

## Mourning Dove

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



The Mourning Dove is an extremely common wild bird across the United States and can be seen on a daily basis almost everywhere. This species, like all doves, is a fast flyer, capable of reaching speeds up to 55 miles per hour! You can easily decipher the Mourning Dove from other doves and pigeons by its pointed tail with white markings. The black spots on its face were used to help distinguish it from the now extinct Passenger Pigeon. The Mourning Dove's sad, mournful call allows us to easily recognize when this bird is near.

### Interesting Facts:

**Family:** Columbidae

**Scientific Name:** *Zenaida macroura*

**Location:** An extremely common wild bird, the Mourning Dove can be found almost anywhere, including open woods, deserts, forest edges, agricultural landscapes, suburbs, and cities.

**Migration:** In the summer, the Mourning Dove is found in southern Canada to as far south as Central America. In the winter, this species is found slightly south of the northernmost areas and throughout Central America.

**Nesting:** To find a mate, the male performs an aerial display where he descends in spiral flight. Once mated, the pair chooses a nest site and begins to build a nest. The male gathers nesting material while the female weaves the sticks, weeds, twigs, and pine needles into a loose, flat nest. Mourning Dove pairs usually have three or more broods a year and each clutch consists of two white eggs.

<b>Diet:</b>	In nature, the Mourning Dove eats weed seeds and grains and may eat some insects.
<b>Size and Color:</b>	The Mourning Dove is a medium-sized bird that is approximately 12" long. Its coloration is a grayish-brown with black dots on the wings and black spots on the cheeks. The male has an iridescent pink sheen on the sides of his neck and a bluish-gray cap. The female has an olive-gray colored cap with a green iridescent sheen. The male is also slightly larger.
<b>Song:</b>	The Mourning Dove call is sad and mournful, giving this species its name. You may recognize this species when you hear its "ooah oo oo oo" call.
<b>Attracting:</b>	Mourning Doves are typically ground feeders. You can attract this species when you place a <a href="#">platform feeder</a> filled with <a href="#">mixed</a> or <a href="#">sunflower seed</a> . You will also have success attracting this species when you scatter <a href="#">seed</a> on the ground.