik from a single specimen. As the bird is unknown to me I give the description as it appears in the above-quoted reference. "The forehead is light grey-brown, the crown and occiput dark grey-brown. The sides of the neck light yellow-brown, cheeks grey, throat white. An indistinct black occipital band bordered at the top by a wide yellowish-brown band, fringing the dark grey-brown occiput. Back, scapulars, wing-coverts, upper tail-coverts and the two median rectrices earthy-brown, the latter being dark greyish-blue at the base. The primaries dark brown, the coverts of the secondaries and primaries black. The throat, the fore-neck and breast yellowish-brown, like the flanks. The belly and the under tail-coverts white. Lower wing-coverts brown, with dark patches here and there. The rectrices, except the median ones, earthy-brown with dark grey base and grey wash, tipped with white. Bill black, irides citron yellow. Around the eye there are naked parts with small, red wart-like formations. Feet pale red-lilac. Wings 144 mm."

MALE, unknown. JUVENILE, unknown.

HABITS:

"The bird lived in the dense bush and copse vegetation bordering the shores of Victoria Nyanza in the Kavirondo country."

Streptopella deciplens perspicillata, Fisch. Reich. Masai Pink-breasted Dove.

Ref. Fischer & Reichenow, Journ. f. Orn., xxxii., p. 179, 1884.

Type locality: Nguruman, T.T.

DISTRIBUTION:

The country between the south of Victoria Nyanza to Kilimanjaro.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Front part of head and cheeks light grey, shading to white on the chin and throat; hind part of crown and ear-coverts greyish washed with pink, shading to vinous pink on the nape sides of neck and breast; on the lower hind neck a broad black collar edged above with white and below with vinous. The pink of the breast shades into white on the belly and into light grey on the flanks. The vent and under tail-coverts are white, the latter with a greyish tinge along the shafts. Mantle, scapulars, tertials and most of the inner wing coverts ashy-brown with a greyish bloom; the outer or marginal wing-coverts and outer secondaries grey; primaries and inner secondaries blackish-brown paler on the outer webs and with pale edgings. Back, rump, upper tail-coverts and central pair of rectrices, earthy-brown with a grey wash on the rump; rest of rectrices dark greyish black at the basal half shading to black distally, the terminal third of the feathers dirty greyish fading to white at the tips. Bill black; eyelids red, eyes ochre to pinky-yellow; feet lilac-red or lilac-madder. Wings 155-168 mm.

FEMALE:

Similarly coloured but smaller. Wings 148-160 mm.

JUVENILE:

This is unknown to me.

Streptopella decliens permista, Reich. Uganda Pink-breasted Dove.
Ref. Reichenow, Vogel Af., p. 808, 1905.
Type locality: Maliwungu, T.T.

DISTRIBUTION:

In suitable localities in Western Uganda, south shore of Lake Victoria.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Crown, cheeks and ear-coverts, ashy-grey inclining to white on the throat; neck and breast deep vinous shading to greyish on the flanks, and whitish on the abdomen; thighs, vent and under-tail-coverts, light grey, the feathers of the latter white tipped. A black collar is present on the hind neck, bordered above and below with whitish. Mantle, scapulars, inner lesser coverts and tertiaries ochreous-grey-brown inclining to greyish on the marginal coverts and outer secondaries of the wing. Primary coverts blackish-brown. Primaries and secondaries blackish-brown with pale edges. Back, rump and upper tail-coverts like the mantle; slightly more greyish on the rump; rectrices, two central pairs ashy-grey-brown, slightly darker basally, remainder blackish-grey at the base distally inclining to black; the terminal third pale ashy shading to white at the tip. Eyelids

red; eyes orange or yellow, bill blackish-grey, nostrils grey; feet purple madder to lilac. Wings 150-168 mm.

FEMALE:

Very like the male but with less vinous on the breast, and smaller.

