

Karoo Eremomela

Groenbossanger

Eremomela gregalis

The Karoo Eremomela is endemic to southern Africa. It is uncommon and localized with its centre of distribution in the Karoo, extending into Namibia mainly near the coast, and marginally into the winter-rainfall region of the south-western Cape Province (Hockey *et al.* 1989). The entire range is relatively restricted. The ranges of the two sub-species (Clancey 1980b) appear continuous on the present map. The well-isolated population in the Naukluft section of the Namib-Naukluft park in Namibia may deserve closer taxonomic investigation. Sibley & Monroe (1990) placed the species in a superspecies with three other eremomelas, including the Greencapped Eremomela *E. scotops*.

It is inconspicuous, occurring in pairs or small flocks in low scrub where it feeds low down or on the ground. It is often detected first by its contact call and is capable of moving away unseen. It is not easily confused with other species and the atlas data are accurate, but the species may have been overlooked in places.

Habitat: It is found in scrub on Karoo plains or in desert and semi-desert, often in areas where the scrub is more dense, such as along watercourses and around the base of hills. It may also occur on rocky hillsides in very arid habitats. It was recorded almost exclusively in three major vegetation types: Nama Karoo, Succulent Karoo and Grassy Karoo, particularly the first two.

Movements: It is not known to show movements, but it is likely to move at least locally in relation to rainfall. Modelled reporting rates show a winter peak in Zone 4, which coincides with recorded breeding during the atlas period. There are no consistent trends in other Zones. During the nonbreeding season, it moves in small flocks, whereas during the breeding season in the southwest (late winter) it is more evenly dispersed, which may account for increased reporting rates at this time.

Breeding: Breeding was recorded May–December, earlier than the previously reported breeding period August–

December, mainly October–November (Maclean 1993b). It is likely that its breeding is determined by rainfall which is often irregular in arid areas.

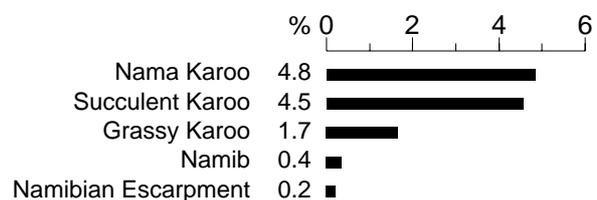
Interspecific relationships: It is the only eremomela restricted to southern Africa, and the only one which does not occupy woodlands in at least part of its range. Its distribution overlaps with the Yellowbellied Eremomela *E. icteropygialis*, but that species tends to occur in taller scrub. The Rufouseared Warbler *Malcorus pectoralis* occurs in the same habitat, while the Greybacked Cisticola *Cisticola subruficapilla*, Spotted Prinia *Prinia maculosa* and Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus* prefer denser stands of vegetation. The extent of competition between these species is not known.

