

Blackeared Canary

Swartoorkanarie

Serinus mennelli

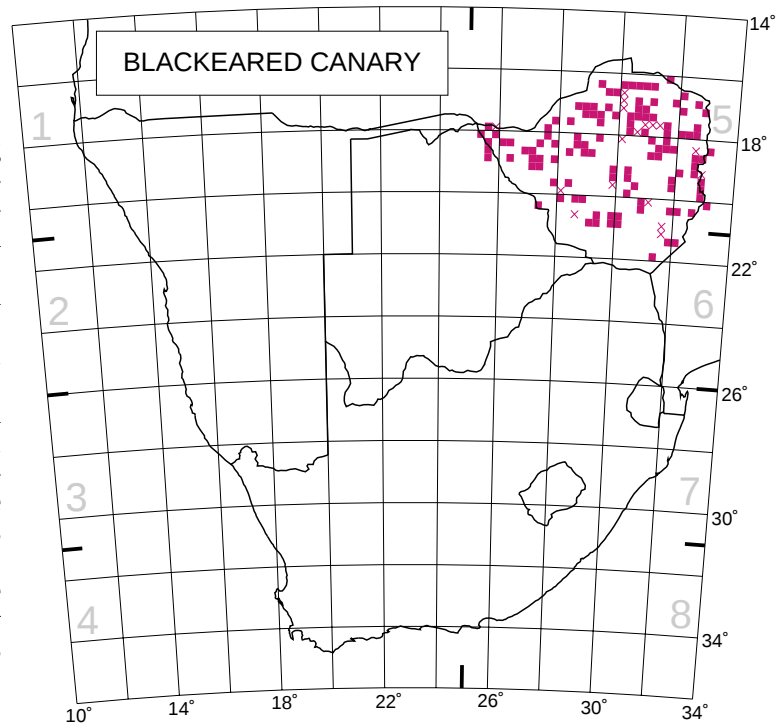
The Blackeared Canary has a range encompassing Angola, Zaire, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and, marginally, far northeastern Botswana. Some confusion is likely to have occurred with the similar Streakyheaded Canary *S. gularis*, but this is unlikely to have affected the distribution map.

It is not a common bird in its southern African range and favours relatively undisturbed miombo woodlands, with many records falling in western *Baikiaea* and miombo woodlands on Kalahari sands where there has been far less clearing of primary woodland than is the case further east. The clearing of these woodlands has also led to this bird's replacement by the Streakyheaded Canary, which favours more open conditions. The wide overlap between the two species is caused mainly by the presence of remnant woodland in areas otherwise cleared for agriculture.

Although it is considered to be sedentary, there does appear to be local movement and at Great Zimbabwe (2030BD) it arrives in September to breed and departs by March (Irwin 1981). The models show an increased reporting rate in summer, compared with the late winter, but this could be due to increased conspicuousness associated with breeding songs. Erratic seasonal wandering occurs in Zambia, where it may occur in large numbers at one locality one year and be absent at the same time in a following year (pers. obs). Breeding takes place September–February, with a peak during the height of the rains (January–February) (Irwin 1981).

The distribution shown for southern Zimbabwe appears to be more extensive than that given in Irwin (1981); this is unlikely to indicate range expansion but rather better coverage. This species is presently not considered to be at risk (Collar *et al.* 1994), but the threat posed by the destruction of its woodland habitat is cause for concern.

A.J. Tree



Recorded in 132 grid cells, 2.9%
Total number of records: 330
Mean reporting rate for range: 6.2%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