HABITS:

This bird and the form *perspicillata*, are similar in habits and are here treated together. They appear to be somewhat restricted in distribution and to require certain conditions such as are found in dry hot districts where, however, there is an abundant water supply; thus one finds the race *permista* along the south and western shore of Lake Victoria, and the other in such places as the banks of the Northern Guasso Nyiro. These birds are more associated with the bush country where there is plenty of open bare ground, rather than in areas which are populated; one seldom sees them in townships though at Kisumu for instance they will visit the railway yard after loading has ceased for the day, to pick up any fallen grain which may have been scattered about. In this particular district one finds them actually along the lake shore roosting on the ambatch trees which grow out in the water, or at feeding time, frequenting the native cultivations. One may usually count on seeing them in fair numbers on patches of ground where Wimbi or Simsim has been grown.

The nest is of the usual pigeon type, usually built in some low bush, but I have taken the nest of *permista* placed in a dense clump of Papyrus growing well out in the water. There used to be a particular patch of ambatch trees growing in the middle of a large papyrus swamp at the head of Kavirondo Gulf, where at practically any time of the year one could find half a dozen nests of this bird.

Along the Northern Guasso Nyiro we found *perspicillata* nests built on the Dom palms as well as in bushes.

Streptopelia decipiens elegans, Zedlitz. Juba Pink-breasted Dove.
Ref. Zedlitz, Orn. Monatsb, p. 59, 1913.
Type locality: Afgoi, S. Somaliland.

DISTRIBUTION:

Jubaland to the Northern Frontier.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Very like *S. d. perspicillata* but paler throughout. Chin, throat and forehead white, shading to pearly-grey on the cheeks and crown, the hind part of the crown washed with vinous; the nape and upper part of the hind-neck and the chest, a delicate vinous-pink fading to white on the breast, abdomen and flanks, the last with just a wash of pale grey. Under tail-coverts white. A black collar outlined above and below with white is present on the lower hind neck.

The mantle, scapulars, tertials and lesser wing-coverts pale earthy brown shading to paler brown on the median coverts, and to pale grey on the marginal wing-coverts and secondary coverts. Primaries and secondaries earth-brown, with pale edges to the outer webs, especially on the secondaries. Back, rump, upper tail-coverts and central pair of rectrices like the mantle, the rump slightly washed with grey. The rest of the rectrices dark greyish at the basal half shading to blackish before the terminal third, which is white shaded with faint grey proximally. Bill greyish-black; bare area round the eyes pink, eyes pale creamy with a pinkish tinge; feet light purple madder. Wings 145-156 mm.

FEMALE:

Like the male but duller, and smaller.

JUVENILE:

Unknown to me.

HABITS:

The Juba pink-breasted Dove is a pale desert form of *decipiens*, and is similar in habits to others of this species. It is rather more addicted to desert land away from native settlement. At most times they are seen in pairs in the desert and bush country, but congregate in flocks when coming to water; at such times they associate with Reichenow's Dove.

Streptopelia capicola tropica, Reich. Uganda White-vented Ring Dove.

Ref. Reichenow, Orn. Monatsb., p. 139, 1902.

Type locality: Songea, T.T.

DISTRIBUTION:

Throughout Uganda east to Elgon and south to Kenya above 5,000 feet.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Crown grey, paler on the forehead and deepening in shade towards the occiput; a black loreal streak from the gape to anterior angle of the eye; chin white shading to vinous pink on the throat, cheeks and side of head; with a deeper shade of vinous on the back of the neck and lower throat, this, in turn, shading to vinous-grey on the breast and flanks, the latter more washed with grey. The abdomen and under tail-coverts are white. A black collar, outlined with white, is present on the hind-neck. The mantle, scapulars, all the wing coverts except the marginal ones, ashy-grey-brown; the back and rump, and upper tail coverts ashy-grey, slightly paler laterally; three inner pairs of rectrices ashy-grey, remainder deep grey at the base, pale grey shading to white at the tip; outer web of lateral pair, white.



Secondary, median and marginal lesser coverts light grey; primaries blackish brown; secondaries ashy-grey with pale margins. Eyelids red; eyes light to dark brown; bill black; feet lilac-madder to purple-madder. Wings 150-160 mm.