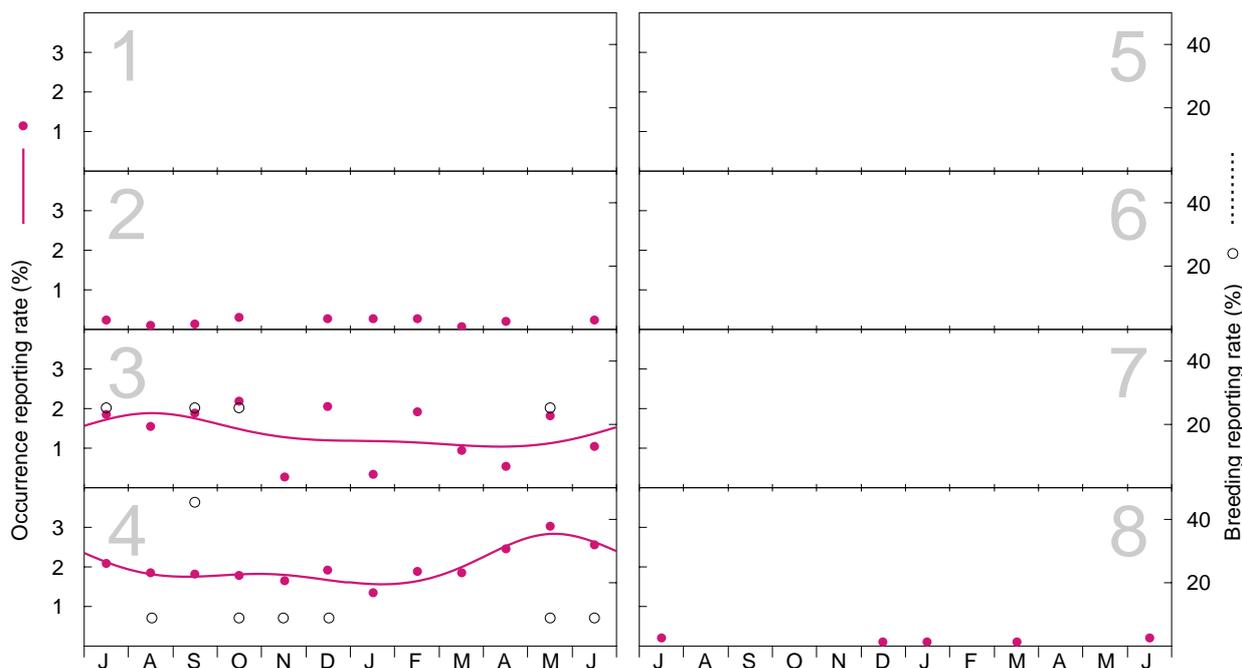
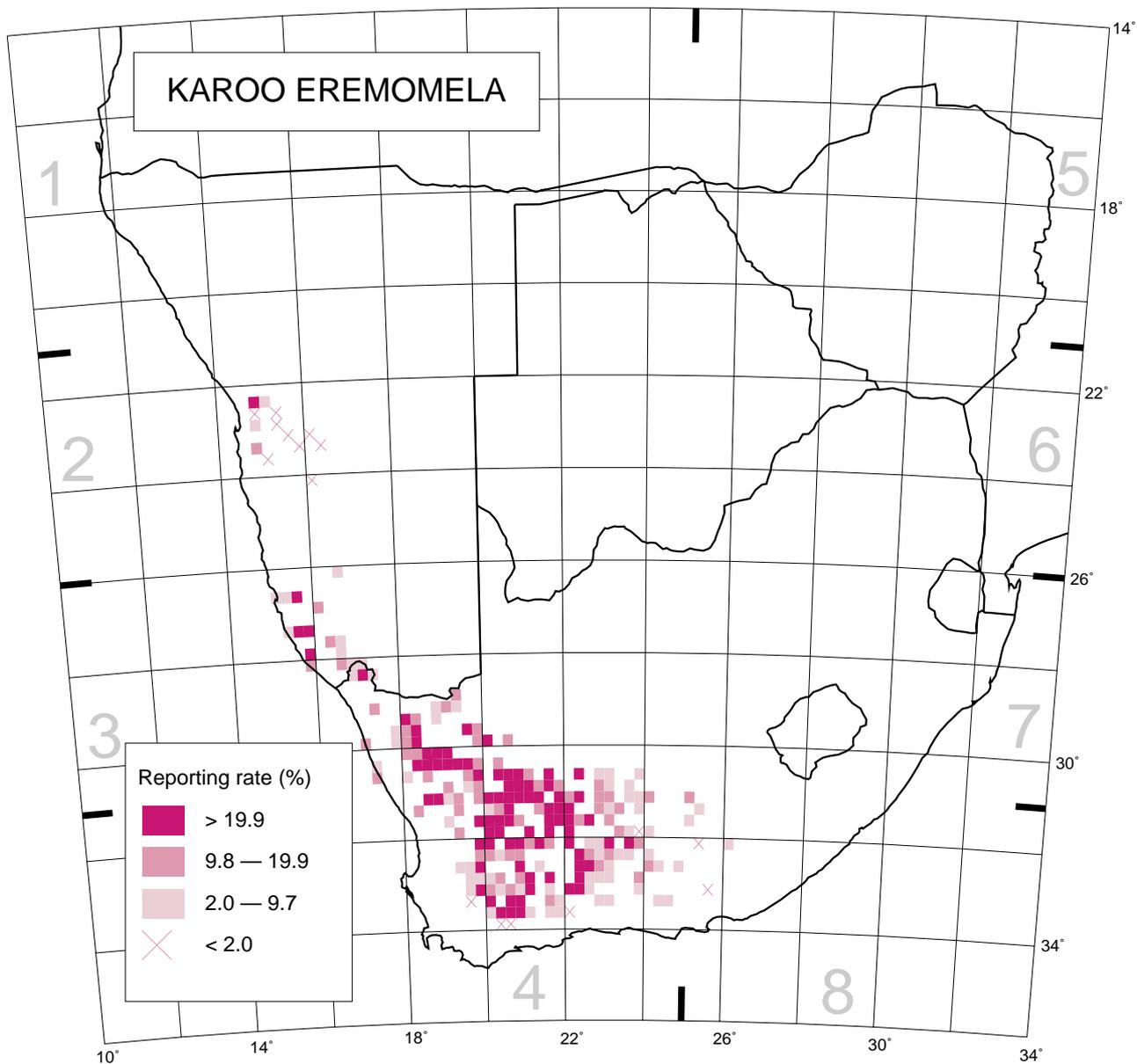
Historical distribution and conservation: The distribution is not known to have differed from that of the present day, and it seems unlikely that significant changes have occurred, although heavy browsing of karroid scrub may have reduced its abundance in some parts. Though not common, it is widespread within its range which is not suitable for intensive agriculture. The Karoo Eremomela is not listed in the South African Red Data book, despite its relatively restricted range and status as a Southern African endemic, but it is regarded as worth monitoring (Brooke 1984b).

A. Berruti

Recorded in 233 grid cells, 5.1%
Total number of records: 674
Mean reporting rate for range: 11.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 0, 18, 132, 517, 0, 0, 0, 7; Breeding: 0, 0, 4, 11, 0, 0, 0, 0.