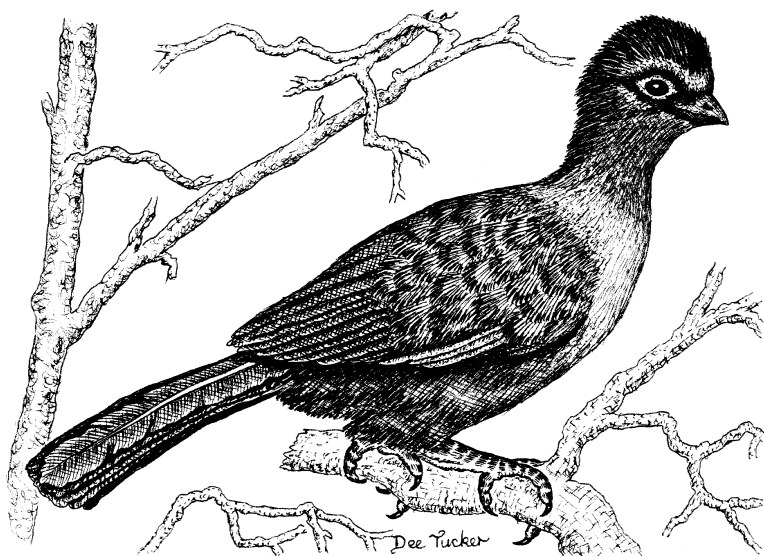




Purplecrested Lourie Bloukuiflourie

Tauraco porphyreolophus

The Purplecrested Lourie is less restricted to evergreen forest than the Knysna/Green Lourie *T. corythaix* complex, but it does not range as widely through the Afrotropical region, reaching no further north than the equator. Its southern limit was placed at 32°S by Rowan (1983) but is shown at about 31°S on the distribution map. It occurs along the mesic east of South Africa and Swaziland, eastern and northern Zimbabwe, with a pocket population in the Matobos Hills (2028) of Zimbabwe. The nominate race occurs in the atlas region, with a second race north of the Zambezi River valley (Clancey 1980b).

It is easily distinguished from other louries by its black beak, lack of white markings around the eye and its purplish-blue crest. It is more vociferous than other forest louries, the crowing call being faster and rising in pitch. It also gives a loud, 'kok-kok' call, especially when disturbed and flying precipitately from the canopy of a tree. It spends most of its time in tree canopies, running about nimbly and bounding from limb to limb. It drinks and bathes regularly and is a common visitor to garden bird baths and even bird tables, if fruit is put out. It is usually seen in pairs or in groups of up to six birds (Rowan 1983).

Habitat: It favours coastal forests in the southeast, occurring alongside the Knysna Lourie *T. c. corythaix* in southern KwaZulu-Natal and the neighbouring eastern Cape Province, but also ranging widely into moist woodlands. It is common in riverine forest and dense thickets on termite mounds which provide both cover and food resources in the form of fruiting plants for extended periods of the year. The vegetation analysis shows its preference for floral communities of the East Coast Littoral; high reporting rates for arid habitats are probably derived from grid cells with riverine forest or termitaria thickets. In Zimbabwe, it may move into miombo woodland during the wet season (Irwin

1981). It is not normally found far from tall trees and does not often venture much above 1300 m except in some areas of the Zimbabwe plateau. It commonly frequents parks and gardens of cities such as Durban (2931CC) and Harare (1731CC), and may associate with introduced trees, such as cypresses, for the cover they provide (Fry *et al.* 1988).

Movements: Some short-distance movements, involving dispersal out of riverine growth into surrounding woodlands during the rains, have been reported from Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981). This may be responsible for the small decrease in reporting rates in the winter months in Zone 5 if the majority of atlas records came from woodland rather than riverine areas. No regular seasonal movements have been reported from other areas.

Breeding: The models show summer peaks and are in accordance with published information (Rowan 1983; Fry *et al.* 1988). Egg-laying evidently peaks in November, with 94% of a sample of 34 records October–January (Rowan 1983).

Interspecific relationships: It overlaps with the Knysna Lourie at the moist end of its habitat spectrum and with Grey Louries *Corythaixoides concolor* at the dry end. It is liable to be found together with one or the other at fruiting trees or thickets. Chasing has sometimes been observed between this species and Knysna Louries in such situations, but they have also been seen to feed amicably together, as with Grey Louries (Rowan 1983).

Historical distribution and conservation: In the past, this and the Knysna Lourie were hunted for their flight feathers which were used as adornment, especially in the headdress of African noblemen and warriors. This practice is still current in Swaziland (V. Parker pers. comm.). There is no documented information to indicate what effect this has on populations.

Louries are protected birds in South Africa but are popular aviary species in demand by the international trade in birds and are listed in CITES Appendix II (Kelso 1995). As frugivores they are also susceptible to tree cutting for firewood or any other form of timber exploitation, which immediately robs them of habitat and food resources.

T.B. Oatley

Recorded in 467 grid cells, 10.3%
Total number of records: 14 865
Mean reporting rate for range: 44.3%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

