



Miombo Doublecollared Sunbird

Miombo-rooibandsuikerbekkie

Nectarinia manoensis

The Miombo Doublecollared Sunbird was formerly considered to be a race of the Lesser Doublecollared Sunbird *N. chalybea*, but more recently it has been separated as a full species (Clancey & Irwin 1978). It is distributed across most of the Zimbabwean plateau and eastwards into the eastern highlands up to 2200 m with no records below 750 m (Irwin 1981). It reappears north of the Zambezi Valley, from Zambia through to Tanzania, but there is no evidence of contact between the two populations, which may be effectively isolated by the Zambezi Valley. In Zimbabwe it is one of the commonest sunbirds, but even in prime habitat its numbers appear to fluctuate from year to year, although the factors determining this are not clear. There are a few records in northeastern Botswana at the edge of its Zimbabwean range (Borello 1992b).

Within its range in Zimbabwe there are no other similar male sunbirds. However, confusion can arise with young male Shelley's Sunbird *N. shelleyi* which occurs rarely in

the Zambezi Valley where the Miombo Doublecollared Sunbird is, however, absent. The juvenile plumage is not described in the earlier literature but within the first six weeks of fledging the young bird can look remarkably similar to a Yellowbellied Sunbird *N. venusta* and even in the hand a small female can easily be confused with that species (Tree 1991d).

Habitat: It typically occurs in miombo woodland, both the more mixed variety and purer stands of *Brachystegia*. It appears to favour those sectors of the woodland closer to drainage lines, although it does not normally frequent evergreen riparian growth. During the winter months when a large variety of plants rich in nectar are available, especially in gardens and parks, it may be found in considerable concentrations (Tree 1990d). In natural habitats, woodlands with a high concentration of parasitic flowering *Loranthus* are highly favoured. A wide range of other nectar-rich flowering plants are sought, both indigenous and alien, with *Tecomaria capense*, aloes, *Leonotis* and *Kniphophia* species topping the list (Tree 1990d).

Movements: Although the models reveal no strong evidence of seasonality, there is considerable local movement. Ringing studies have shown a rapid turnover of individuals at particular localities (Tree 1990d). The extent of these wanderings is not known but birds can occur at isolated patches of habitat on occasion. Birds found in the more artificial vegetation in and around cities tend to be sedentary.

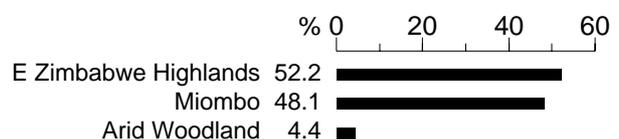
Breeding: Egg-laying may take place in any month of the year but the main season is August–November with a small secondary peak again May–June (Irwin 1981), possibly to coincide with the availability of nectar. The atlas breeding data also come from throughout the year, peaking September–November.

