



COMMONWEALTH of the
NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

- Farallon de Pajaros (Uracas)
- ? • Maug
- Asuncion

- Agrihan
- Pagan
- Alamagan
- Guguan
- Sarigan
- Anatahan
- Farallon de Medinilla
- Saipan
- Tinian
- Aguiguan
- Rota

* Distribution in the CNMI



PHOTOS BY SCOTT VOIGT



NATIVE FOREST BIRD

WHITE-THROATED GROUND-DOVE

Paluman kotbata *Chamorro* Apooka *Carolinian*

IDENTIFICATION

Male white-throated ground-doves have white heads and throats and brown bodies and wings. Females are completely covered with chocolate brown feathers. Ground-doves can be recognized by their short, low, growling calls that can be heard in the early mornings or late afternoons.

HABITAT and FEEDING

White-throated ground-doves are endemic to the Marianas Islands and Yap and are found mainly in native forests. They feed on a variety of native seeds, flowers and berries including those from *Melanolepis* (alum), *Psychotria* (aploghating), *Eugenia* (agatelang) and *Maytenus* (lulujut). They forage while perched on the branches of trees and often fly high over the forest top.

REPRODUCTION

Males show aggression towards each other during courtship because the one who wins will mate with the female. Males will fight one another by attacking each others heads and necks, sometimes falling through the trees. A unique courtship display, males strut around, puffing out their chest feathers to attract a mate. Parents build loose nests of sticks high up in the trees. Both parents incubate the eggs. Once hatched, chicks are fed mashed up, regurgitated

seeds from the mouths of their parents. Young ground-doves are fed this ground up mixture, until they are almost as large as their parents.

THREATS and CONSERVATION

Threats to native forest birds, including White-throated ground-doves, are habitat loss and degradation. They are especially vulnerable in areas where much of the native forest has been altered by humans or introduced mammals. Another threat to this species is human presence. Ground-doves are extremely shy and often flush from forest disturbances such as hiking or hunting activities. On Anatahan, they may often fall prey to the resident hawks.

Predators of ground-doves include rats, cats, monitor lizards and predatory birds. This species is susceptible to extinction by the introduction of other predators because it is only found in the Marianas Islands. A Guam subspecies *Gallicolumba xanthonura xanthonura* is extinct due to predation by the Brown treesnake (*Boiga irregularis*). It was last seen on Guam in 1987.

The White-throated ground-doves are protected native forest birds in the CNMI. They are one of the few bird species found in both the northern and southern CNMI islands.

Protected areas of native forest and efforts to keep the the Brown treesnake out of the CNMI will help protect this bird.



ARTIST
DOUGLAS
PRATT

Gallicolumba xanthonura

STRUT YOUR STUFF

To attract a mate, the male ground-doves strut by females, puffing out their white chest feathers.

FACTOID!



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