

Redfaced Crimsonwing

Roorugsaadvrettertjie

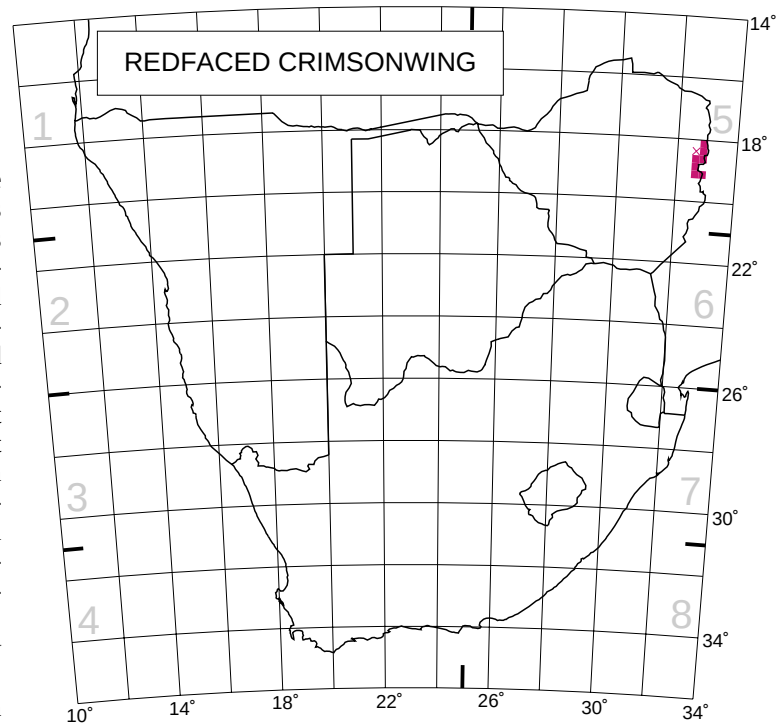
Cryptospiza reichenovii

The crimsonwings are a group of sparrow-sized, montane forest estrildids, of which only the Redfaced Crimsonwing occurs as far south as the eastern Zimbabwe highlands. The name is something of a misnomer; the wings are olive-grey, with little red colour, while the back and rump are indeed crimson. Benson (1946) considered it common but likely to be overlooked and Irwin (1981) indicated it to be generally common, particularly in the wetter localities. At Nyanga (1832BA) and the Vumba (1932BB), it is frequently found at edges and in clearings in montane forest, above 1400 m (Manson & Harwin 1991), but it is less so in the Chimanimani Mountains (1932C) further south. The population in eastern Zimbabwe and adjacent Mozambique is recognized as a separate subspecies, *C. r. homogenes*, endemic to the region (Clancey 1980b).

It inhabits forest edge, clearings and bracken scrub, rather than the forest interior, but may occur deep in the forest where the undergrowth is thick enough. At Nyanga it has adapted to plantations of *Pinus patula*, where it has been observed extracting seeds from pine cones still on the tree (Irwin 1981). It usually feeds on the ground.

Atlas breeding records came from January and March, while three earlier records were in November–January (Irwin 1981) and Maclean (1993b) gave the season as October–March. As with most estrildids, it makes a ball-type nest. This is placed at the edge of the forest or clearing, under a tree canopy some 3–5 m above the ground.

The Redfaced Crimsonwing is generally common in its preferred habitat, and although it has a restricted range in the region, it is of no particular conservation concern.



Recorded in 8 grid cells, 0.2%
Total number of records: 99
Mean reporting rate for range: 13.2%

R.M. Harwin