FEMALE:

Like the male but smaller.

The above description applies to the average bird inhabiting the countries of Uganda and Kenya north west of Mau. South of this, from between 6,000 to 4,500 feet occur birds which are intermediate between the race *tropica* and *somalica*. They are paler above and below and thus approach the Somali form but they are not true *somalica*. The birds inhabiting the coastal belt and the bush-veldt zone are nearer to this form but even they are not like the Jubaland race.

JUVENILE:

Head and breast pale ochreous-grey paler on the forehead and throat and belly; the whole of the back a deeper ashy brown; wings more or less as in the adult, but the feathers throughout edged with pale dirty white or ochreous; the primaries are tipped with rusty red.

HABITS:

This race is found between 4,000 and 6,000 feet, occasionally higher. For the most part it is a bush, and park-country bird, and seldom enters forest. It is plentiful in the bush round Naivasha extending through similar country up to the foot-hills of Elgon. In Uganda we have found it common in the neighbourhood of villages and cultivations, mostly in pairs or small parties. They are entirely ground feeders and though undoubtedly taking a small amount of cultivated grain, their staple diet consists of seeds from wild plants. They are also very fond of small land molluscs which they obtain in the shady damp ground in the banana groves.

Like many other species of Doves, these birds have, to quite a marked degree, associated themselves with humans; thus we find them one of the features of townships which have been established within their range. Nakuru is a case in point; nearly every garden has its pair of doves which feed among the fowls; some have even taken to nesting on ledges under verandahs, and in creepers growing up the walls of the houses.

In the wild this bird usually builds in some low bush or tree; in the Kisumu district a favourite site is a triple fork of a *Euphorbia* branch. The nest is a shallow platform of twigs and roots, with a fair central depression. The clutch consists of two pure white eggs averaging 28 x 23 mm. in size. I have more than once taken a nest, at the top of a *Papyrus* stalk.

Both parents take part in the construction of the first portion of the nest, but when the ground work has been laid the male collects the material while the female lays it in position. Both birds feed the young. Dove shooting is rather disappointing at the best of times, and these birds are no exception to the usual; a few shots may be had at birds put up from feeding grounds or from trees, but as there is so regular fighting, shooting becomes spasmodic; the flight however is swift and strong.

The call note of this Dove is distinctive, and may be rendered thus: Coo kurroo, coo kurroo, repeated twice or thrice, the first note long, the second double one ending somewhat abruptly. The Kavirondo name for this bird is Akuroo; entirely phonetic.

Streptopelia capicola somalica, Erl. Somali White-vented Ring

Dove.

Ref. Erlanger, Journ. f. Ornith., liii., p. 127, 1905.

Type locality: Sarigo, S. Somaliland.

DISTRIBUTION:

Jubaland and the Kenya littoral inland to the Taru desert.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Very like the race *tropica*, but smaller and paler throughout. The crown pale grey to the nape, inclining to white on the forehead. Cheeks, neck and breast pale pinkish-grey, paler on the throat; the pink of the breast shading into the very pale vinous-grey of the flanks and the white of the abdomen. Vent and undertail-coverts white. Mantle scapulars and tertials, pale ashy-grey-brown; most of the lesser wing coverts pale grey, those of the secondary coverts edged with white. Primary coverts black; primaries and secondaries dark ashy-brown, with narrow edges to the outer web. Back and rump grey, shading to ashy-grey on the upper tail-coverts. Rectrices, middle pair ashy-grey, next pair grey, the third pair paler grey at base shading to white at the tip; two next pairs grey at basal two-thirds, shading from very pale grey to white, outermost pair dark grey at the basal half of the inner web, but tending to black just before the white tip, outer web entirely white. Soft parts as in the other race.

FEMALE:

Smaller but otherwise like the male.

JUVENILE:

Dress as in *tropica*, but paler throughout, more greyish.

