

Burntnecked Eremomela Bruinkeelbossanger

Eremomela usticollis

The Burntnecked Eremomela occurs in southern and south-central Africa. Its range covers northern KwaZulu-Natal, western Mozambique, eastern Swaziland, most of the Transvaal, eastern and northern Botswana, northern Namibia, southern Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. It is fairly common and widespread throughout *Acacia* woodlands in this range. In southern Africa it is most abundant in the southwestern part of the Okavango basin, and in the upper Limpopo Valley and surrounding areas in the hardveld of eastern Botswana and adjacent parts of South Africa. It is widely distributed, but common only in optimum habitat, in Zimbabwe, central and northern Namibia, and eastern South Africa.

It is closely related to three other species of *Eremomela* which do not occur in southern Africa (Hall & Moreau 1970). Three subspecies are recognized in the region (Clancey 1980b); there are no breaks on the present map that coincide with the ranges as described. All populations around the large Kalahari 'hole' in the distribution (i.e. in Namibia, Okavango and eastern hardveld in Botswana) are included in *E. u. baumgarti*.

Densities of 1 pair/17 ha were found at Nylsvlei (2428DA) in 1974–75 (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It often occurs in pairs or small groups in the canopy of thorn trees. It is usually detected by its call and may be easily overlooked by inexperienced observers, and so it may have been under-reported. Misidentification is possible if the collar is missing or not seen, but the atlas data are probably accurate.

Habitat: Although recorded from a wide range of woodlands, it is primarily associated with *Acacia* woodland, particularly along major drainage lines (Hall & Moreau 1970; Clancey 1971c; Irwin 1981; Maclean 1993b; Penry 1994). Its association with Miombo is as a result of its presence in patches of *Acacia* in this vegetation type. Irwin (1981) stated that it may occur in small patches (as little as 0.5 ha) of thornveld on the central plateau of Zimbabwe. In northern South Africa, it favours open woodland dominated by *Acacia* species such as *A. tortilis* and *A. mellifera* (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). In the

Mkuze Game Reserve (2732C), it favours tall stands of *A. xanthophloea* around pans. Although it does occur in mixed woodlands, it is clearly much less common in these habitats. **Movements:** There are no marked seasonal trends in reporting rates. It is resident and there is no indication of any seasonal movements in the literature.

Breeding: It has been reported breeding September–April in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), and October–April in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Atlas records span November–April.

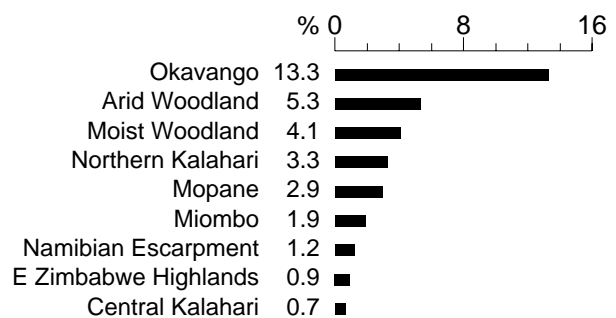
Interspecific relationships: In Zimbabwe it may occur alongside the Yellowbellied Eremomela *E. icteropygialis*, and it keeps more to the canopy in these situations (Irwin 1981). It often occurs in mixed-species feeding groups.

