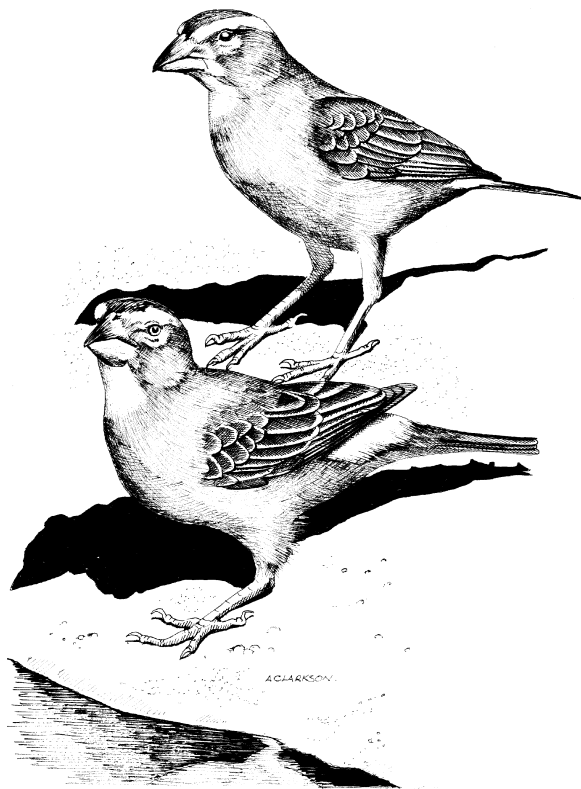




Whitethroated Canary

Witkeelkanarie

Serinus albogularis

The Whitethroated Canary is near-endemic to southern Africa, extending marginally into Angola where it occurs on the coastal plain as far north as Benguela. It is mainly found in the Cape Province and Namibia, with scattered records from the western and central Free State, Lesotho and the extreme western Transvaal. The distribution in southern Africa is substantially the same as that recorded by Skead (1960), except that better coverage of areas within the southwestern arid zone has defined the core distribution more clearly. As with other canaries, Whitethroated Canaries out of their usual range may be aviary escapes (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

This canary is most often seen singly or in pairs, but it also forms small flocks of up to eight birds (Maclean 1993b). Although confusion is possible with the closely related Protea Canary *S. leucopterus*, the two species can be separated by marked altitudinal and floristic differences in habitat. Confusion also occurs between the Whitethroated Canary and the Streakyheaded Canary *S. gularis*, from which it differs in having a yellow rump, much heavier beak, and with the Blackthroated Canary *S. atrogularis*, the western race of which does not have a black throat. Nevertheless, it is distinctive in its usual habitat and the atlas data can be regarded as comprehensive and reliable.

Habitat: It is present in arid and semi-arid dwarf shrublands, and in scrub along drainage lines. In the southern Karoo, it is common in Ganna *Salsola* spp. shrublands on river terraces, and in the southwestern Cape Province it occurs in strandveld and renosterveld (Hockey *et al.* 1989). It occurs in the low succulent shrublands of the Richtersveld (2816, 2817) (Skead 1960) where it is probably restricted to taller vegetation along drainage lines. The slight gap in the atlas data for northern Bushmanland (northern Cape Province) suggests that suitable habitat for the White-throated Canary is sparse or absent in arid perennial grasslands on sands. Skead (1960) suggested that the Whitethroated Canary is usually found near surface water, which may account for its absence from parts of Bushmanland and Namibia.

Movements: The models do not suggest patterns of regular migration. There is, however, a slight increase in reporting rates in the winter-rainfall region (Zone 4) during the winter months, which corresponds with an apparent slight reduction in reporting rates in the adjacent Zone (3) at this time. The species is known to be nomadic (Skead 1960).

Breeding: The breeding season in the southwest (Zones 3 and 4) is in spring–summer, mainly August–December, according well with Winterbottom (1968a) who reported egg-laying during August–November in the southwest. Data for the other Zones indicate a slight trend towards a later breeding season in summer-rainfall areas, especially in Namibia (Zone 2) where Winterbottom (1971d) reported breeding in October–February, while Brown & Clinning (in press) indicated breeding throughout the year.