HABITS:

In general habits this race resembles the preceding, but the habitat differs somewhat in character. It is limited to the dry bush-veldt and

thorn country, where one usually sees them in pairs or small parties. It is a common bird and often associates in large flocks when the crop of some particular seed is ripe. They avoid the thick grass country and keep rather to the dry country where vegetation is sparse, nevertheless when an area of grass-land has been burnt off several scattered flocks may be seen feeding here and there. They are most active during the morning and evening, spending the hours of noon perched in some shady trees often in the vicinity of water. Along the Coast littoral one finds these birds frequently the neighbourhood of native villages and cultivations, retiring to the groves of Coconut palms to roost.

The nest and eggs of this race are indistinguishable from the preceding. In the thorn bush country, we have usually found the nest in some low tree about ten to fifteen feet from the ground, but at the coast I have not infrequently located them at, or towards the base of a frond of a coconut tree; sometimes in a Mango tree quite thirty feet up. The eggs are white and semi-glossy, averaging 25 x 22 mm.

***Streptopelia vinacea barbaru*, Antin. Pink-faced Dove.**

Ref. Antinori, Cat. di Uccelli, p. 89, 1864.

Type locality: Sennar, White Nile.

DISTRIBUTION:

Uganda, in suitable localities.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

The whole of the head and neck to upper breast, vinous pink, slightly paler on the chin, and tinged with grey on the posterior aspect of the crown and nape. A black line runs from the gape to the anterior angle of the eye. On the hind-neck there is a broad black collar edged above with pale grey. The whole of the breast is vinous pink shading to white on the abdomen and vent, and to slaty-grey on the flanks. Mantle, scapulars, and inner wing-coverts, ashy-ochreous-brown shading to greyish-brown on the rump and upper tail-coverts. Central pair of rectrices like the upper tail-coverts, the next two similarly coloured on the outer webs, grey on the inner, the remainder with basal $\frac{3}{5}$ blackish-grey, with white ends increasingly shaded with light grey from without inwards; the outer pair with white margin to outer web. Under tail-coverts white. Lesser coverts on the outer side of the wing, greyish; and secondary coverts, primary coverts blackish; secondaries and primaries greyish-brown with narrow paler edges. Eyes brown; bill slaty-grey to black; feet bluish-lilac to pink-grey. Wings 135-155 mm.

JUVENILE:

Unknown to me.

HABITS:

This species of Dove extends into the northern districts of Uganda from the Sudan, but according to Jackson the southern limit appears to be at Mubendi. It is very like *S. capicola tropica*, but can be distinguished from that bird by its smaller size and its much pinker head. In habits they are alike, but the call note of the "barbaru" is distinctive; Stoneham likens it to the words "what about it?"

It is fairly plentiful in the northern area of its range, and is usually seen in pairs or small flocks in the vicinity of old cultivations or in patches of Sorghum or Mtama. The nesting habits are similar to *S. c. tropica*.

Streptopelia reichenowi, Erl. White-winged Ringed Dove.

Ref. Erlanger, Orn. Monatsb., p. 182, 1901.

Type locality: Salakale, Juba River.

DISTRIBUTION:

Jubaland, particularly the northern districts.

DESCRIPTION: MALE:

