

Melanistic Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* in Morocco

Patrick Bergier

Une Tourterelle turque *Streptopelia decaocto* mélanique, observée à Tan Tan Plage, Maroc, le 26 avril 2001, est décrite. L'oiseau était presque entièrement noir, seules les rémiges secondaires et tertiaires, les couvertures et les scapulaires étant plus pâles, gris foncé. Cette aberration de plumage ne semble pas avoir été rapportée précédemment chez cette espèce.

The Eurasian Collared Dove reached Morocco in the late 1970s and subsequently spread rapidly across the entire country¹, including desert areas. On the Atlantic coast, it reached Dakhla in 1998 and is now resident in most of towns to the north of there.

On the 26 April 2001, the species was found to be common around the port and town of Tan Tan Plage (28°29'N 11°20'W). Among normal-plumaged birds,

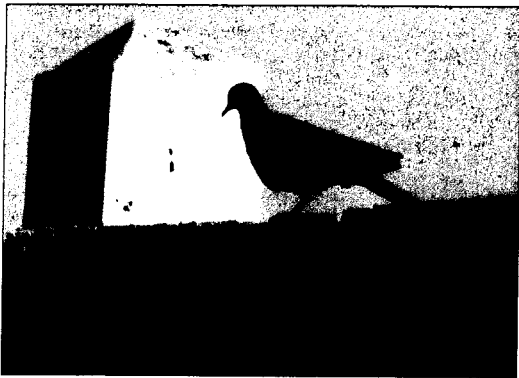
colleagues and myself discovered an almost entirely black individual near the Restaurant Equinoxe (Figs 1–3); only the secondaries, tertials, wing-coverts and scapulars appeared paler and greyer. Its behaviour was the same as the other individuals.

Slight colour variations are fairly common in this species², but I have failed to discover any instances of melanism in the literature. ♀

References

1. Bergier, P., Franchimont, J. and Thévenot, M. 1999. Implantation et expansion géographique de deux espèces de columbidés au Maroc: la Tourterelle turque *Streptopelia decaocto* et la Tourterelle maillée *Streptopelia senegalensis*. *Alauda* 67: 23–36.
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11 rue Saint Pol Roux, 78280 Guyancourt, France. E-mail: pbergier@yahoo.fr.



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Figures 1–3. Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*, Tan Tan Plage, Morocco, 26 April 2001 (Patrick Bergier)