

Sighting of a Melanistic Zebra Dove

Tuck-Hong Tang

On the morning of 19 April 2026, ten members of the Malaysian Nature Society visited Kapar Power Station, Selangor, Malaysia, to conduct a shorebird count. Towards the end of the count, we noticed a dark bird perched on a bare tree beside an ash pond. We trained our binoculars on the bird and could identify it as a Zebra Dove *Geopelia striata* but with unusual dark feathers (Plate 1). Notably, the bluish-grey feathers of the head and the pink of the breast and underparts were replaced by dark melanistic feathers, while the bare parts remained unaffected.



Plate 1: Melanistic Zebra Dove. Kapar Power Station, Selangor, Malaysia, 19 April 2026.

Melanism is an "*aberrant production and distribution into the feather cells of normal melanin (not necessarily an increase of pigment)*" with feet, bill and eyes normal (van Grouw 2021). To my knowledge, melanistic Zebra Doves have not previously been documented in Malaysia (Amar-Singh HSS et al. 2024). However, the Macaulay Library images show a few observations of melanistic Zebra Doves seen in the United States and Thailand (Kirwan et al. 2026).

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**References**

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