

Conservation Corner

By H. Dieter Oschadleus

It is common knowledge that Bronze Mannikins have come to Cape Town! In 2015 some Bronze Mannikins were released in Rondebosch and these birds established a freely breeding population. They were reported from Rondebosch, and soon also from Kirstenbosch. Eight years later this species is numerous from Observatory to Kirstenbosch to Wynberg to Athlone. This range expansion is expected to continue.



The Bronze Mannikin is a small passerine bird with a core range in the east of South Africa from KwaZulu-Natal to Limpopo Province. According to SABAP2, the closest natural, regular occurrence to Cape Town is St Francis Bay.

Photo: Dieter Oschadleus

There is a concern that Bronze Mannikins, which are also seed eaters, may dominate and eventually displace Sweet Waxbills, so the

spread of the Mannikin is a conservation concern.

To study these invasive Bronze Mannikins in Cape Town, I have started a ringing project (which will run for the next 5 years or so). Every bird caught will contribute data to study the species' prolonged and sometimes irregular moult. The proportion of juveniles caught can provide data on extent and timing of breeding, and re-captures may provide data on movements.



While ringing a bird, it becomes possible to study their moult pattern which, in Bronze Mannikins, is prolonged and sometimes irregular.

Photo: Dieter Oschadleus

If you have Bronze Mannikins regularly in your garden, and are happy for them to be ringed, please let me know (dieter@birds4africa.org).

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<https://www.capebirdclub.org.za/conservation-corner/>