

Firecrowned Bishop

Vuurkopvink

Euplectes hordeaceus

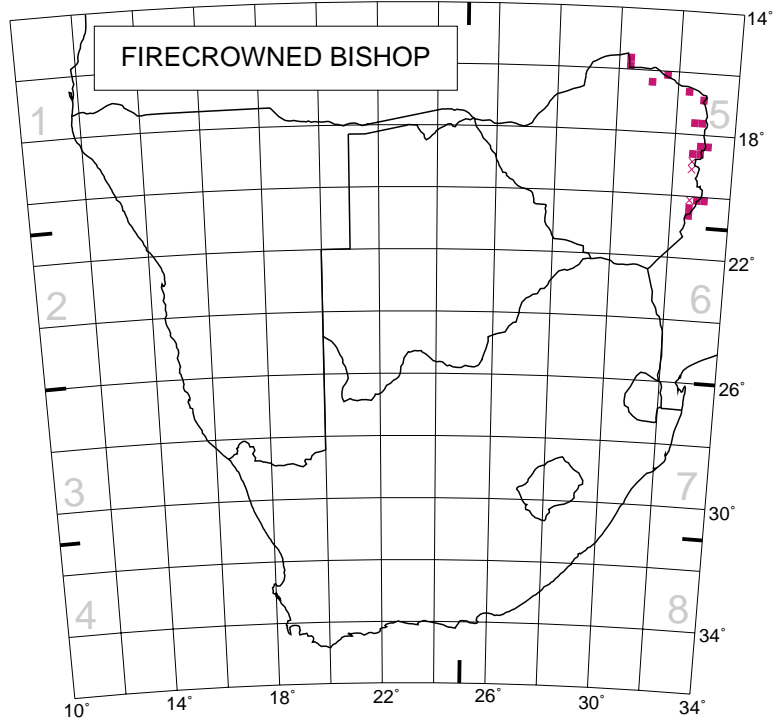
The Firecrowned Bishop occurs widely and, in places, abundantly to the north of southern Africa as far as the Sahel, appearing to be the tropical lowland equivalent of the Red Bishop *E. orix*. It occurs marginally in southern Africa in the lower-lying areas of eastern Zimbabwe up to about 1500 m. It also occurs locally and in small numbers in the eastern middle Zambezi Valley, occasionally as far upstream as Chirundu (1628CC), and in the Save Valley in the southeast (Irwin 1981). It occurs more widely to the east in Mozambique.

In southern Africa it is found in moist, open areas in miombo woodland. Its main breeding habitat is rank herbaceous growth and long grass, usually flanking streams or vleis, but it may also occur in rank vegetation around the margins of cultivated fields. During the dry season it forms roving flocks with other species of *Euplectes* and is easily overlooked in nonbreeding plumage.

The apparent seasonality of its presence shown in the model is due to its being overlooked in non-breeding plumage, rather than any movement out of the region during the winter–spring period. The atlas breeding records are for December, January and February. The egg-laying period of this colonially breeding species in Zimbabwe spans January–April, with the majority of records in February–March at the height of the wet season (Irwin 1981).

It occasionally occurs alongside the Red Bishop and the Yellowrumped Widow *E. capensis* but their preferred habitats differ. The Firecrowned Bishop is one of the few species to have survived the widespread modification of its original habitat brought about by intense arable agriculture in the lower-lying areas of eastern Zimbabwe. Indeed, it may have benefited from the more widespread growth of secondary grasses and forbs associated with crop farming.

A.J. Tree



Recorded in 19 grid cells, 0.4%
 Total number of records: 50
 Mean reporting rate for range: 7.4%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