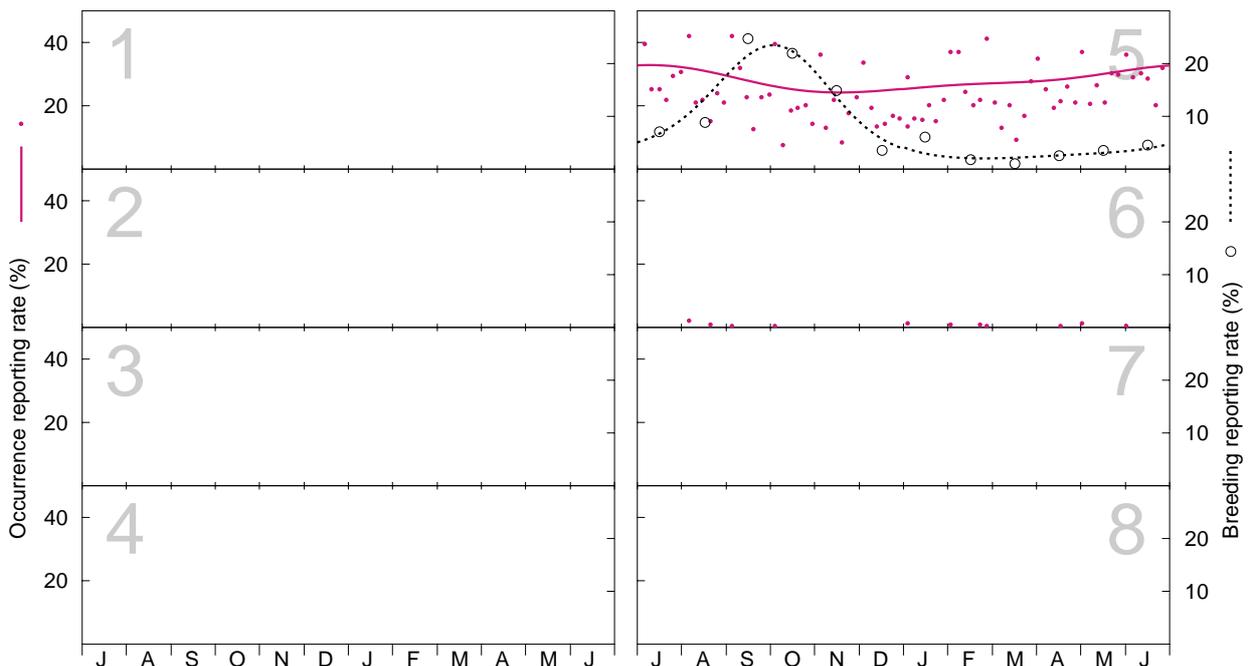
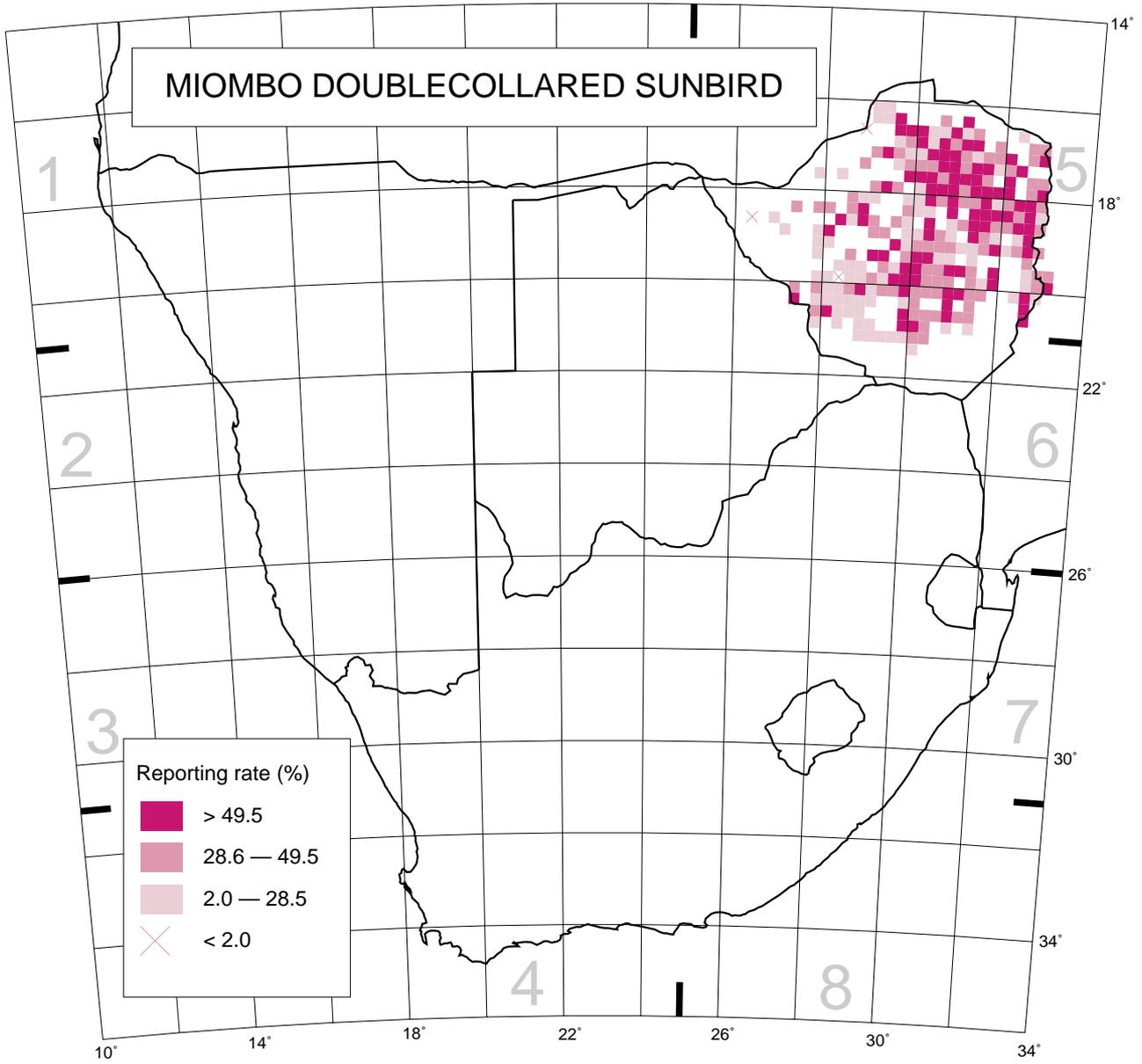
Historical distribution and conservation: The historical distributional limits do not differ much from that shown in Skead (1967c) for the *N. chalybea intermedia* subspecies of the Lesser Doublecollared Sunbird, its taxonomic status at the time. The atlas data provide additional records for those areas less accessible or inadequately covered in the past. The Miombo Doublecollared Sunbird appears to have benefited from a degree of fragmentation of miombo woodlands which has created a more open savanna. It does not appear to be as common in extensive, unbroken tracts of woodland, and is also uncommon in areas where extensive clearing of woodlands has occurred (Tree 1990d).

A.J. Tree

Extent of range: 272 grid cells, 6.0%
Total number of records: 3978
Mean reporting rate for range: 45.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 0, 0, 0, 0, 2456, 17, 0, 0; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 114, 0, 0, 0.