

### Red Lark

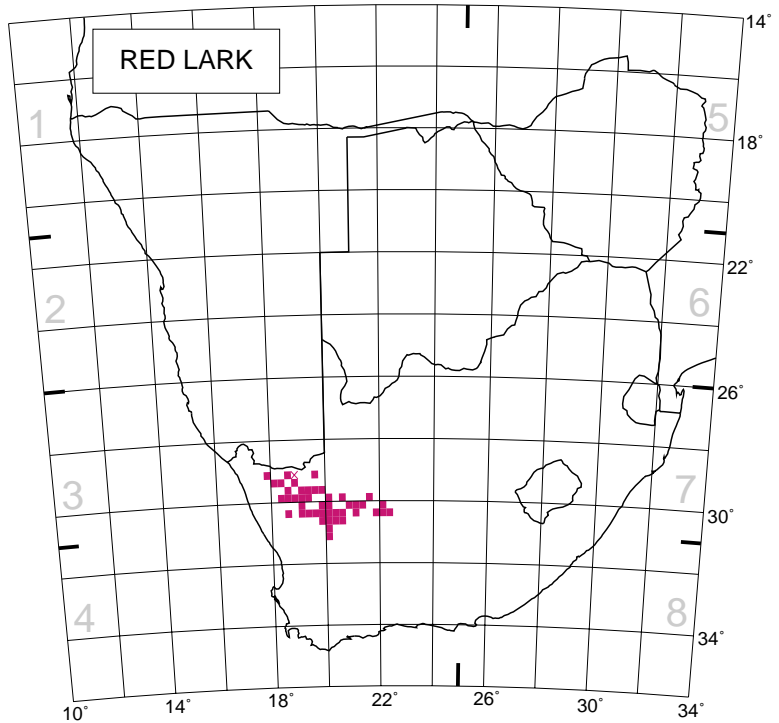
Rooilewerik

*Certhilauda burra*

The Red Lark is a South African endemic with a very restricted distribution in the northern Cape Province, from east of Steinkopf (2917BC) to Klein Soutpan (3022AD). It follows the distribution of red sand-dunes south of the Orange River, but it also occurs on shale soils around Brandvlei (3020AD). The distribution is fragmented, and the species is probably most common and continuously distributed along the Koa Valley (2918, 2919) in northern Bushmanland, where the density varies from 0.17 birds/ha to 0.02 bird/ha (Dean *et al.* 1991).

Apparently resident, the Red Lark is usually solitary or found in pairs. It is conspicuous in the breeding season when males make display flights and sing protractedly. It occurs in grassland with scattered Wild Green-hair Trees *Parkinsonia africana* on red sand-dunes. An important component of its habitat is the presence of annual large-seeded grasses such as *Brachiaria glomerata* for food, and perennial grasses with plumed awns, such as *Stipagrostis ciliata* for nest material and nest sites, and taller shrubs and trees to provide perches (Dean *et al.* 1991). Although confusion with the Karoo Lark *C. albescens* is possible, the ranges of the two species are not known to overlap, and the atlas data appear to be comprehensive and reliable. Ten breeding records, spanning February–October, were collected during the atlas period.

There is some evidence that distribution and numbers have been reduced (Dean *et al.* 1991), but atlas records, particularly in the eastern parts of the range, suggest that it may be more common and widespread than previously thought. The Red Lark is a Red Data species, categorized as ‘indeterminate’ (Brooke 1984b), and is not adequately conserved in protected areas (Siegfried 1992).



Recorded in 45 grid cells, 1.0%  
 Total number of records: 92  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 19.9%

W.R.J. Dean

