Chirping Cisticola

Piepende Tinktinkie

Cisticola pipiens

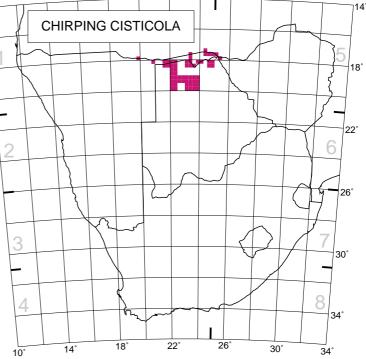
In southern Africa, the Chirping Cisticola is restricted to the Okavango Delta in Botswana, and the Kavango, Kwando, Linyanti, Chobe and Zambezi rivers in the Caprivi, far northern Botswana and far western Zimbabwe. The species was described in 1930 (Lynes 1930). Its presence in Zimbabwe, although predicted (Irwin 1981), was confirmed only recently (Butler 1989; Hustler *et al.* 1990b, 1991). Elsewhere in Africa it ranges to Angola, Zambia and southern Zaire, and was found in Burundi in 1992 (Moyer & Schulenberg 1994), representing an extension of range of 800 km.

It is a common resident of reedbeds, flooded grasslands and papyrus swamp in the Okavango. It is strongly territorial throughout the year, with pairs responding vigorously to anything that resembles their loud calls. During breeding the male displays aerially and calls from the tops of vegetation.

It may be confused with the Blackbacked Cisticola *C. galactotes*, which also occurs in the wetlands of the Okavango, but it differs in voice and plumage. The Chirping Cisticola frequents taller, more rank vegetation than the Blackbacked Cisticola.

It is resident. The seasonality in reporting rates presumably reflects the greater conspicuousness of the male during the breeding season. Breeding is known from Botswana, October–April (Skinner 1995a), and a single Namibian record in March (Brown & Clinning in press); in Zambia breeding also occurs October–April (Benson *et al.* 1971).

Its historical distribution is not known to have differed from that recorded during the atlas. The Chirping Cisticola does not appear to be threatened in southern Africa, although proposals to extract water from the Okavango could lead to a reduction of its habitat.



Recorded in 62 grid cells, 1.4% Total number of records: 216 Mean reporting rate for range: 16.5%



