

Squairetailed Drongo

Kleinbyvanger

Dicrurus ludwigii

The Squairetailed Drongo is a tropical lowland species widespread in the Afrotropical region (Hall & Moreau 1970) and reaching the southern extremity of its range along the subtropical east coast corridor.

It has a slightly forked tail (less 'square' than in the Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*) and is normally encountered in pairs. It is readily distinguished from this flycatcher by its red (not brown) eye, its noisy behaviour and forest habitat. It is a loud vocalizer with harsh chattering, twanging calls, and it readily scolds intruders, but as easily disappears and falls silent. Dry-season bird parties in coastal forests frequently include a pair.

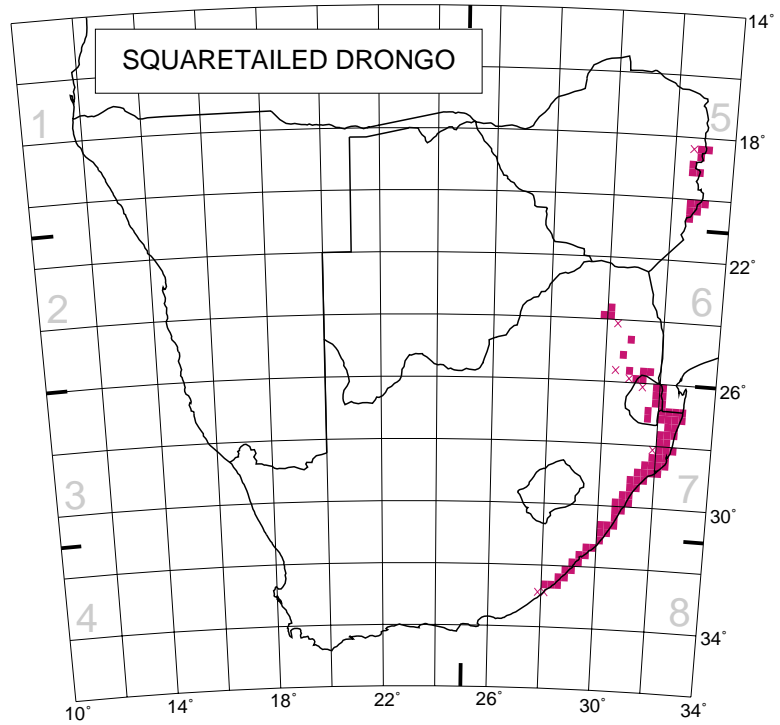
It characteristically haunts the midstratum and subcanopy levels of the forest, rarely if ever frequenting the undergrowth. It is an obligate forest dweller in the East Coast Littoral, Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands (at lower levels only), and some Afromontane Forests in the eastern Transvaal and Swaziland. Observers who claim to have seen it in open woodland have probably confused it with the more widespread Black Flycatcher which is the same size.

Because of its loud, characteristic calls and bold demeanour, it is an easily located forest bird, but is little studied. Owing to its preference for midstratum levels, it is seldom ringed so there is no information on its propensity for movement, although the models indicate that it is probably sedentary.

Apart from single records in August and March, atlas records of breeding spanned October–January. Maclean (1993b) reported egg-laying October–April in KwaZulu-Natal. In Zimbabwe, egg-laying months are September–January, with an October–November peak (Irwin 1981). The nest is a shallow cup, usually in the terminal fork of a slender horizontal branch 3–4 m above ground-level in a subcanopy glade, easily visible but difficult for a predator to approach.

The Squairetailed Drongo is not currently threatened, but destruction of coastal forest for any sort of development will result in fragmentation and contraction of its range along the east coast.

T.B. Oatley



Recorded in 99 grid cells, 2.2%
 Total number of records: 3638
 Mean reporting rate for range: 25.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

