

Sharptailed Starling

Spitsstertglansspreeu

Lamprotornis acuticaudus

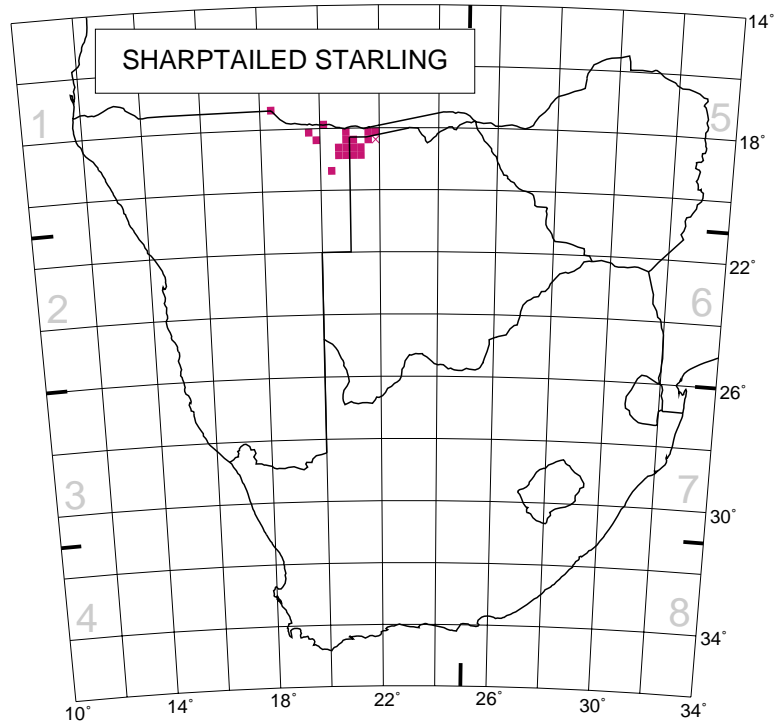
Within southern Africa, the Sharptailed Starling is confined to northeastern Kavango and the western Caprivi Strip in Namibia and to the adjacent northwestern corner of Botswana. To the north, its range extends into Angola, Zambia and Zaire (Ginn *et al.* 1989).

Adults are distinguished from similar glossy starlings by their bright red or orange eyes (other species and juveniles have yellow eyes); it has a diagnostic wedge-shaped tail (other species, other than the much larger Burchell's Starling *L. australis*, have a square tail).

In Angola and Zaire, this species was described as occurring in climax miombo woodland (Ginn *et al.* 1989). Within the atlas region, it does not occur in the Miombo biome, but all records were in an area of deciduous broad-leaved woodland in the Northern Kalahari vegetation type (Brown 1990a). It is mainly confined to well-developed *Burkea-Pterocarpus* woodland, also occurring along the margins of this habitat, usually to feed on the fruits of *Diospyros lycioides*. It nests in natural holes in trees, or makes use of the old nests of cavity excavators such as woodpeckers and barbets.

It was recorded in the atlas region mainly during the dry season, March–November, but this starling is resident in Namibia. During the breeding season it pairs off and is relatively inconspicuous. After breeding it forms flocks of up to 40 or more birds, which are conspicuous and therefore reported more frequently (C.J.B. pers. obs.).

The only atlas breeding record was in March; other records for Namibia are November–February (C. Hines pers. comm.); these lie outside the August–October period known for Angola (Ginn *et al.* 1989).



Recorded in 20 grid cells, 0.4%
 Total number of records: 43
 Mean reporting rate for range: 10.6%

L.G. Underhill and C.J. Brown

