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Author's address: Department of Zoology, University of Helsinki, P. Rautatiekatu 13, SF-00100 Helsinki 10, Finland

## A mixed pair of Collared *Streptopelia decaocto* and Turtle Doves *S. turtur* in Kokkola, W Finland, in 1978—79

Harri Hongell & Lennart Saari

Hybrids between the Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* and other *Streptopelia* species are common, whereas those between *S. decaocto* and *Columba* species are rare (Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer 1980). Earlier observations of hybrids between *S. decaocto* and the Turtle Dove *S. turtur* include that of Voous (1963) and the record from Finland by Lehtikoinen (1977).

To our knowledge no report on the behaviour of such a mixed pair in the wild exists and therefore these field observations deserve to be published. The observations were made by Hongell, and the report was written by Saari.

On 26 May 1978 one single male *turtur* arrived in the Länsipuisto park in Kokkola (63°51'N, 23°07'E), where it joined three local pairs of *decaocto* and was observed up to 27 June. Turtle Dove courted a *decaocto* female and one copulation was observed.

26 May 19.30 hrs: A female (!) *decaocto* repeatedly approached the *turtur* male perched on a birch branch 8 m above the ground in the centre of the park. The female approached nodding and tripping. Finally both birds were sitting silently next to each other.

3 June 04.40—05.20 hrs: At 04.40 the male performed an aerial chase. Both birds alighted on a birch branch and the female crouched almost immediately, to which

the male responded by an attempt to copulate. It was interrupted by a fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* defending its nest. The male was attacked and fell off the back of the female.

A new attempt was accompanied by fluffing of neck feathers, nodding and continuous cooing. This time it was successful, although the smaller *turtur* male had obvious difficulty in copulating with the bigger *decaocto* female. The tail of the male scarcely reached low enough. This behaviour lasted for only a few seconds. Somewhat later, the female was seen preening perched on a branch of a nearby birch and the male approached with fluffed feathers, strong pumping movements and cooings.

At 05.15 hrs both birds alighted on a TV aerial on a nearby house. The male approached the female, flew a circle in the air and continued to court the female. Finally at 05.20 hrs both birds flushed and an "extra" *decaocto*, probably a male, joined the company and flew away with the female. The *turtur* male returned to the aerial and was observed there at 12.30 hrs, cooing eagerly.

As a curiosity, it is worth mentioning that both the mixed pair and an incubating *decaocto* female were attracted to the observer through imitation.

20 June at 03.30 hrs: The *turtur* male was heard cooing eagerly from what was supposed to be a nest at the edge of the park. It was situated in a birch ca. 10 m above ground level and about 1.5 m from the trunk, at the tip of a branch on a witches' broom. The female was watching 4–5 m away in the same tree. In between the male chased the female in the air. The female was the one with which the male had copulated earlier. The identification was based upon individual recognition marks and typical behavioural patterns.

22 June at 18.05 hrs: The male was again at the "nest", where the female was possibly sitting, but owing to the traffic and interest of the crowds this could not be ascertained.

26 June at 07.20 hrs: The *turtur* male and a *decaocto* male were engaged in a cooing contest in the park.

27 June: No birds in the "nest"; in the morning both birds were seen on the nest branch. After this date the male was not observed any more in that year.

End of May — end of June 1979:

One *turtur* male and a *decaocto*, probably a female, were often observed at Hakalahti ca. 1.5 km from the 1978 site. The birds could be observed at close range since they preferred to feed in a courtyard (Mr. R. Storbäck). The next year no *S. turtur* was observed in Kokkola.

The reasons for this association must naturally remain a matter of speculation. The most probable explanation is that a surplus *decaocto* female chose the "next best" alternative as the conspecifics were already paired. In the absence of conspecific females the *turtur* male was willing to pair with a bird which most closely resembled the right one. The observations in 1979 may be explained by the same birds recognising each others when meeting again. Why the *decaocto* female did not pair off with a conspecific during spring 1979 remains a mystery, unless it had some abnormal preferences or became imprinted in 1978 to *S. turtur*. *S. decaocto* is a scarce sedentary bird in Finland breeding at a few, mostly coastal, localities, whereas *S. turtur* is a rare highly migratory visitor to Finland, usually arriving in May. However, during the last few years the observations of *S. turtur* have increased considerably. As the case reported by Lehtikoinen (1977) shows, some mixed pairs may succeed in producing young. This might slow down the establishment of *turtur* in Finland, if the arriving birds decide to settle for a local *decaocto*, instead of waiting, on the chance that a conspecific will turn up.

## Selostus: Turkin- ja turturikyhyhyn sekapari Kokkolassa

Kokkolan Länsipuistoon (63°51'N, 23°07'E) saapui turturikyhykkoiras 26.5.1978 kolmen turkinkyhykyparin seuraksi viiheyden 27.6. asti. Turturikyhykky liehitteli turkinkyhykynaarasta ja parittelikin kerran onnistuneesti (3.6.). Sitä edeltävän yrityksen oli katkaissut räkättirastaa pesänpuolustushyökkäys. Turturikyhykky havaittiin turisemassa ilmeisessä "soidinpesässä" puiston laidalla 20.6. ja 22.6. oli turkinkyhykynaaras mahdollisesti pesässä (tämä jäi runsaan väenpaljouden takia varmistamatta). Vielä 27.6. sekapari nähtiin lähellä "pesää", mutta sen jälkeen ei turturikyhykyä havaittu.

Vuonna 1979 havaittiin turkinkyhykky turturikyhyhyn seurassa Kokkolan Hakalahdessa n. 1,5 km edellisestä paikasta toukokuun lopulta kesäkuun loppuun.

Seuraavana vuonna ei turturikyhykyä Kokkolassa havaittu.

Selitys tapahtumaan saattaa piillä siinä, että paritomaksi jäänyt turkinkyhykynaaras hyväksyi puolisoseen "toiseksi parhaan" vaihtoehdon. Seuraavana vuonna yksilöllisellä tunnistamisella saattoi olla osuutta asiaan.

Turkinkyhyhyn risteytymähavaintoja tunnetaan runsaasti. Suomesta Lehtikoinen (1977) on julkaissut havainnon turkin- ja turturikyhyhyn risteytymästä. Tietävästi ei kuitenkaan tällaisen sekaparin käyttäytymisestä luonnossa ole aiemmin julkaistu havaintoja.

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Authors' addresses: H. Hongell, Raahenkatu 46, SF-67200 Kokkola 20, Finland;  
L. Saari, Department of Agricultural and Forest Zoology, University of Helsinki, SF-00710 Helsinki 71, Finland.