

Orangebreasted Rockjumper

Oranjeborsberglyster

Chaetops aurantius

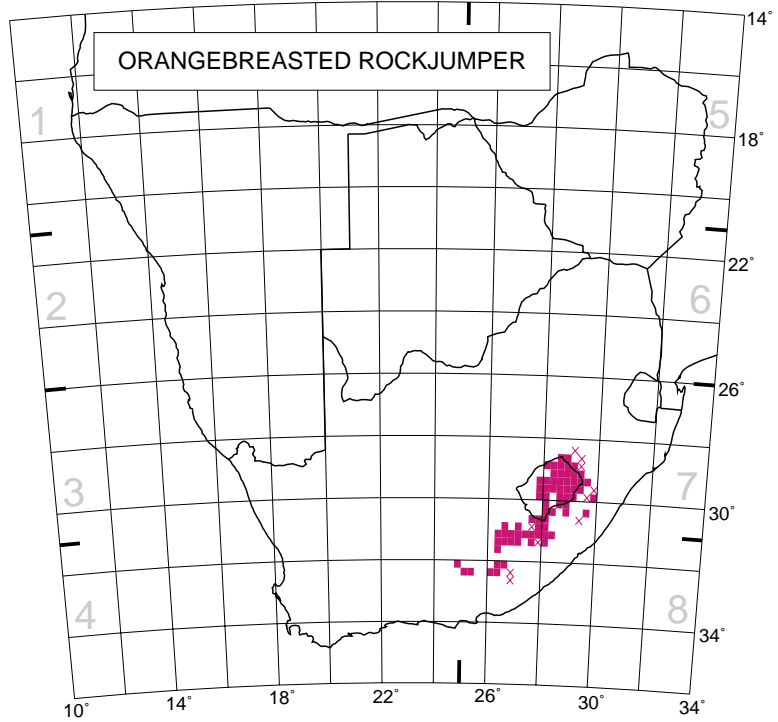
A locally common resident, the Orangebreasted Rockjumper is a southern African endemic, restricted to the highlands of Lesotho, the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and the mountains of the northeastern Cape Province. The species is considered monotypic. It can be confused with the Cape Rockjumper *C. frenatus*, but the distributions of these two species do not overlap. Otherwise it is unmistakable, conspicuous and vocal, and not likely to have been overlooked.

It is usually seen in pairs or small groups, and in suitable habitat it may occur at fairly high densities. In the Katse Basin in Lesotho it occurs at a density of about 1 pair or group/30 ha (Tarboton *et al.* 1993), and is one of the most numerous avian species at high altitude.

It is a habitat specialist, found in mountainous, boulder-strewn grasslands at high elevations, generally above 2000 m. The vegetation analysis shows the extent to which it is restricted to the Alpine Grasslands, and sightings outside of this habitat are exceptional.

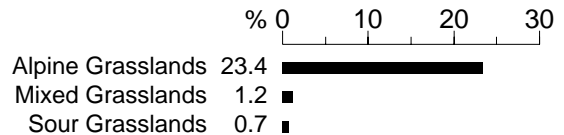
It possibly moves to lower altitudes during spells of harsh winter weather; it has been recorded as a regular altitudinal migrant along the KwaZulu-Natal escarpment (Brown & Barnes 1984), but only occasionally in Lesotho (Osborne & Tigar 1990; Tarboton *et al.* 1993). The models show insignificant seasonal changes in reporting rates. The breeding season is spring–summer, but breeding as late as May has been recorded (Osborne & Tigar 1990). Four records, one in each month September–December, were obtained in the Giant’s Castle area (2929AD) (Brown & Barnes 1984).

It is considered to be globally ‘near-threatened’ (Collar *et al.* 1994) because of its restricted range, and is one of three endemic species which define the Drakensberg Mountains Endemic Bird Area (Bibby *et al.* 1992). Most of the preferred habitat of the Orangebreasted Rockjumper is inaccessible to development, and it is not immediately threatened.

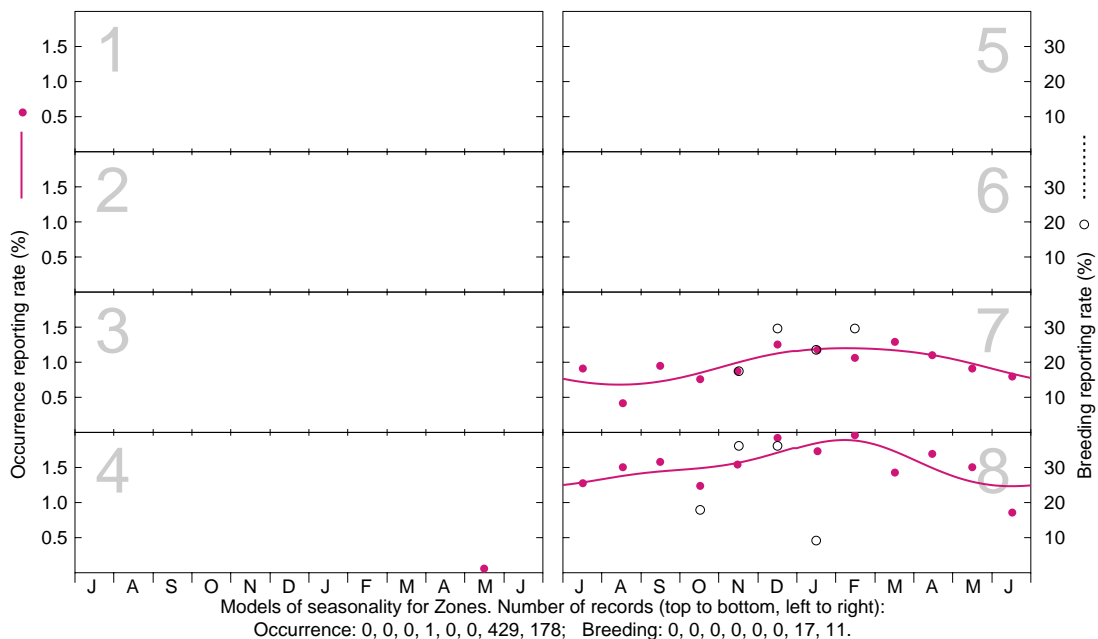


Recorded in 80 grid cells, 1.8%
 Total number of records: 608
 Mean reporting rate for range: 15.6%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



A.R. Jenkins





Cape Rockjumper

Orangebreasted Rockjumper