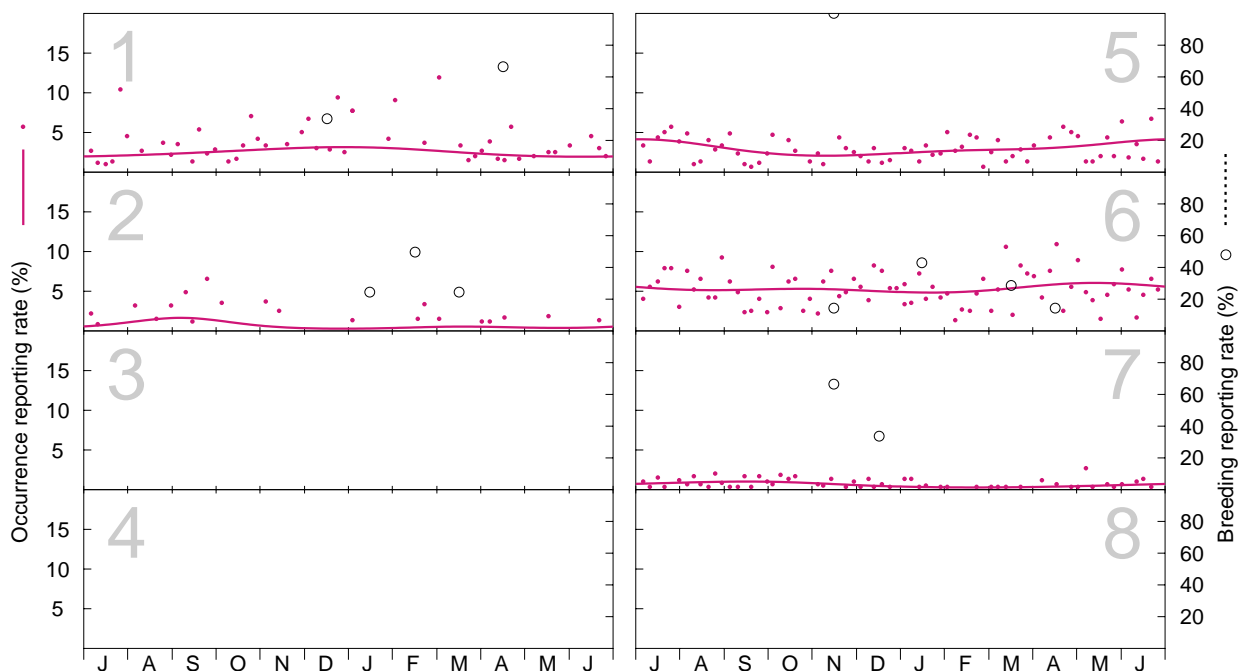
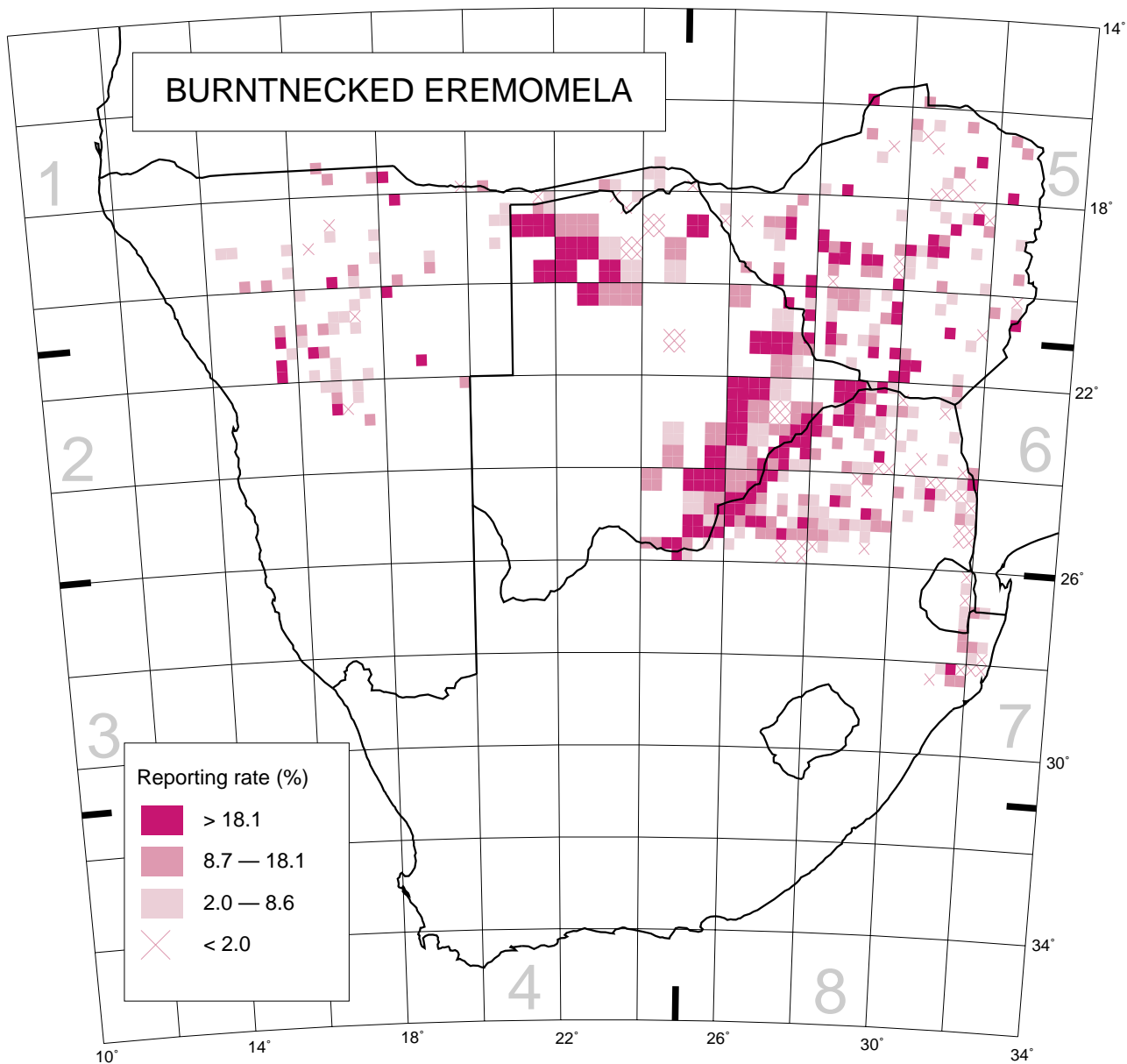
Historical distribution and conservation: The Burntnecked Eremomela is not regarded as threatened in South Africa (Brooke 1984b). Its wide distribution and occurrence in many protected areas should ensure its long-term survival.

A. Berruti

Recorded in 574 grid cells, 12.7%
Total number of records: 2000
Mean reporting rate for range: 8.0%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 80, 24, 0, 0, 259, 610, 119, 0; Breeding: 3, 4, 0, 0, 1, 7, 3, 0.