

African Broadbill

Breëbek

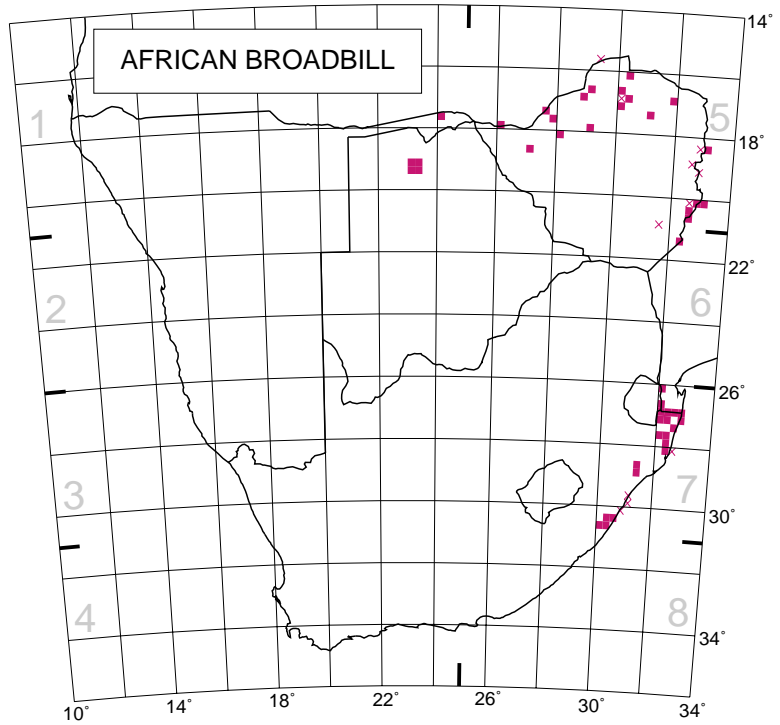
Smithornis capensis

The African Broadbill is an uncommon to fairly common localized resident in southern Africa. It is found widely in southeastern Africa, while having a more localized distribution in West and Central Africa (Keith *et al.* 1992). The subspecies *S. c. capensis* occurs in southern coastal and northcentral KwaZulu-Natal (Clancey 1980b); the fragmentation of its habitat in these areas is evident from the scattered distribution. The subspecies *cryptoleucus* is more common and is found from northeastern KwaZulu-Natal, along the Lebombo Mountains in eastern Swaziland, and north into Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe (Clancey 1980b; Irwin 1981). An isolated record from the northeastern Transvaal probably refers to this subspecies (Clancey 1980b; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The subspecies *conjunctus* is found in the middle Zambezi drainage west to Victoria Falls (1725DD), at scattered localities on the Mashonaland Plateau and in the Caprivi Strip. It appears to have been under-recorded in the middle Zambezi Valley because Irwin (1981) stated that it is widespread below 800 m in this region. Maclean (1993b) indicated it to occur in the Caprivi, but the atlas provided only a single record. There is a single record from the Okavango Delta in Botswana, where it could be a sparse, overlooked resident in dense riparian vegetation (Penry 1994).

It is inconspicuous and can easily be overlooked unless calling, and the increased reporting rates during spring and early summer can probably be attributed to increased calling during the breeding season.

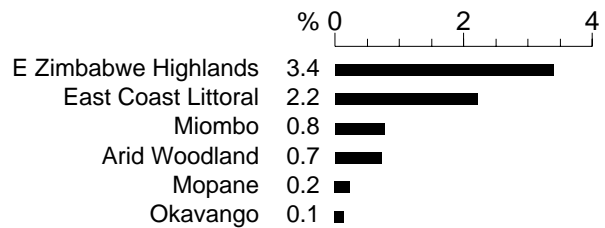
It inhabits dense deciduous thickets, the understorey of riparian forest and other dense woodland, and the mid-stratum of lowland evergreen forest (Irwin 1981; Maclean 1993b).

Breeding data were received only for Zimbabwe, August–February, with a peak October–December, which is in general agreement with published egg-laying dates (Irwin 1981). Egg-laying data for KwaZulu-Natal span September–December (Dean 1971). The Barred Longtailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus* is a suspected brood parasite (Dean *et al.* 1974).



Recorded in 56 grid cells, 1.2%
 Total number of records: 444
 Mean reporting rate for range: 7.2%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Destruction of its wooded habitat threatens the African Broadbill, especially in heavily populated areas such as KwaZulu-Natal (Clancey 1980b; Maclean 1985c). Brooke (1984b) listed it as 'vulnerable' in South Africa.

C. Cohen

