

A ROCK DOVE BATHING IN DEEP WATER

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At noon on Saturday, June 13, 1981, Ellen G. Fader and I were preparing to sail a small boat out into Herring Bay from a dock in Deale, Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Our attention was drawn to a Rock Dove (*Columba livia*) that was circling low near the boat. The dove glided to within a foot or so of the surface of the water, which at that point is about six feet deep, then flapped its wings strongly and settled on the surface. It dipped its head underwater several times and splashed the water backward over its wings and body. The dove appeared to be very buoyant, like a small gull. It remained there for about 30 seconds, not swimming at all but simply floating. As our boat cleared the dock and headed toward the dove, it rose from the surface with a few powerful wingbeats and flew up and away.

I have never seen or heard of any species of dove resting on the surface of a body of water, and I was astounded to witness this event.

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