

Sclater's Lark

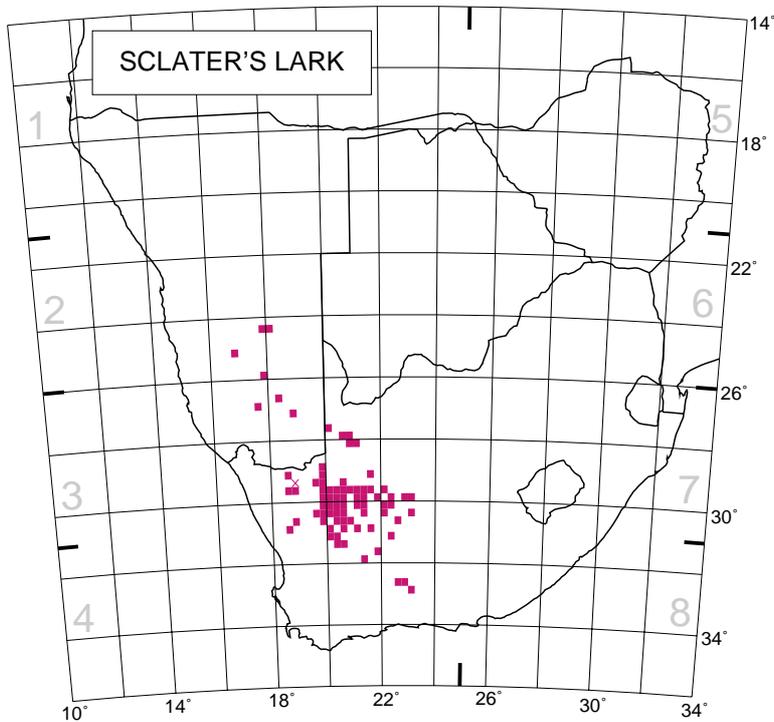
Namakwalewerik

Spizocorys sclateri

Sclater's Lark is endemic to southern Africa, its distribution being confined to the Nama Karoo. The majority of records are from the central and northwestern Cape Province, with scattered records from southern Namibia. It is both uncommon and local in occurrence, especially in Namibia. It is usually seen singly, in pairs or, when not breeding, in groups of up to 25 birds. It overlaps in distribution with other small nomadic larks and finchlarks with which it can be confused and amongst which it is easily overlooked. It is, however, often the only lark in a particular locality. Sclater's Lark is darker than Stark's Lark *Eremalauda starki*, with which it shares some of its habitat, and it can be distinguished from the Pinkbilled Lark *S. conirostris* by its large wedge-shaped bill, bold face pattern and habitat.

Sclater's Lark inhabits arid to semi-arid gravelly and stony plains with scattered shrubs and grasses on shale soils and sparse dwarf shrublands on clays, sometimes where drainage is impeded and there are extensive bare patches. It is an opportunistic and nomadic species, moving into areas after rain, nesting, and then moving on. Sclater's Lark is probably commonest on the vast stony plains north of Brandvlei (3020AD), but even here it is scarce and local. Reporting rates are higher during the winter, perhaps owing to increased activity and breeding at this time. Atlas breeding records were from the months April, June and October.

Sclater's Lark is a Red Data species in South Africa, categorized as 'indeterminate' by Brooke (1984b). There is no evidence that its distribution has changed in the recent past. It drinks often (Steyn & Myburgh 1989a) and may have benefited to some extent from stock water points (Brooke 1984b).



Recorded in 78 grid cells, 1.7%
 Total number of records: 98
 Mean reporting rate for range: 10.8%

W.R.J. Dean

