

Slenderbilled Honeyguide

Dunbekheuningvoël

Prodotiscus zambeziae

The distribution of the Slenderbilled Honeyguide stretches from southern Angola across Zambia to Mozambique, with two fragmented populations in southeastern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, and in westcentral Ethiopia (Fry *et al.* 1988). In southern Africa, it occurs mainly in Zimbabwe, more commonly above 900 m, and therefore it is absent from the middle Zambezi and Limpopo river valleys. The records in northern Namibia and northern Botswana represent the southern periphery of the Angolan range. There are several records in Namibia along the Kavango near Andara (1821AB) and from the Okavango west to Tsodilo Hills (1821D) in northern Botswana. There is an isolated record from a densely wooded kloof in the Tswapong Hills (2227C) in eastern Botswana in August 1990 (Hunter 1992).

Cassin's Honeyguide *P. insignis* in north-western Angola has no known contact with the Slenderbilled Honeyguide, but this is possible in Angola and southeastern Zaire. These two species constitute a superspecies (Fry *et al.* 1988).

It is nondescript and inconspicuous except when displaying when its white outer rectrices are noticeable. It was most likely under-reported. Reporting rates tended to be higher in winter (June–August) when it is possibly more visible, joining bird-parties and displaying territorially. Reporting rates were lower during breeding when it is inconspicuous in more dense summer vegetation.

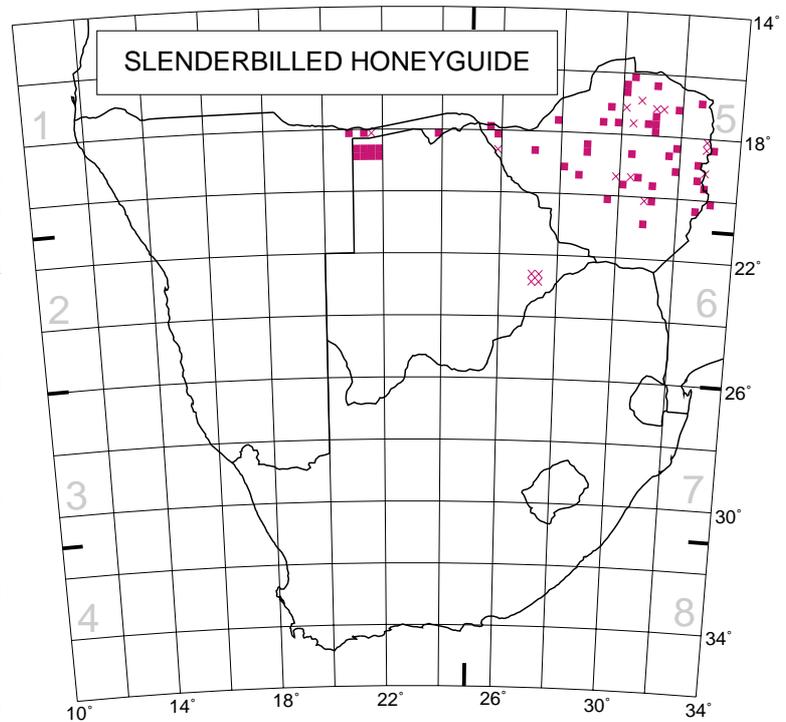
The preferred habitat is broadleaved woodland, particularly miombo and *Baikiaea* woodlands (Irwin 1981). This is confirmed by the vegetation analysis which shows highest reporting rates in Miombo, and marginal reporting from Mopane and Arid Woodland.

It is a brood parasite of *Zosterops* spp.; the Yellow White-eye *Z. senegalensis* is the principal host in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981). Breeding August–October with a September peak (Fry *et al.* 1988) coincides with the breeding peak of the Yellow White-eye in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981). The Slenderbilled–Cassin's Honeyguide superspecies is the only member of the genus to parasitize species that have open cup nests.

The Sharpbilled Honeyguide *P. regulus* overlaps the Slenderbilled Honeyguide throughout Zimbabwe, but is ecologically separated in more open woodland or areas of scattered trees (Irwin 1981). Adults differ, but immatures are similar.

The Slenderbilled Honeyguide is not endangered, but miombo woodlands are being destroyed by agriculture; therefore the species' conservation status needs monitoring.

D.B. Hammer and W.J. Chadder



Recorded in 65 grid cells, 1.4%
Total number of records: 106
Mean reporting rate for range: 3.6%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

