

## Genus *Streptopelia* Bonaparte

*Streptopelia* Bonaparte, *Compt. Rend. Acad. Sci. Paris*, **40**, Jan. 1855, p. 17; Id. *Consp. Av.*, **2**, June 1855, p. 63. Type, by subsequent designation, *Columba risoria* Linnaeus. (Gray, *Cat. Gen. Subgen. Bds*, 1855, p. 150.)

Goodwin (1983) notes that members of this exclusively Old World genus are commonly called turtledoves, and are usually thought of as ‘doves’ in contradistinction to ‘pigeons’. They are small to mid-sized, trim pigeons with fairly long tails. Greys and browns, often with a mauve or pinkish tinge to the body feathers, feature in the subtle plumage colouration of most species, and many have black or black and white

feathers forming a patch or collar on the neck. Many species also have striking tail patterns, which feature prominently when the tail is fanned during display flights or as a bird takes flight. There is little or no sexual dichromatism in most species and juveniles are duller than adults, usually lacking the head or neck markings.

## Subgenus *Spilopelia* Sundevall

*Spilopelia* Sundevall, *Meth. nat. Av. disp. Tent.*, (1872) 1873, p. 100. Type, by original designation, *Columba tigrina* Temminck (= *Streptopelia chinensis tigrina* Temminck).

This subgenus is one of three ‘species groups’ recognised by Goodwin (1983). It comprises two species that stand rather apart from other groups, appearing to lack any equivalent of the excitement cry which, in differing forms, is a characteristic vocalisation in other

turtledoves. In their rather long tails and short wings, they show some resemblance to the *Geopelia* doves, but Goodwin emphasises that this is due to convergence and not to any close relationship.