

Carp's Black Tit

Ovamboswartmees

Parus carpi

Once regarded as a subspecies of the Whitewinged Tit *P. leucomelas* (Clancey 1972b, 1985c), Carp's Black Tit is confined to the northwestern third of Namibia (and far southwestern Angola), but extends eastward to Namutoni in the Etosha Park, the Waterberg Plateau Park (2017A), and slightly further east.

The distinguishing features of black undertail and associated coverts need to be carefully observed to avoid confusion with the Southern Black Tit *P. niger*, and it is likely that it was under-recorded in the atlas period because its detection distance was the lowest of any of 10 Namibian endemics in an intensive study. During that study it was found in seven new grid cells where it had not been recorded in the past 15 years (Robertson *et al.* 1995); it therefore has a greater total range than shown in the map, covering 94 000 km² in north-central Namibia (Robertson 1993).

Like other Namibian endemics, the highest densities tend to occur in northern Namibia (Zone1) where reporting rates averaged over twice as high as in central Namibia (Zone 2). This accords with field densities in dry riverbeds dominated by Mopane where over 15 birds/km² have been recorded in winter.

Habitat: It is particularly common in Mopane and *Acacia* savanna. The vegetation analysis reveals a strong association with the escarpment areas of Namibia.

Movements: Existence of some seasonal movements are suggested by apparent disappearance from central breeding areas and occurrence in suburban gardens in winter (pers. obs).

Breeding: In summer, during breeding, it is thought to be cooperative (C.F. Clinning pers. comm.) and it may occur in groups of 2–5 birds. In recent years it has been induced to

breed in nest boxes in *Acacia* savanna near Windhoek (2217CA), and clutch size, breeding success and social behaviour are being studied among colour-ringed birds (D. Wiggins pers. comm.), which may shed some light on seasonal movements. Egg-laying has been recorded February–April (Brown & Clinning in press) and atlas breeding records came from January–March, May and July. These data conform to a breeding season during and after the rainy period.

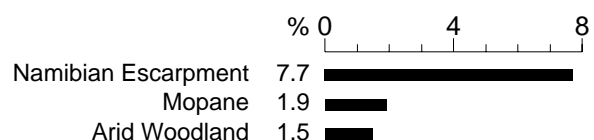
Interspecific relationships: On the whole, west of Etosha National Park, Carp's Black Tit and the Southern Black Tit are not found together. To the northeast and at the Waterberg Plateau Park (2017A) there is a meeting and interdigitation of broadleaved woodland and *Acacia* savanna, allowing both species to occupy the same area.

