

Pied Mannikin

Dikbekfret

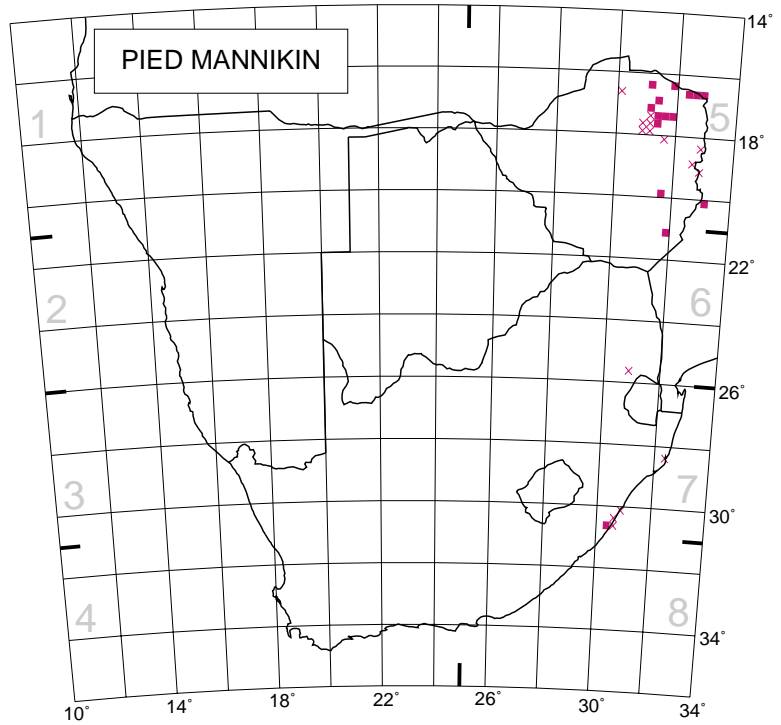
Spermestes fringilloides

The Pied Mannikin occurs in Central and East Africa (Clancey 1980b). It is an uncommon to rare localized resident in the extreme east of southern Africa, and is nomadic and erratic in response to its food supply (Irwin 1981; Maclean 1993b). It occurs sparsely in southern coastal KwaZulu-Natal and northward through Mozambique (Clancey 1971c), with records from the southeastern Transvaal. The greatest concentration of atlas records occurred on the Mashonaland Plateau in north-eastern Zimbabwe. It was probably under-recorded in the eastern Zimbabwean lowlands where it has been widely, although erratically, recorded previously (Irwin 1981). It has been collected on the Okavango River in northeastern Namibia (Clancey 1980b), the only record for this country, and there is also a single record for Botswana from the Chobe River (1724D) during 1994 (Bishop 1995).

The distribution in Zimbabwe is closely linked to the indigenous Bindura Bamboo *Oxytenanthera abyssinica*, on whose seeds it preferentially feeds (Irwin 1981). It undergoes local movements in response to the seeding of this localized plant, which occurs principally along rivers and the margins of lowland evergreen forest in the east of Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981). However, the bird has become established in and near Harare (1730DD,1731CC), being found in gardens and *Acacia* woodland (A.J. Tree *in litt.*). In other parts of its southern African range, it inhabits the edges of evergreen riparian bush, clearings in dense woodland, and sometimes around rural villages, cultivated lands and gardens (Maclean 1993b).

Egg-laying has been recorded October–June in southern Africa (Maclean 1993b).

The Pied Mannikin is rare and localized and its numbers in the region must be low, but its irregular presence makes an assessment of population trends difficult. Brooke (1984b) listed its conservation status as ‘indeterminate’ in South Africa.



Recorded in 30 grid cells, 0.7%
 Total number of records: 51
 Mean reporting rate for range: 1.3%

C. Cohen

