

DOVE TAIL-LENGTH

by

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The last couple of years of the I.S.U. dove colonies existence included measurements on the length of the main adult tail-feather (rectrix) usually at about 6 months of age. A few had quite long tails, nearly 1/3 longer than the shortest. These measurements were studied by Mr. Bryan A. Jones as an undergraduate research topic in the spring of 1983. Three populations of ringnecks were compared:

1. Straight S. risoria from several sources in the U.S.A.
2. S. risoria (douraca) stock. Originally 6 albinos from Japan were infertile inter se. They were outcrossed to U.S. ringnecks and reextracted with near normal fertility.
3. A mixture of S. risoria with S. humilis, but mostly risoria.

Jones found about 5% greater length for males than females. This was fairly consistent for the 3 populations, but there was great individual variation. The sex difference is similar to that for body weight, but very little correlation of tail length with body weight was found. Since long (or short) tail length tended to run in families, selection should succeed in producing long or short tailed stocks. Do any of your ringnecks exceed the extremes listed?

Summary of tail length measurements in ringneck doves.

<u>Population</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>No. of birds</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Range</u>
1	M	183	12.27 cm.	10.6 — 14.9 cm.
	F	194	11.49	10.2 — 13.3
2	M	100	11.93	11.0 — 13.1
	F	113	11.34	10.2 — 12.3
3	M	82	11.60	10.5 — 12.7
	F	88	11.00	10.2 — 12.0

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DOVE TAILS

As reported previously the ringneck dove colony at the Genetics Laboratory of Iowa State University was discontinued in 1982, and the birds have been dispersed. Wilmer Miller still has a lot of accumulated records awaiting analysis. Measurements of adult tail-feather lengths had been made routinely in recent years, and these have been studied as an undergraduate research topic by Mr. Bryan A. Jones (Spring 1983). Three populations were compared: two were straight Streptopelia risoria and the third was a mixture of risoria and humilis, mainly risoria. These populations are labeled A, B, and C resp.:

Population	Sex	No. of birds	Average	Range
A	M	183	12.27 Cm.	10.6 — 14.9
	F	194	11.49	10.2 — 13.3
B	M	100	11.93	11.0 — 13.1
	F	113	11.34	10.2 — 12.3
C	M	82	11.60	10.5 — 12.7
	F	88	11.00	10.2 — 12.0

There was about 5% greater length for males than females, fairly consistent for the populations, but great individual variation. The sex difference is similar to that for body weight, but very little correlation of rectrix length with body weight was found. Marked family differences in tail lengths also indicated that selection should be successful.