

PLICATION (TAILFOLDING) IN RINGNECK DOVES

by

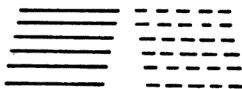
Wilmer J. Miller

Back when I was a lad of 22 (1947) I wrote down a batch of observations on ringneck doves, Streptopelia risoria. Some I worked up and published on later*. Some remained isolated observations. One of these observation "bits" involved tail folding. I don't mean "lacing a fantail" kind of human behavior. But how do doves naturally hold their 12 main tail feathers (rectrices) inter-related?

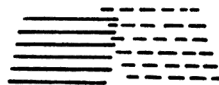
My observations are limited and I may not be justified in generalizing, but perhaps other breeders of doves can verify or add to my data.

Squabs or squeakers about 4 weeks old tend to hold the tail feathers as two sets of six, right and left rectrices, side by side with only a slight fanning out of the bottom ones.

YOUNG:



OR:



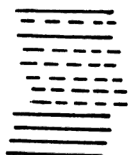
Older juveniles about six weeks to three months of age carry the right six over the left six completely overlaid vertically, or start to interlace as adults.

JUVENILE



The mature or adult birds over six months of age usually intermixed the rectrices a little bit. They might refold the tail in somewhat different sequences. The top 3 or 4 feathers were interlaced followed by all the 4 or 5 remaining ones of one side over the other side. I tested 10 adults with all rectrices complete and unbroken.

MATURE



OR



7/10

3/10

I used dashes for the right side six rectrices, since color will not show in ordinary duplication.

Could this be a recapitulation of tail carriage in their evolution? Can you add to the data?

*Miller, W. J. and L. S. Miller 1958. Synopsis of behaviour traits of the ring neck dove. Animal Behaviour 6: 3-8.