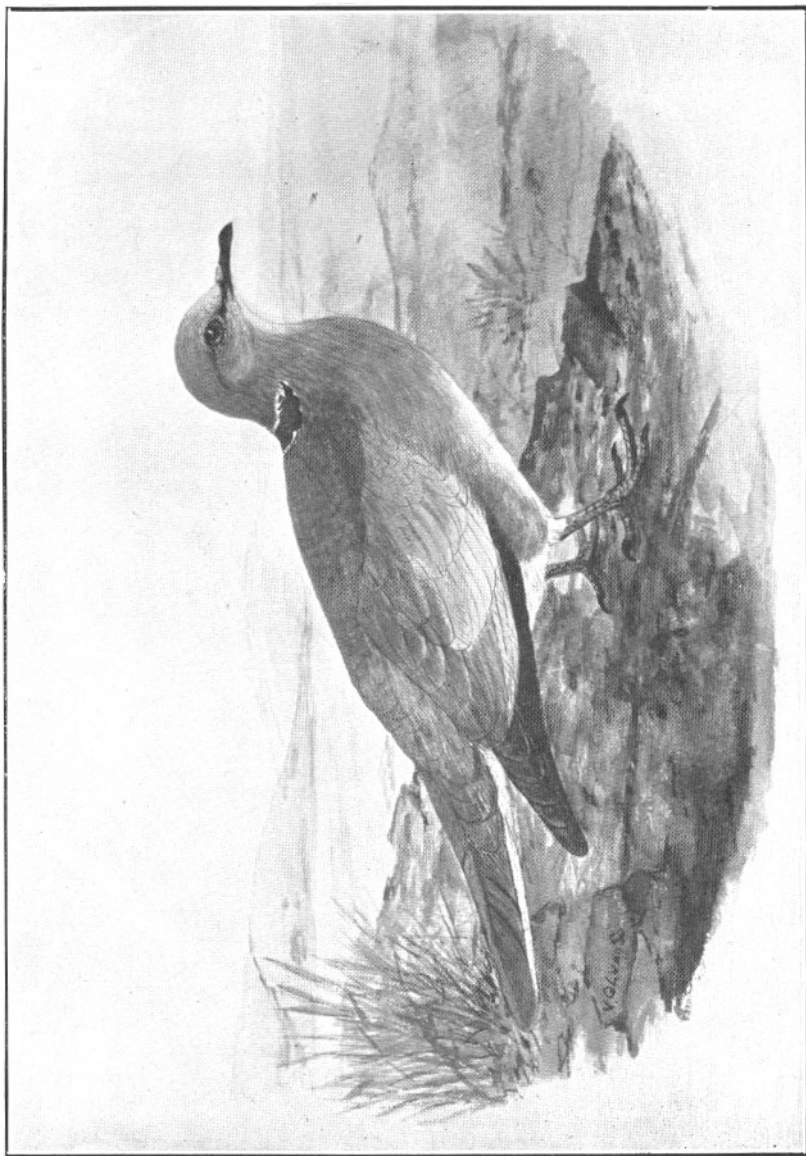
Entire head, neck and breast light bluish-grey, slightly darker on the head, and inclining to white on the throat. The grey of the breast gradually shades away to whitish on the flanks and on the lower breast and abdomen becomes pure white. Vent and under tail-coverts white, the shaft area of the longer feathers slightly tinged with grey. A sharply defined black neck band is present on the hind neck, edged particularly distally, with white. Mantle and scapulars ochreous-ashy grey, shading on the wing to a more greyish colour on the secondaries, secondary coverts and lesser coverts; then merging to pale grey through to white on the rest of the wing coverts, the edges of the outer webs of the secondary coverts, and secondaries. Primary coverts black; primaries blackish-brown with narrow pale edging and tips to the three outermost. (The dark primaries contrast strongly with the white-edged secondary coverts.) Back and rump to upper tail-coverts and two central rectrices, greyish-ashy-brown, tinged with grey on the rump and rectrices; third, fourth and fifth pairs ashy-grey at the base, with an increasing degree of shading, from without inwards, from the white tip to the mid-point. Eyelids crimson; eyes red, or orange to brown; bill black; feet red to purple madder. Wings 136-146 mm.

FEMALE:

Like the male in colour but smaller; wings 132-140 mm.

JUVENILE:

Head, ashy-grey like the breast and flanks; throat and sides of head buffy grey, all with pale tips to the feathers; mantle scapulars



WHITE-WINGED RING DOVE.
(*Streptopelia reichenowi*.)

and wing-coverts ashy-grey-brown, with dark centres to those of the last two areas, and all with pale buffy tips. Marginal wing-coverts and secondary coverts leaden grey, rest of wing feathers ashy-brown, with rusty and buff tips and edges.

The next plumage is similar to the above, but there are no light tips to the feathers and a black collar is present on the hind neck.

