

SLEEPING DOVES

There is a report in Science journal of 1983 vol. 221 on pages 194 and 195 on sleeping doves. The 4 authors Walker, Walker, Palca and Berger tested 4 adult ringneck dove, Streptopelia risoria, while the doves were fasting. The doves weighed 102 to 164 grams at the start and took 3 to 8 days to loose 20-22% of their body weight. They recorded sleeping time and wakefulness, and concluded that sleep merged into shallow torpor in the fasting doves. The body temperature went lower each night during fasting-- about 8° F lower at night overall at the end of the fasting.

I was amazed at the time the doves spent sleeping, even before fasting. 67-71% of the time the doves slept. Yes, the doves have REM (rapid-eye-movement) sleep like humans, as well as slow-wave-sleep. The sex was not given. The birds were kept in a cage about 14" x 22" x 24" in size. The photoperiod was 12 hours of light and 12 hours of dark. The test was done during winter.

My doves may loaf or rest during part of the day, but I wouldn't have called it sleeping. Perhaps their doves were bored? Well, live and learn. But I'm jealous now; my doves get to sleep twice as much as I do! ?

ADAN 1985 (Jan-Feb):14

...W. J. Miller