

### Woodwards' Batis

#### Woodwardse Bosbontrokkie

##### *Batis fratrum*

Woodwards' Batis is endemic to the coastal plain of southeastern Africa (Harris & Arnott 1988). In southern Africa it ranges from extreme north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal northwards through Mozambique to the Haroni-Rusitu and Vimba forests (2032BB) in eastern Zimbabwe. From there the range extends to northern Mozambique (Harris & Arnott 1988).

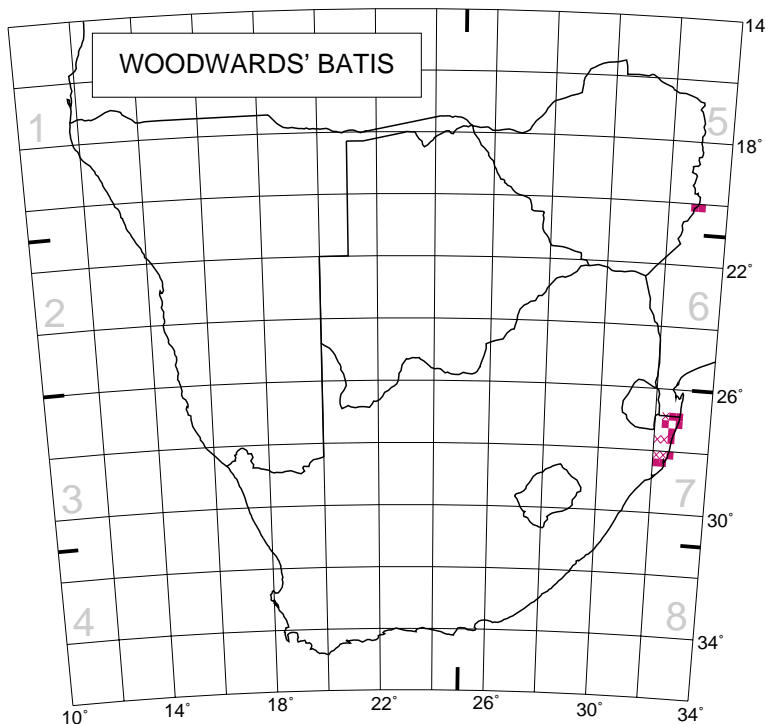
Its plumage is somewhat nondescript and it could be confused with female Cape *B. capensis*, Chinspot *B. molitor*, and Mozambique *B. soror* Batises, which occur in, or close to, its range. It is a skulking bird, occurring in pairs, but reveals its presence when calling.

It is confined to coastal closed-canopy evergreen forest and thicket, preferring the understorey (Harris & Arnott 1988). In KwaZulu-Natal it is most likely to be found in dune forest from St Lucia (2832CB) northwards, but is nowhere common. It is also found in riverine and, formerly, lowland forests up to 600 m altitude (Clancey 1964b).

There is no evidence for seasonal movement, and the lower reporting rates during the post-breeding period are probably due to inconspicuousness during moult, when calling is probably reduced. There were no atlas breeding records, but breeding is known to be initiated in October in KwaZulu-Natal (Clancey 1964b) and in November in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981).

It is sympatric with Chinspot and Mozambique Batises, which inhabit woodland and, significantly, it is largely allopatric with the Cape Batis which occupies much the same forest niche to the west.

Historically, Woodward's Batis extended further to the south, to Mtunzini (2831DD) where it is now absent (Clancey 1964b; Garland 1967). Cyrus & Robson (1980) put the southern limit in the 1970s at just south of St Lucia (2832AD), the present situation. Woodward's Batis is ranked 'indeterminate'



Recorded in 16 grid cells, 0.4%  
 Total number of records: 128  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 6.6%

in the South African Red Data book, on the basis that it is rare and restricted (Brooke 1984b). Its dune forest habitat is vulnerable to mining for titanium. This poses a serious threat, especially as much of this habitat has been lost in southern Mozambique (Lamm 1953; Ryan 1995). Conservation of all remaining dune forest is essential.

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