HABITS:

The White-winged Ring Dove is very local in its distribution and has not been recorded outside the Northern Frontier area and Jubaland (so far as Kenya is concerned). It is a common species along certain parts of the Juba River but less frequently met with in the desert country to the west. In the latter area they occur in pairs but when they come to drink at some waterhole they congregate in large numbers. They usually arrive some time before the advent of Sand-grouse and scatter when these birds appear. I am told that in localities where the only water supply is from deep wells that these birds actually descend there, in order to quench their thirst, and that it is a wonderful sight to watch them going down in twos or threes to drink from the limited foothold offered by the niches cut into the face of the well during construction.

Practically nothing has been recorded regarding the habits of this species, and I have no information in connection with nidification, etc.

GENUS STIGMATOPELIA, Sund.

Stigmatopelia senegalensis aequatorialis, Erl. Speckle-necked Laughing Dove.
Ref. Erlanger, Orn. Monatsb., p. 98, 1904.
Type locality: Menaballa, Abyssinia.

DISTRIBUTION:

Throughout Kenya and Uganda.

DESCRIPTION: MALE, ADULT:

Head, neck, and breast deep purply-vinous grey, paler on the throat, and tending to creamy white on the abdomen, and to grey on the flanks. Vent and under-tail-coverts white. Around the front and the sides of the lower neck is a speckled collar composed of bifid feathers which are black at the basal half and orange-vinous at the tips, the black bases showing through the bifid ends. The hind neck is washed with grey, while the mantle and scapulars and inner wing coverts are greyish with broad rusty brown ends; rest of the wing coverts and outer webs of the secondaries leaden-grey; primaries and primary coverts blackish with narrow edges to the outer webs. Back and rump leaden grey, shading to ashy-grey-brown on the upper tail.

coverts and the central pair of rectrices; the next pair of tail feathers are ashy-grey, slightly darker at the basal half; the three outer pairs black at the basal half, white distally, with a graduated amount of grey tinge, increasing from without inwards. The eyelids are red while the eyes are dark brown; bill black with grey nostrils; feet purple-madder to lilac. Wings 130-145 mm. The sexes are alike for the most part, but the females tend to have less rusty brown on the back.

JUVENILE :

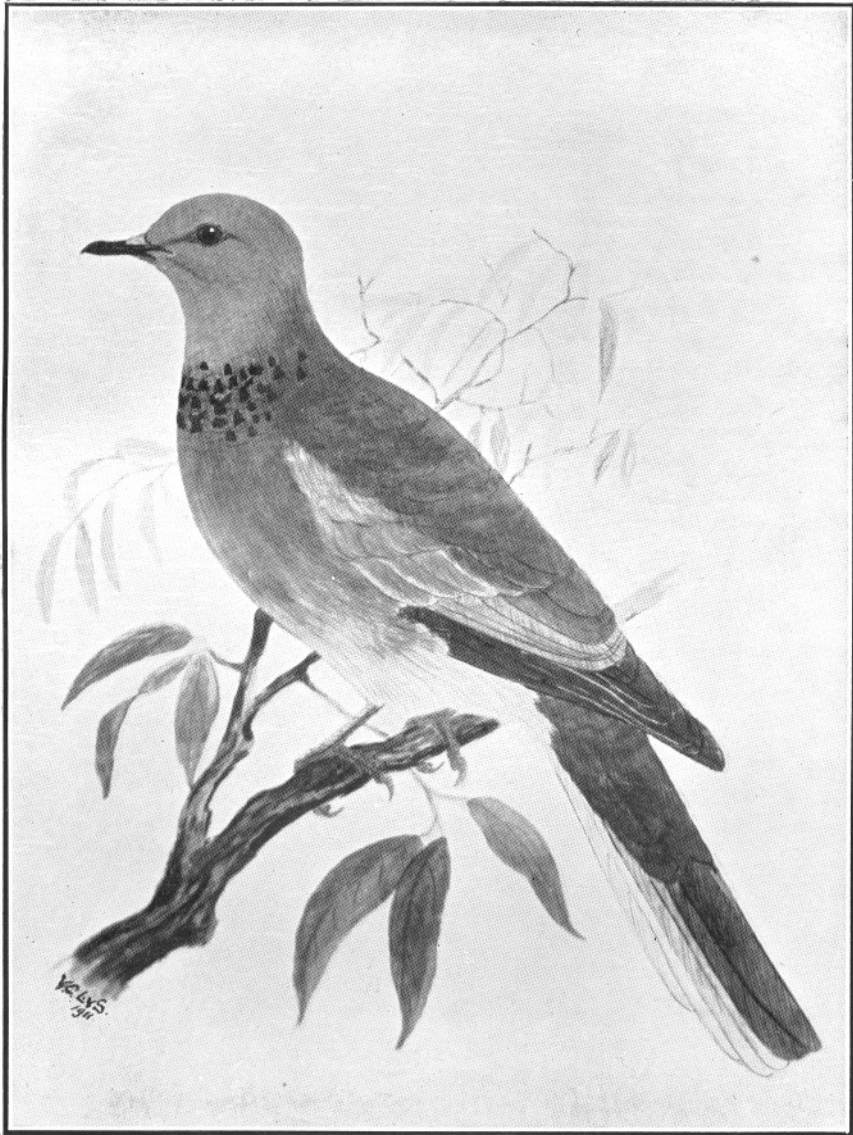
The nestling is sparsely covered with yellowish hairy down. In the first feathered plumage the head, neck and breast are ashy ochreous with paler buffy tips to the feathers; the mantle, scapulars back and rump to the upper tail-coverts, ochreous ashy-grey with paler ends, the majority of the wing coverts are grey, buff tipped; and the primaries brownish black with rusty tips and edges. The lower breast and abdomen are dirty whitish tinged with ochreous.

