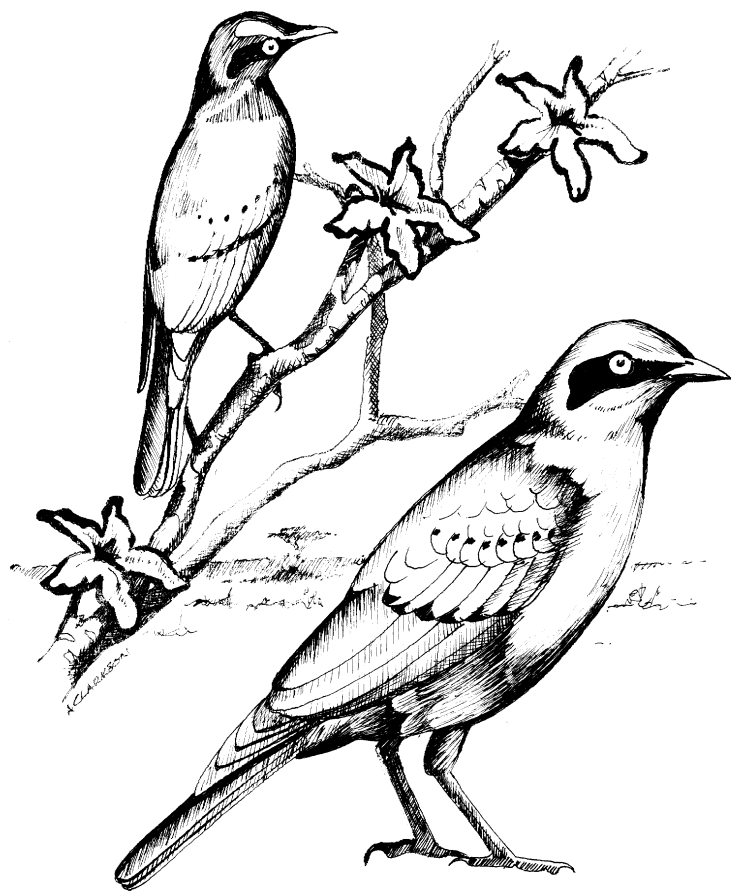




sidered the Greater Blue-eared Starling to be the most evenly distributed and commonest member of this genus.

Habitat: It is found in deciduous broadleaved or riverine woodland, especially miombo and mopane, thus resembling the Longtailed Starling *L. mevesii* in habitat preference. However, it is much commoner and more widely distributed on the Zimbabwe plateau, but less common in Namibia. In Zimbabwe it appears to avoid the Zambezi Valley.

Movements: Irwin (1981) noted a winter influx in some areas of Zimbabwe, and suggested that the birds wander widely. The models show variation in abundance, particularly in Zimbabwe (Zone 5), with higher reporting rates in winter and lower in summer. In Zone 1, which reflects the Okavango region in this case, a wet-season influx is apparent with fewer birds present in the dry winter. Post-breeding flocking would, however, also cause a drop in the frequency of encounters, and hence a drop in reporting rates. There are no ringing results to help resolve the directions of movements.

Breeding: Atlas records were from spring/summer with a peak October–November. In the Transvaal, egg-laying takes place October–November, and in Zimbabwe the peak months are September–November (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Interspecific relationships: Throughout its range it is frequently found in close association with similar-sized, congeneric species – in the atlas region these are the Glossy Starling and Lesser Blue-eared Starling – and they may also roost together. Irwin (1981) stated that ‘interspecific competition between the glossy starlings is apparent’.

Historical distribution and conservation: There is nothing to suggest that the current distribution differs from that in the past. The Greater Blue-eared Starling is one of the most widespread and abundant glossy starlings in Africa.

A.J.F.K. Craig

Greater Blue-eared Starling

Groot-blouoorglansspreeu

Lamprotornis chalybaeus

The Greater Blue-eared Starling is widespread in Zimbabwe and extends into the northern and eastern Transvaal lowveld, northern and eastern Botswana, and sparsely into northern Namibia. It is also widely distributed in Mozambique south of the Save River (Clancey 1971c). In Botswana the distribution coincides with more luxuriant vegetation available in major river systems. To the north it extends into Angola, through the savanna areas of Zambia and southern Zaire to Ethiopia, and across the Sahel to Senegal in West Africa (Hall & Moreau 1970).

This species is easily confused with the Glossy Starling *L. nitens*. Clancey (1964b) reported a sight record from the Transvaal/KwaZulu-Natal border, but it was not recorded during the Natal atlas (Cyrus & Robson 1980). In Zimbabwe the Greater and Lesser Blue-eared *L. chloropterus* Starlings are often confused in sight records, but Irwin (1981), who relied extensively on specimen records, con-

Recorded in 782 grid cells, 17.2%

Total number of records: 6755

Mean reporting rate for range: 28.6%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