Interspecific relationships: The Whitethroated Canary sometimes forms mixed flocks with Yellow Canaries *S. flaviventris* (pers. obs.) and with Bully Canaries *S. sulphuratus* (Skead 1960).

Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence that there have been gross changes in the distribution of the Whitethroated Canary. Hockey *et al.* (1989) suggest that the species may have been displaced from its former distribution in the southwestern Cape Province where alien *Acacia* species have replaced dune fynbos and strandveld in many places. The Whitethroated Canary is not threatened.

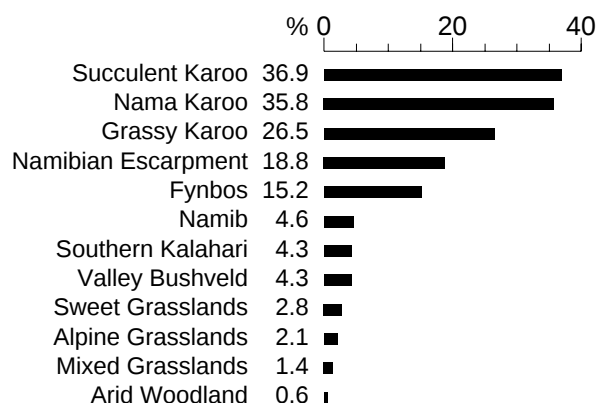
W.R.J. Dean

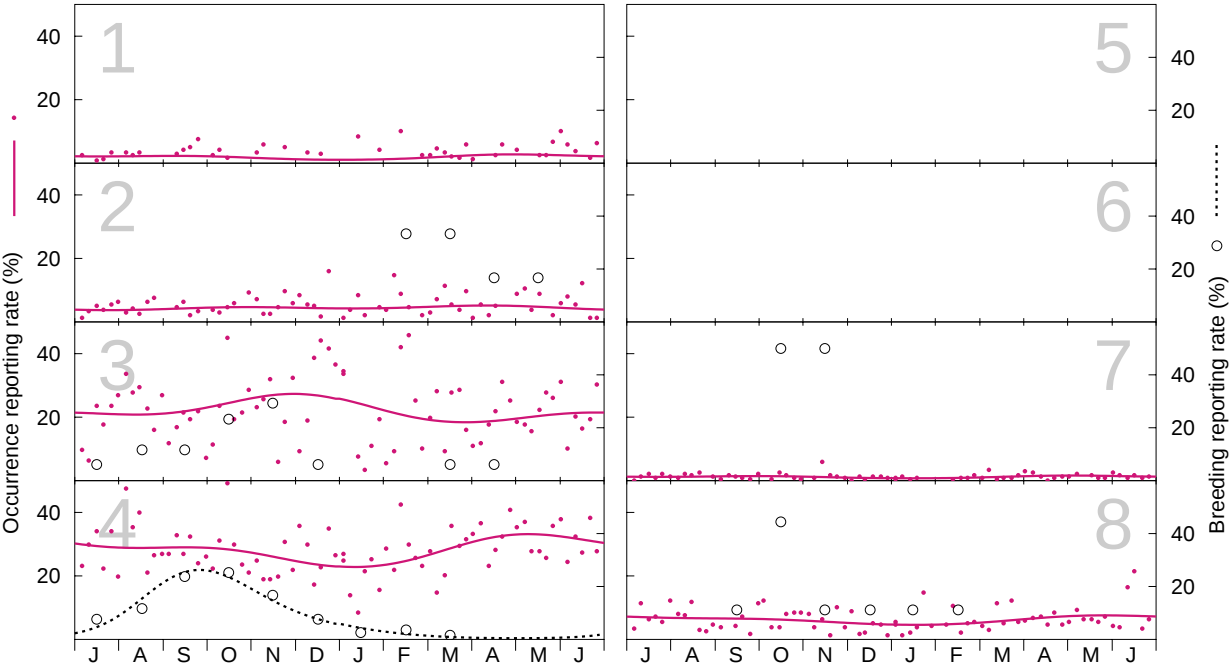
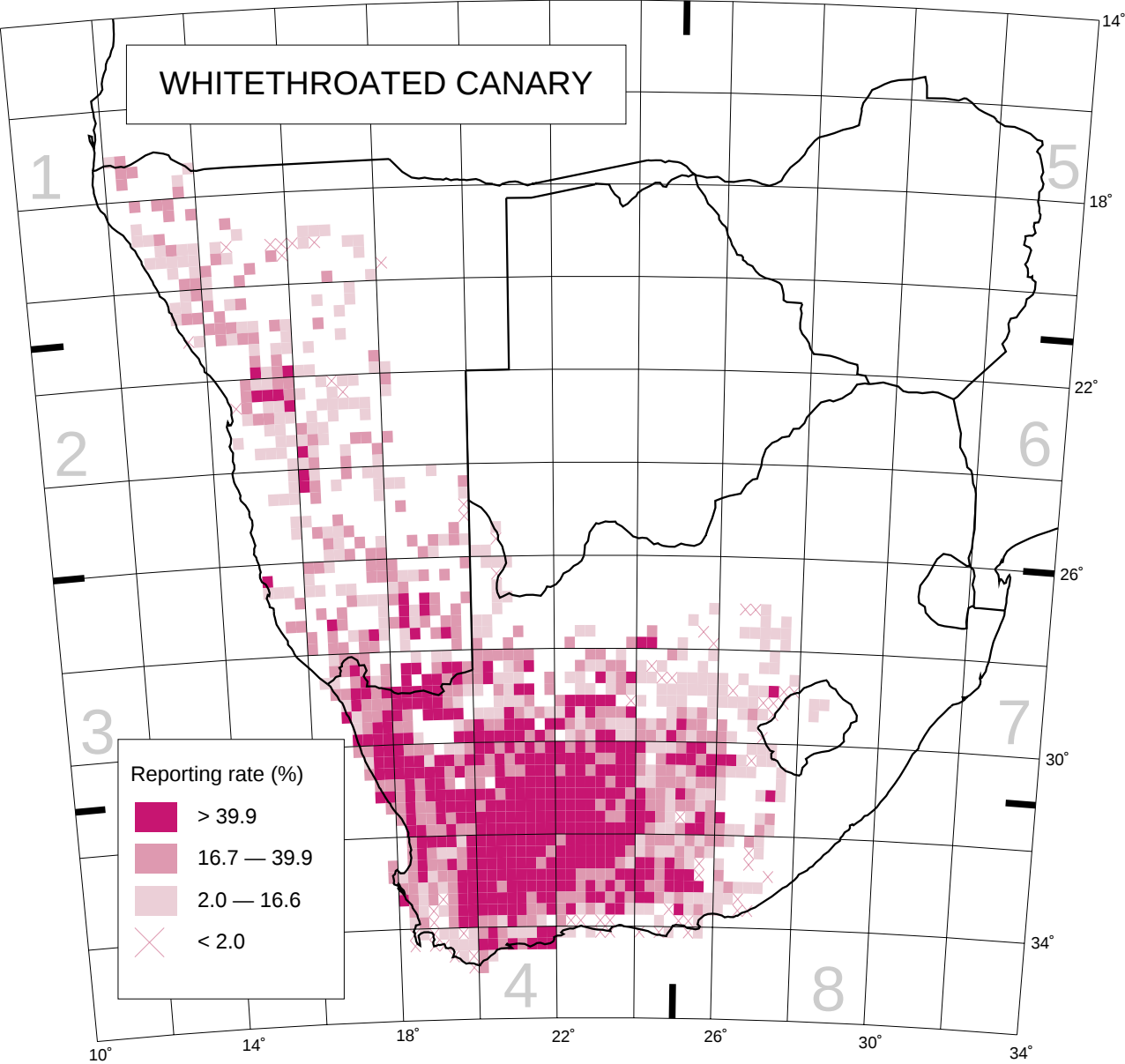
Recorded in 1185 grid cells, 26.1%

Total number of records: 9707

Mean reporting rate for range: 18.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right): Occurrence: 70, 161, 1205, 2484, 0, 0, 236, 340; Breeding: 0, 6, 17, 79, 0, 0, 2, 9.