

Some home owners now have Ringneck doves in open dove coats in their gardens, to come and go as they please.

In parts of Africa and Australia they have increased to millions. They learn to follow maize planters and eat the maize seeds, causing lower maize yields. They know the seeds are about 20 cm apart.

Here it could be twenty or thirty years before they increase to uncontrollable numbers.

They should be forbidden now, and all disposed of now, when it is possible to do so. Some people in the Waikato keep them as pets, so will not want to lose them. Fantail pigeons could replace them and would never become a problem because they are not naturally wild, can't fly far to fend for themselves, and don't go far from their domestic source of food.

One pair became three pairs in one year, which then become 12 pairs.

I warned MAF and the government, but as typical bureaucrats, they ignored it, so in a fifty years time maize growers and some other growers, will have their seedlings eaten. In between times they eat Poa and other plant seeds and green leaves.

We all regret the pests that have entered or been brought into NZ with good intentions, but have multiplied in our kind climate, and become a problem.

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Ringneck doves have been allowed into NZ, and are spreading like they have in South Africa and Australia, eating grain then fruit when grains run out.

The Barbary dove, ringneck dove, ring-necked turtle dove, or ring dove (*Streptopelia risoria*) is a domestic member of the dove family. Pigeons and doves constitute the bird family Columbidae, which includes about 310 species. Pigeons and doves are stout-bodied birds with short necks, and short slender bills. They primarily feed on seeds, fruits, and plants. This family occurs worldwide, but the greatest variety is in the Indomalaya and Australasia ecozones.

What I wrote was that it is a huge problem in parts of South Africa and could be increasing here, so I suggested that ring neck doves be banned in New Zealand. They have no benefits and they are exotic. As you know, many exotic flora and fauna have established themselves in New Zealand with disastrous effects, and currently it would be easier to get rid of them because their numbers are so small and most are in aviaries or dove cotes in lifestyle areas.

I know of one wild flock, which was wild around Chartwell, Hamilton. This wild flock was reported to the Council, and appears to have now gone. Also, a neighbour has some in dove cotes, they are free flying.

Either way, if you could answer the following questions for me, that would be greatly appreciated. We regularly deal with MPI with regards to spreading the word about pests, so if these doves could pose a problem in our highly agricultural region in future, I'm sure our readers would love to know more.

Also, if you know someone from the Franklin area who's as concerned about these birds as yourself, please do let me know their details. While we're happy enough to quote an expert from our neighbouring region, it'd be more effective if we spoke to someone from our own backyard.

- Aside from maize crops, what else do they favour? Seeds from the smallest size up to a maximum of maize, because they can't swallow larger one, they have ruined crops in Australia.



In the Chartwell area they have increased from none in 2012 to hundreds now. Two became 12 in two locations. So the 12 can be 72 next year.

What steps should councils and MPI be taking now to check the population of these birds?

To make them illegal and to get rid of the ones here now, which will be easier now, from what I've seen in the Waikato.

What do you think will be the impact on agriculture in Waikato (and Franklin?) if these measures are not put in place now?

As I wrote before, their numbers will increase to become a problem which may take 20 or more years. Again, the sooner MPI acts, the easier it would be to prevent the problem. The reply from the MPI seems to pass the responsibility onto Regional Councils, and this is a perfect recipe for nothing to get done about it.

Ring neck doves in South Africa have many more predators than here in New Zealand, and the climate is much kinder. For that reason, they could increase much more quickly here.

I have noticed that the ring necked doves in New Zealand are slightly larger than those in South Africa, which is typical where climate and supply of feeds are easy to find.