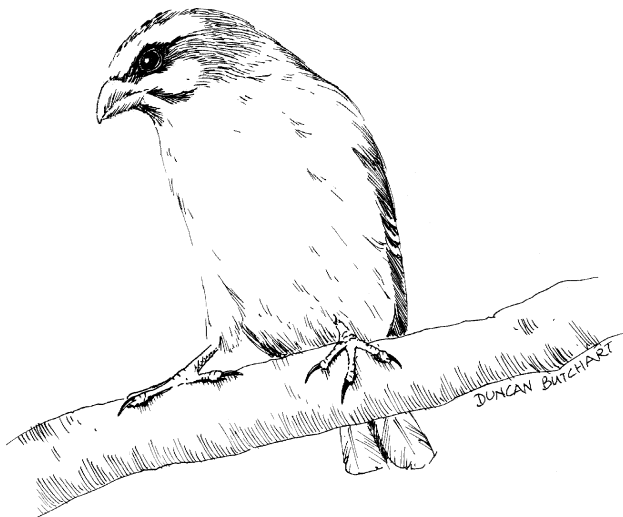




Yelloweyed Canary

Geeloogkanarie

Serinus mozambicus

This is an abundant, widespread Afrotropical species. The core distribution in southern Africa is situated in the moist, higher-rainfall eastern regions, and particularly along the northeastern escarpment in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It shows continuous areas of high reporting rates in KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and the eastern Transvaal. Overall, its distributional limits are relatively sharply demarcated. The three subspecies recognized by Clancey (1980b) show entirely continuous ranges on the present map.

It can be confused with other yellow canaries, such as with the larger Yellow *S. flaviventris* and Bully *S. sulphuratus* Canaries, and also with Lemonbreasted *S. citrinipectus* and Blackthroated *S. atrogularis* Canaries, both of which also have a yellow rump, and their vocalizations are also similar to those of the Yelloweyed Canary. The atlas data were vetted to remove possible cases of misidentification and the present map comprehensively reflects the range.

Habitat: It occurs in a wide variety of woodland habitats, from lightly wooded thornveld along the eastern seaboard into the moist broadleaved woodlands of the northern interior. In more arid regions it prefers mixed and broadleaved woodlands, e.g. along river courses (Penry 1994), and avoids *Acacia* woodlands on well-drained soils; the distribution also suggests that it needs surface water for drinking. The association with grassland biomes primarily results from alien plantations and gardens, to which it has adapted well (Cyrus & Robson 1980; Irwin 1981; Parker 1994).

Movements: Comparatively uniform reporting rates throughout the year in most zones suggest that it is sedentary (see also Irwin 1981). Some local movements may occur, particularly in the arid edge of its range in Botswana (Penry 1994), and vagrants have appeared in the eastern Karoo (Skead 1960). Fluctuations in reporting rate in Zone 5 are probably insignificant in view of the scatter, but the

decrease in reporting in late summer and early autumn in Zone 6 is substantial, though difficult to explain adequately. Higher reporting rates in winter may result from increased conspicuousness either of birds in deciduous woodland when trees lose their leaves, or of flocking birds during winter (Skead 1960; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Singing activity of males during territory establishment in spring may also contribute to higher reporting rates.

Breeding: Breeding occurs almost throughout the year, mostly October–May. The models show peak activity somewhat earlier in the south (December) than further north (February). The onset of breeding in Zone 8 appears more sudden than elsewhere; there is also indication here of two peaks of breeding activity, in spring and in autumn. Reasons for these phenomena are unclear, but may indicate double brooding. With the limited data available at the time, Skead (1960) suspected two breeding seasons.

Interspecific relationships: It may compete with the Blackthroated Canary, but the latter is more typical of dry savannas, and feeds more regularly on or near the ground than the former (Irwin 1981). Lemonbreasted and Yellow-eyed Canaries are frequently seen together in the palm savannas of northeastern KwaZulu-Natal (Maclean 1993b) where they may feed alongside one another (pers. obs.).

Historical distribution and conservation: The atlas distribution map is similar to that shown by Skead (1960) but provides considerably more detail. In particular, more records are shown for far northern Namibia, northern and eastern Botswana and the lower-lying parts in the north and south of Zimbabwe. Skead (1960) showed it to be present in parts of the Free State where it was not recorded, or was scarce, during this atlas; perhaps these early records were based on misidentifications. This common, widespread species is frequently trapped as a cage bird, particularly in Botswana where commercial quotas are allocated (M. Herremans pers. comm.) and in Mozambique (D.G. Allan pers. comm.). There is no indication whether this practice poses a threat to local populations. Generally, the Yellow-eyed Canary is not threatened.

R.J. Nuttall

Recorded in 1491 grid cells, 32.9%
Total number of records: 32 213
Mean reporting rate for range: 37.0%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

