



PALUMAN SINISA **(Philippine turtle-dove)** *Streptopelia bitorquata*

Introduced Species

Called the paluman sinisa in Chamorro, the Philippine turtle-dove was brought to Guam by the Spanish in the 1770s. Originally from the Philippines, this bird adapted well to Guam's environment and spread all over the island.

A member of the pigeon family, paluman sinisa eats seed and small fruits, which it stores in a sack in its throat, called a crop. The food is digested later.

This bird nests year-round on Guam. It makes a weak nest of twigs in small trees and shrubs. Two eggs are usually laid, which the adults take turn sitting on and incubating for 17 days. Once the baby doves hatch, they are fed "pigeon's milk," a white liquid made in the lining of the crop, for one to two weeks. At this age, the chicks have to stick their beaks into their parent's mouth to eat this food. As they get older, their diet shifts to seeds and fruit. They remain in the nest for about 16 to 19 days after hatching and during this time they grow flight feathers and learn to fly. After leaving the nest, the young usually stay nearby and continue to be fed by their parents.

Paluman sinisa were once numerous on Guam and a hunting season was set aside for this popular game bird. Although still found throughout the island, their numbers have declined in recent years and have since been taken off the game list, which means that it can no longer be hunted. Brown tree snake predation is the cause for the bird's decline. The snake eats the eggs and young of the turtle-doves. If the snake population can be controlled, the bird probably will recover quickly and can again be hunted.