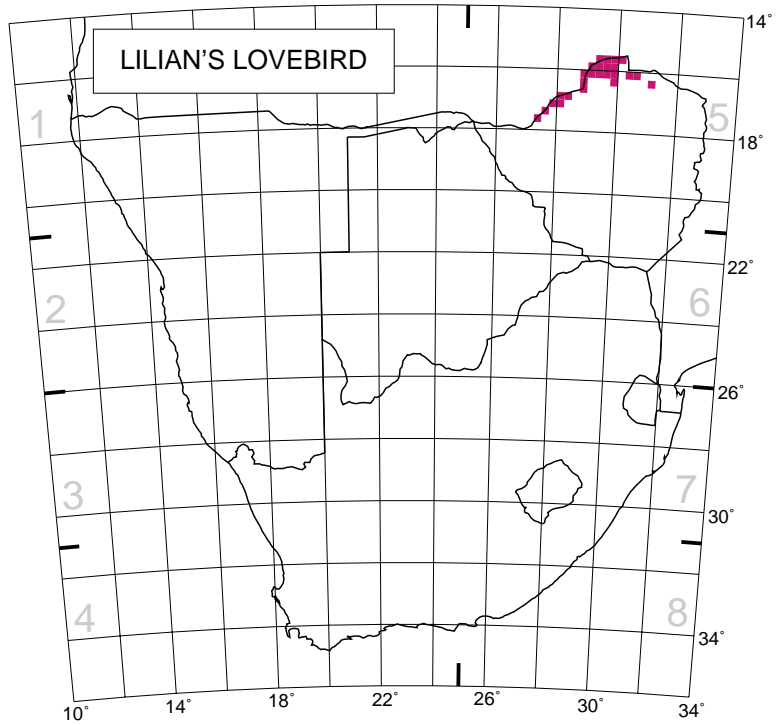# Lilian's Lovebird

Niassaparkiet

Agapornis lilianae

Lilian's Lovebird is a noisy and sociable species confined to the Zambezi Valley and associated river valleys (Irwin 1981). It has a restricted range extending downstream along the Zambezi Valley into Mozambique (Clancey 1971c) – although its present status in that country is unknown – northwards into Zambia along the Luangwa River, and along the Shire River into Malawi (Fry *et al.* 1988).

It is one of the true inhabitants of Mopane woodlands, wandering seasonally into more mixed woodland on alluvial terraces.

It is sedentary and may be found throughout the year, but it is most conspicuous during winter when it forms flocks that may number several hundred birds. It is a popular cage bird and records away from the natural range refer to escapes from aviaries. During the summer breeding season, pairs are distributed throughout the Zambezi Valley, but during the dry season the species concentrates closer to the river, presumably to satisfy water requirements. The model indicates this apparent seasonality.
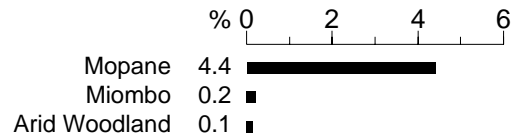
No information on breeding was collected during the atlas period nor is any given in Irwin (1981); the few available records suggest that breeding takes place during the rains and early dry season (Fothergill 1984; Maclean 1993b), as was found for a feral population in Zambia (Benson *et al.* 1971).

The total population has already been reduced considerably by the flooding of a large section of the valley by Lake Kariba, and very likely also by the Cahora Bassa Dam in Mozambique, and may now number only some 5000–10 000 birds. In the eastern portion of the Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe, it is considered a pest by small-scale agriculturalists and permission has been given by the relevant government body for considerable trapping to take place for the cage-bird trade. To what extent this is drawing Lilian's Lovebird out of protected areas to the west is not known, but should be investigated. Within the valley, however, it tends to be localized (Irwin 1981) and it may be possible to wipe out a local population easily with uncontrolled trapping.

A.J. Tree

Recorded in 26 grid cells, 0.6%
Total number of records: 379
Mean reporting rate for range: 42.7%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

	%	0	2	4	6
Mopane	4.4				
Miombo	0.2				
Arid Woodland	0.1				

Occurrence reporting rate (%)

Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 0, 0, 0, 0, 375, 0, 0, 0.