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## A Ground Dove at DeSoto NWR

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### A GROUND DOVE AT DESOTO NWR

A Ground Dove was sighted at DeSoto NWR on 18 November 1979, for about ten minutes around 11 AM, in the hedgerows opposite the entrance to the nature trail, south of the swimming beach.

It was a small dove, only slightly longer but chunkier than Tree Sparrows sitting in the same small tree. There was gray scalloping on the head and breast, the eye was dark, the beak light colored at the base, with the rest appearing dark. The wing was grayish with black speckling from shoulder to tip. We noticed a short tail when the bird was sitting, and it looked black on the underside of the tip. When it flew we were able to see the silhouette, but not the rufous patches in the wings. It had a short, stubby tail, short wings, and a rapid wing beat.

We estimated that the first sighting was at approximately 40 feet, while it sat in the tree. We observed it for about five minutes through 6×25 Bushnell binoculars and a 25×60 Bushnell scope. It flew down into a field of corn stubble. Later we observed it (at about 80 feet) at about 50 yards south, sitting in another small tree. The sun was behind us when we studied the bird sitting, but it flew in the direction of the sun.

We have observed Ground Doves on many occasions in Florida and Texas.

— Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue 68005

This is probably the second or third record for Nebraska, and certainly the best documented. They were reported from Lincoln 13 and 15 November 1976 (*Am. Birds* 31:96; *NBR* 45:19), but local birders who were aware of the sightings at the time could not find the birds, and later efforts to contact the observer (who was a visitor to Nebraska) were unsuccessful. After the DeSoto sighting a birder told the editor that about ten years ago a couple of birds had flown across in front of the birder's car and perched on a fence near Offutt AFB. The birder stopped the car and observed the birds for a short time before the birds flew on. The birder was familiar with Ground Doves from having spent some time in the south, and was sure that they were Ground Doves, but since it was out of the bird's normal range, and they had not previously been reported from this area, the incident was not reported. The birder is still not willing to make an official report of the sighting.