

Streakybreasted Flufftail

Streepborsvleikuiken

Sarothrura boehmi

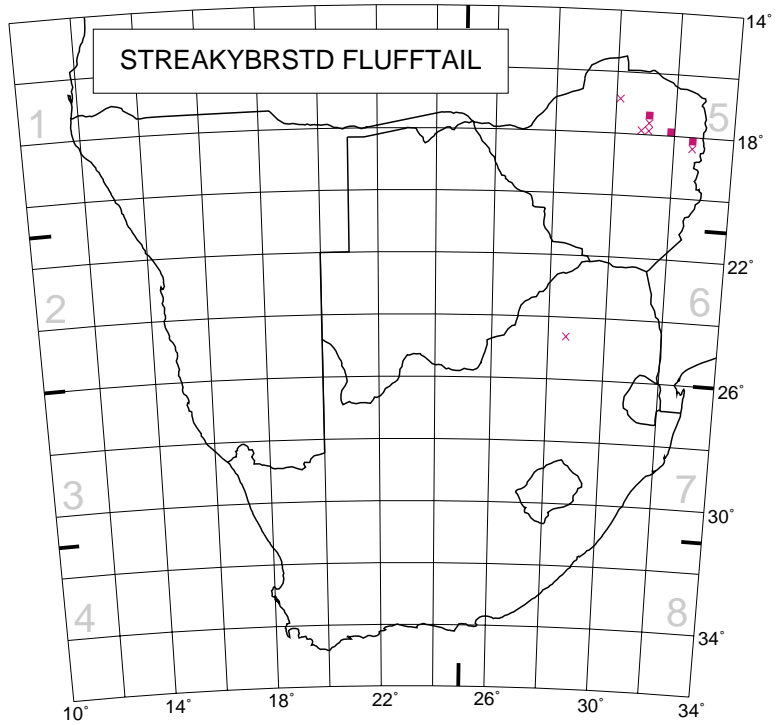
This poorly known flufftail occurs from Cameroon east to Kenya and south to Zimbabwe, with a vagrant recorded off the coast of Guinea (Urban *et al.* 1986). It is apparently sedentary in Gabon, where it occurs alongside the Redchested Flufftail *S. rufa* in dry grassland (Brosset & Erard 1986). In eastern and southern Africa it is a migrant, breeding mainly in the southern tropics and retreating towards equatorial regions in the dry season, when much of its habitat dries out and is burnt (Urban *et al.* 1986). In southern Africa its preferred breeding habitat differs from that of the Redchested Flufftail in being shorter, less dense, temporarily flooded grassland, often in drier situations (Benson *et al.* 1971; Irwin 1981; Taylor 1994), and it occurs alongside the Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* in such habitat (Urban *et al.* 1986).

Most southern African records are from the central plateau of Zimbabwe (Zone 5) where it occurs November–April, breeding November–March (Irwin 1981). The timing and period of its occurrences depend upon the extent and duration of the rains, and birds may be present for only a short time in ephemeral habitat (Taylor 1994). It is often uncommon but may be locally numerous in years of good rainfall (Hopkinson & Masterson 1984; Urban *et al.* 1986).

Atlas data extend its known range to South Africa, where calling males were present on the Nyl floodplain (2428DA) in January 1988 and April 1991, seasons of unusually high rainfall. As with the Striped Crake, its breeding range may extend to South Africa in such years. Some breeding records must be treated with caution because of the possibility of confusion with the Redchested Flufftail (Keith *et al.* 1970; Taylor 1994). For example, 12 of 13 Zimbabwe nest record cards for the latter species probably refer to the Streakybreasted Flufftail (pers. obs).

Numbers of the Streakybreasted Flufftail may have been affected by habitat loss, resulting from overgrazing and the damming and draining of wetlands.

P.B. Taylor



Recorded in 9 grid cells, 0.2%
 Total number of records: 13
 Mean reporting rate for range: 0.9%

