

SANTA CRUZ GROUND-DOVE

What are they called?

Scientific: *Gallicolumba sanctaecrucis*

Other English:

Santa cruz ground dove

French: Gallicolombe de Santa Cruz

Bislama:

Vernacular (local name):

Pimo (Nolovula, Santo)

A little bit about them:

These are small round birds of the forest floor. They are only found in the Solomon Islands (Santa Cruz Islands) and on Santo in Vanuatu. They live in old growth forest, 300-1000m elevation. It is believed the Santa Cruz Ground Dove forages only on the ground, but perches on low branches and roosts in trees.

Their diet includes seeds, berries and young shoots it finds when foraging the forest floor, insects and worms. It's call is a slow series of up to 15 low woop noises.

What do they look like?

These small, plump birds grow up to 25 cm long. Males, seen below, have grey heads, very pale white/brown chests and a dark brown belly. The back and wings are grey-brown with glossy purple feathers on the wings. Females are duller with a reddish-brown head, neck and back. They have some green glossy feathers on their mostly brown back, and a grey belly. They each have black eyes with a short black bill, a short tail and red feet. Young birds are brown, sometimes with some purple on the wing.



Source: Ray Pierce Pacific

Did you know?

- They prefer to escape from an intruder by running to hide in the undergrowth, rather than fly.



Source: Ray Pierce Pacific

Santa Cruz Ground-Doves are classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List.

Why are they threatened?

- Predation by invasive species such as rats, cats, dogs and pigs.
- Habitat loss caused by the clearing of land for development.
- Habitat loss due to the invasive vine *Merremia peltata* kills huge numbers of canopy trees in the Vatthe Conservation Area.
- Hunting by people.

What do they do for us?

- They feed on fruit and seeds enabling them to disperse seeds.
- Their foraging and scratching on the forest floor cycles nutrients in the forest ecosystem.
- Provide tourism opportunities through activities such as bird watching.

What can we do for them?

- ✓ Castrate and spay pet cats and dogs to reduce feral animals preying on adults, chicks and eggs.
- ✓ Enforce regulations in existing protected areas, and identify other nesting and breeding sites and take conservation measures to protect them.
- ✓ Increase awareness of the threats to this species and discourage hunting.
- ✓ Control *Merremia* vine.

Want to know more?

- ❖ IUCN website: www.iucnredlist.org
- ❖ Book: ***Birds of Melanesia*** by Guy Dutson

