

HOW HEAVY ARE YOUR DOVES?

by

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Different species of doves are expected to have different weights. But it is often tacitly assumed that, aside from some small sex difference, any healthy dove should be close to the norm for its kind. Underweight may imply a sick bird.

Well, under domestic conditions the range of normal has widened--drastically for the various breeds of domestic pigeon, Columba livia, and and everyone accepts that as understood. But for the domestic ringneck dove, Streptopelia risoria, the establishment of different breeds is just getting underway.

I habitually weigh all my birds at about six months of age. I had produced a stock of whites some years ago that regularly produced most offspring (14/20 in one year) weighing over 180 grams (some 200 g. = about 8 ounces). I couldn't keep many and had to give most away. Like Runts and other large breeds of pigeons they did not reproduce as well as lesser weight birds, but they worked well enough to maintain themselves and even expand numbers with appropriate care. Their weight type still crops out now and then in my current birds here at ISU.

Just what is the "normal" weight for these doves? From an early flock in my experience, I'd say about 6 ounces (= .375 lbs. = 170.16 g) which is about a third heavier than the 4 ounces for a mourning dove, Zenaidura macroura, native to the U.S. But different stocks make quite a difference. My ivory birds acquired a few years ago have lowered my colony average.

Recently I examined the records for 60 males and 23 females currently in holding pens.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Range:	140 - 204 grams	140 - 180 grams
Average:	168 g.	161 g.

I do have some females over 200 grams in mating, so they are not as limited as the sample above implies. Moreover, in the past some family lines have had heavier females than males, as if one genetic type is sex-influenced. I have had some go as low as 128 grams, but under 140 is suspect for stubby dwarf (see the ADA newsletter for Oct. '74). I am counting these mentioned above as non-dwarfs by the criteria of measurements of bone lengths and wing span.

So-- how does your flock of ringnecks compare with mine?

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