

## Yellowbellied Eremomela

### Geelpensbossanger

#### *Eremomela icteropygialis*

The Yellowbellied Eremomela is widely distributed in Africa south of the Sahara in a range of habitats. It is widely, although often locally, distributed in Namibia, Zimbabwe, the western parts of South Africa and the eastern lowveld of South Africa and Swaziland, but restricted to the drier parts of southern Mozambique (Clancey 1971c). Its centre of abundance lies in the central Karoo through to the Kalahari in Botswana. It is mainly absent from the coastal areas of the southern Cape Province, the highveld areas of the Free State and Transvaal, the eastern parts of the eastern Cape Province, and most of KwaZulu-Natal where it occurs sparsely in the north.

The five subspecies recognized in the region (Clancey 1980b) appear to have largely continuous ranges. In the past, Salvadori's Eremomela *E. salvadorii* (Angola and Zambia) and Yellowvented Eremomela *E. flavocrissalis* (northeastern Africa) were regarded as subspecies of the Yellowbellied Eremomela, but these are now accepted as separate species (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980; Sibley and Monroe 1990).

It is unobtrusive and not particularly distinctive, and may be confused with the Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus* and Grey Penduline Tit *A. caroli*. It occurs singly, in pairs or family groups, actively working through the vegetation for insect prey.

**Habitat:** It occurs in a wide range of habitats, from woodlands to low scrub. It was most commonly reported from thornveld regions such as the Nama and Grassy Karoo, Namibian Escarpment and the three Kalahari vegetation types. In Zimbabwe, it is most common in *Brachystegia* or *Acacia*, and in riparian *Acacia* in the southeast (Irwin 1981). In the Transvaal it occurs in scrub and low trees,

usually in broadleaved rather than *Acacia* woodland (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Penry (1994) noted that in Botswana it occurs commonly in low bushes, particularly along watercourses and the edges of pans, and in secondary growth on the edges of woodland and in open bush savanna. In the southwestern Cape Province it occurs in indigenous *Acacia* along watercourses, but also in adjacent bushy vegetation (Hockey *et al.* 1989).

**Movements:** There are distinct seasonal trends in reporting rates with a peak in autumn and early winter throughout the region. This suggests that it is either more active at this time or, alternatively, that it is less conspicuous during the breeding season. It has been described as nomadic in some areas (Macleane 1993b), but the models provide no evidence of regular movements. However, Irwin (1981) suggested that there may be movement into the middle Zambezi Valley in winter, and Penry (1994) suggested that some movements may occur in Botswana.

**Breeding:** During the atlas period, the few breeding records from the eastern half of the subcontinent were August–January, and mainly September–April in the western regions. Presumably breeding in arid areas is determined by the occurrence of rain, which makes timing more variable and breeding ‘seasons’ longer. Egg-laying data span August–April (mainly September–November) in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), and September–January in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

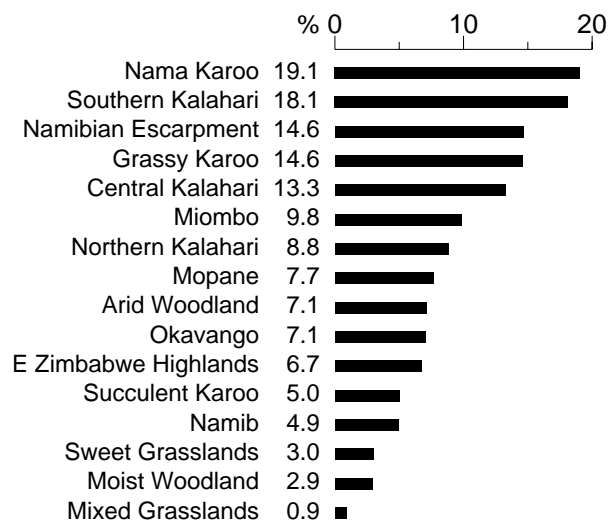
**Interspecific relationships:** Its range overlaps those of three other eremomelas in the region, but it prefers different habitat from Karoo *E. gregalis* and Greencapped *E. scotops* Eremomelas which occupy karroid and tall broadleaved woodland, respectively. It occurs frequently alongside Burntnecked Eremomela *E. usticollis* and may associate with it and other small warblers, such as Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*.