HABITS :

The Laughing Dove, so called because of its peculiar call, is widely distributed and common through Uganda and Kenya, inhabiting districts which are cultivated or covered in scrub and thorn-bush, but seldom being found above 6,000 feet. It is entirely a ground feeder and may frequently be seen feeding along roads, taking little or no notice of pedestrians and merely flying out of the way of a passing vehicle to alight again almost immediately. On most occasions one sees them in pairs or small family parties, but at certain times of the year they congregate in large flocks. In certain townships such as Jinja and Kampala they take the place of the English house Sparrow, being as tame and as plentiful and taking little notice of passers-by, merely fluttering a foot or two to avoid being trodden on.

Away from habitations these birds are less tame, but in the Native Reserves where such grain as M'wimbi and M'wele are grown, one can count on finding large associations when the harvesting and threshing season is on. At such a time one can obtain fair shooting, taking the birds as they come and go.

The regular nesting season is between the months of April and August, and again in November to January, but a certain few semi-domesticated birds have been known to breed at any time during the year. The nest is usually built in a low bush or tree not more than 10 feet from the ground. It is of the usual type, a shallow structure of twigs loosely put together, with practically no lining twigs to speak of. Two eggs usually form the clutch, but on more than one occasion I have taken three eggs from a nest. They are white with a semi-matt surface, and measure on an average 25 x 21 mm. Birds which



SPECKLED-NECK LAUGHING DOVE.

(*Stigmatopelia senegalensis aequatorialis.*)



SPECKLED-NECK LAUGHING DOVE FEEDING YOUNG.



SPECKLED-NECK LAUGHING DOVE AT NEST

habitually frequent a garden are very conservative in their choice of the nesting site; thus, I have known a pair to select the same tree for eight seasons in succession, and even though the first nest was destroyed the birds built in practically the same position within a day or two. The call consists of a high kruo kruo repeated four or five times ending with a chuckling note rapidly repeated who-oo-o-o-o-o-o.

The mating display is interesting; the male approaches the hen with a soft cooing note and bobbing of the head accompanied by blowing out of the crop; if the female accepts attention they bill and coo for a second or two then the male flies up from the branch almost vertically with rapid clapping of the wings above the head, then when a sufficient height has been reached he sails round with outstretched wings circling the hen once and then alights beside her, with a chuckle, after which they both coo softly and bill each other.