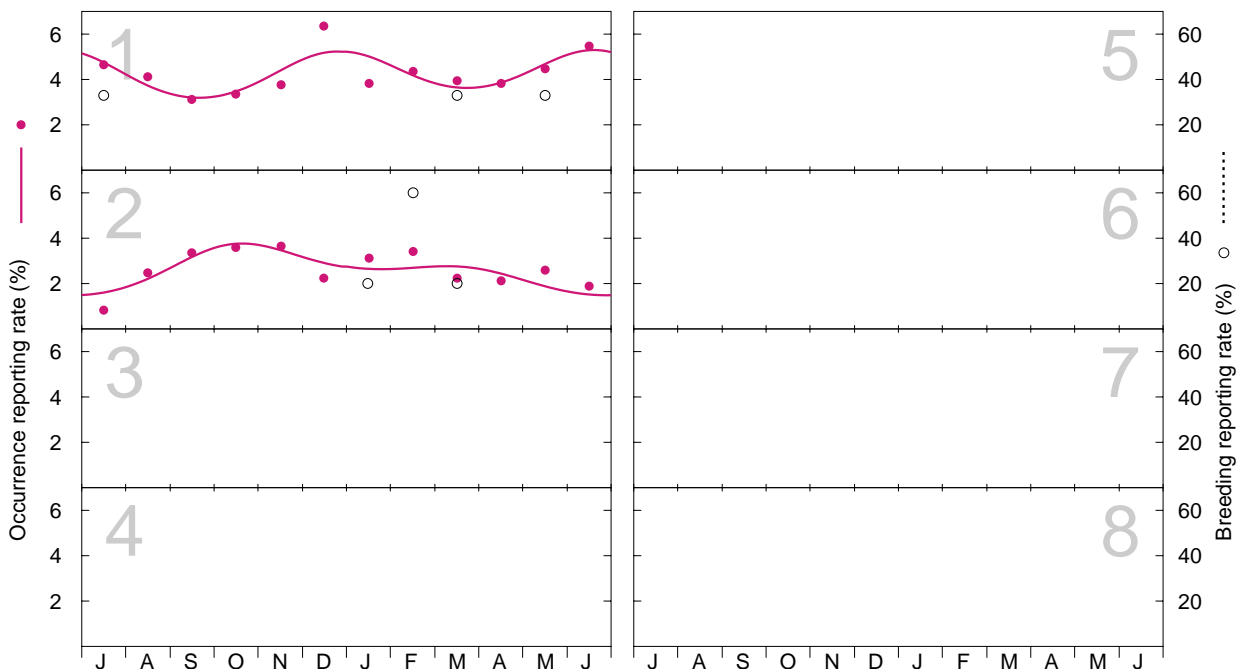
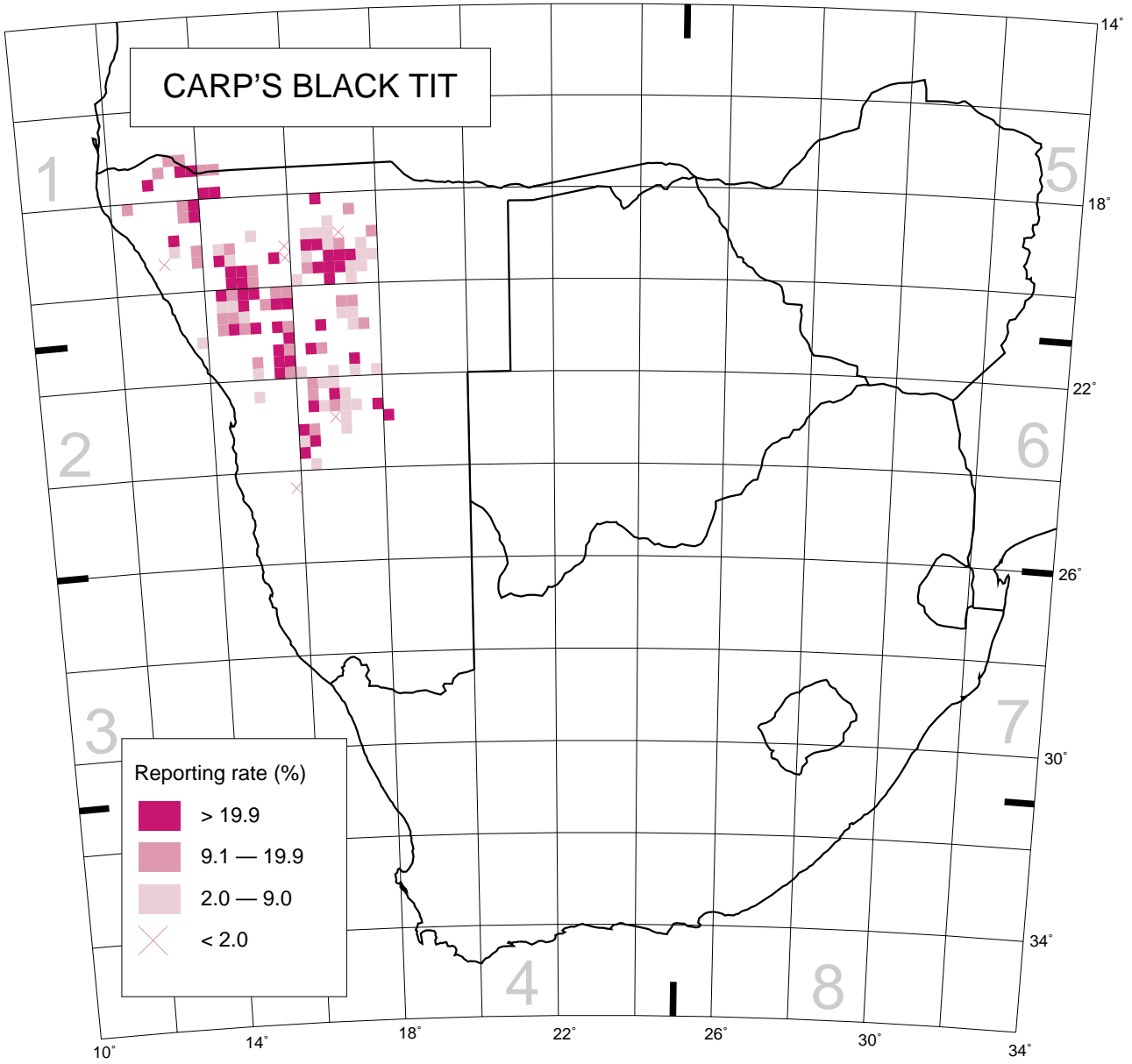
Historical distribution and conservation: Despite its limited range, Carp's Black Tit is unlikely to be of immediate conservation concern because of the low human density in escarpment habitat.

R.E. Simmons

Recorded in 131 grid cells, 2.9%
Total number of records: 654
Mean reporting rate for range: 12.3%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 386, 268, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0; Breeding: 3, 5, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.