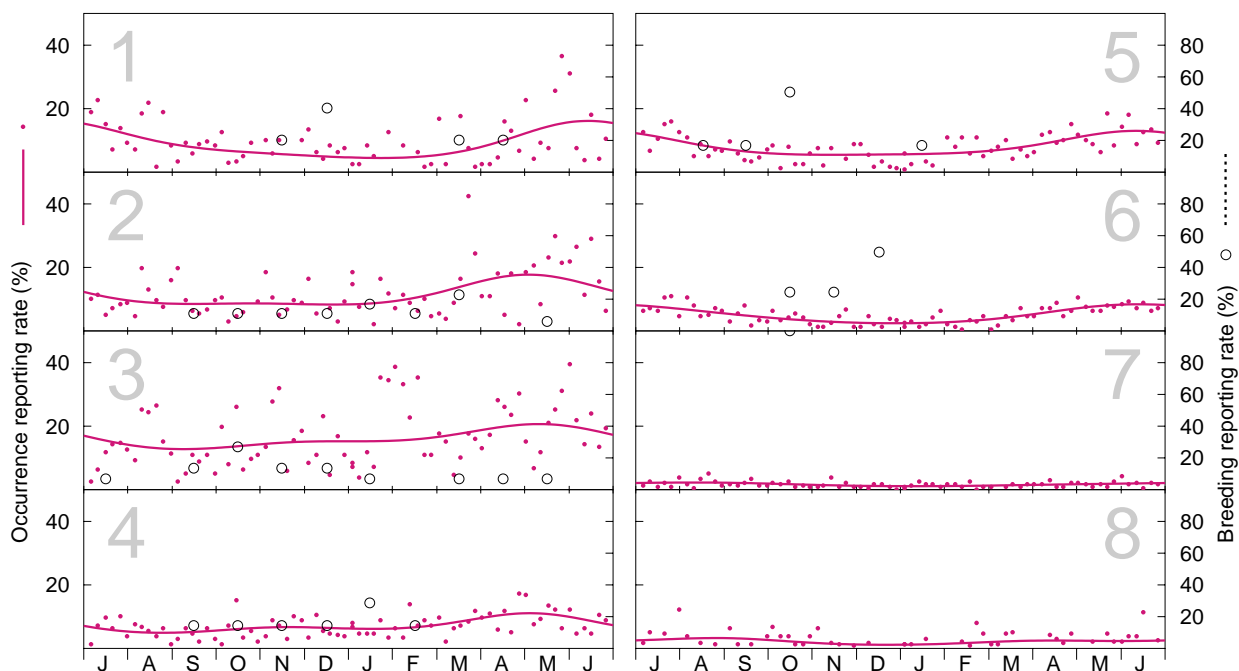
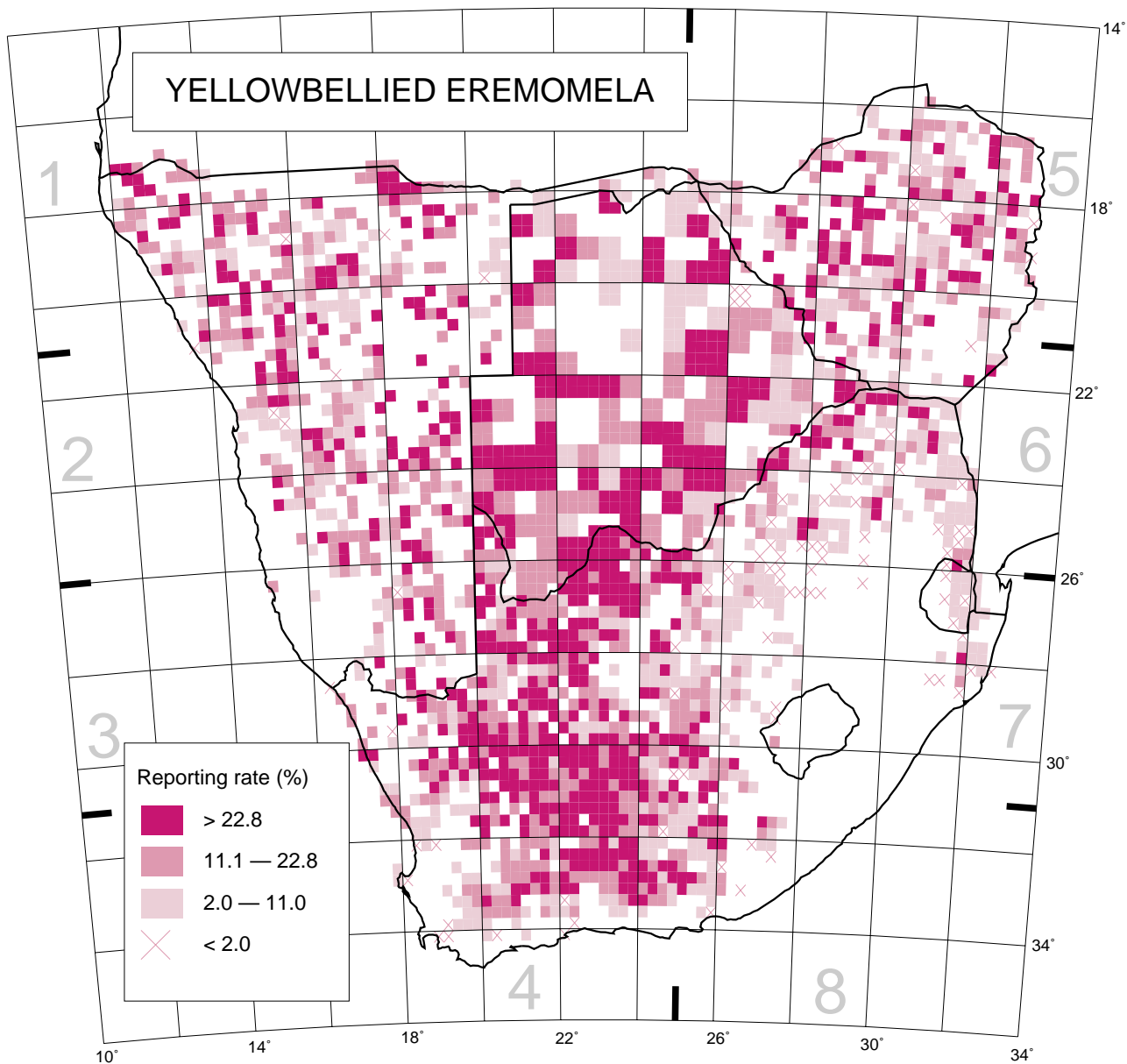
**Historical distribution and conservation:** The Yellowbellied Eremomela is widely distributed in southern Africa and is not threatened.

A. Berruti

Recorded in 2291 grid cells, 50.5%  
Total number of records: 7251  
Mean reporting rate for range: 10.0%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 313, 431, 902, 639, 704, 572, 322, 120; Breeding: 5, 18, 15, 7, 6, 4, 1, 0.