

Striped Pipit

Gestreepte Koester

Anthus lineiventris

The Striped Pipit is a partially arboreal pipit which is widely if locally distributed in the Afrotropics to the east and south of the equatorial rainforest belt (Keith *et al.* 1992). It extends from the mountain ranges of southeastern Kenya and adjacent northeastern Tanzania southwest to Angola, where it is relatively uncommon, and to the east of southern Africa as far south as the eastern Cape Province. It is present on the Zimbabwean plateau and adjacent highlands of Mozambique, south to the Transvaal plateau and adjacent eastern Botswana hardveld, the Transvaal escarpment, Swaziland, and through KwaZulu-Natal to the Transkei and the extreme east of the eastern Cape Province in the lower Kei River drainage. In the south of its highly fragmented range it generally occurs above 500 m.

It is sometimes grouped with the Rock Pipit *A. crenatus* in a superspecies (Hall & Moreau 1970), on the grounds that the wing and tail-feathers are edged with lemon-yellow, but other characters and the ecology of the two pipits indicate that such an association is ill-advised. It is somewhat similar in its boldly streaked underparts to the Malindi Pipit *A. melindae* of the East African coast, but their relationship has still to be investigated in depth. There are two subspecies in southern Africa; the scattered and localized nature of the species' distribution makes it difficult to assess to what extent the nominate race in the western Transvaal and eastern Botswana may be isolated from birds further to the east and north.

It has a fairly diagnostic plumage, habitat and vocalizations and does not pose great identification problems. It occurs singly or in pairs, but in small loose parties outside the breeding season. It is silent as a rule but during the breeding season territorial males give vent to a loud, almost canary-like song, reminiscent of the Tree Pipit *A. trivialis*. It is a very active bird, foraging among woodland litter and often among rocks, flitting up into leaf cover when alarmed.

Habitat: It prefers broadleaved woodland, particularly miombo, on rocky outcrops and in gorge-like situations and alongside small woodland streams. Further south it is commonest in escarpment country in association with deeply incised drainage lines. It is occasionally encoun-

tered singly on rock-faces far removed from tree cover, or alongside mountain roads and tracks.

Movements: A seasonal influx of birds, presumed to be migrants from further south, has been noted in the Lebombo Mountains in northeastern KwaZulu-Natal and southern Mozambique. Birds with features of the nominate race, breeding on the Transvaal plateau, have been identified from dry-season collections in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, south of the Chimanimani Mountains (1932C) (Clancey 1990b). Tropical populations appear to be more sedentary. No seasonal patterns were evident in Swaziland (Parker 1994). Variation in reporting rates may reflect seasonal changes in conspicuousness, especially in vocalizations.

Breeding: Egg-laying has been recorded in spring and summer, September–January (Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The few atlas records conform to this pattern.

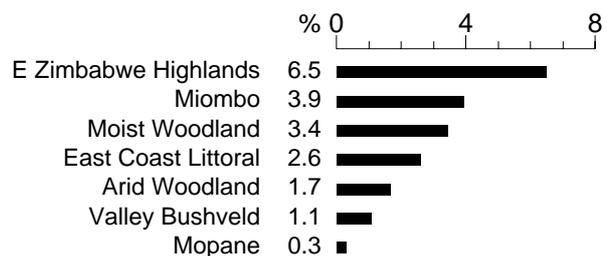
Interspecific relationships: It does not consort with other pipits.

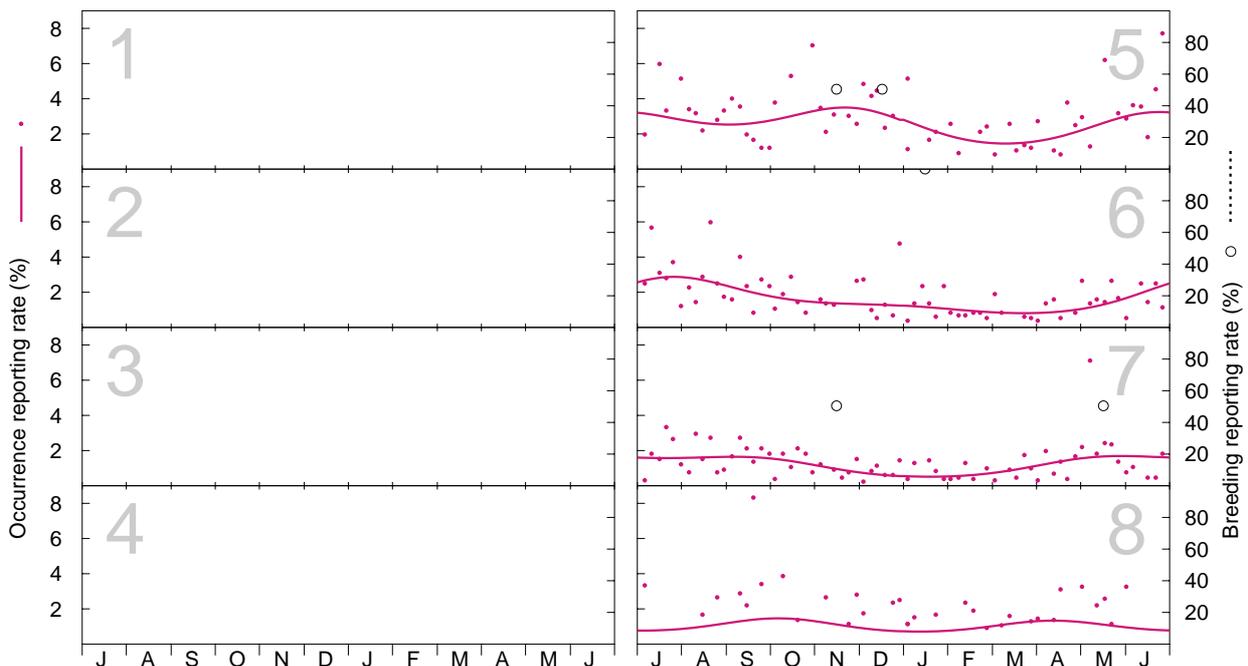
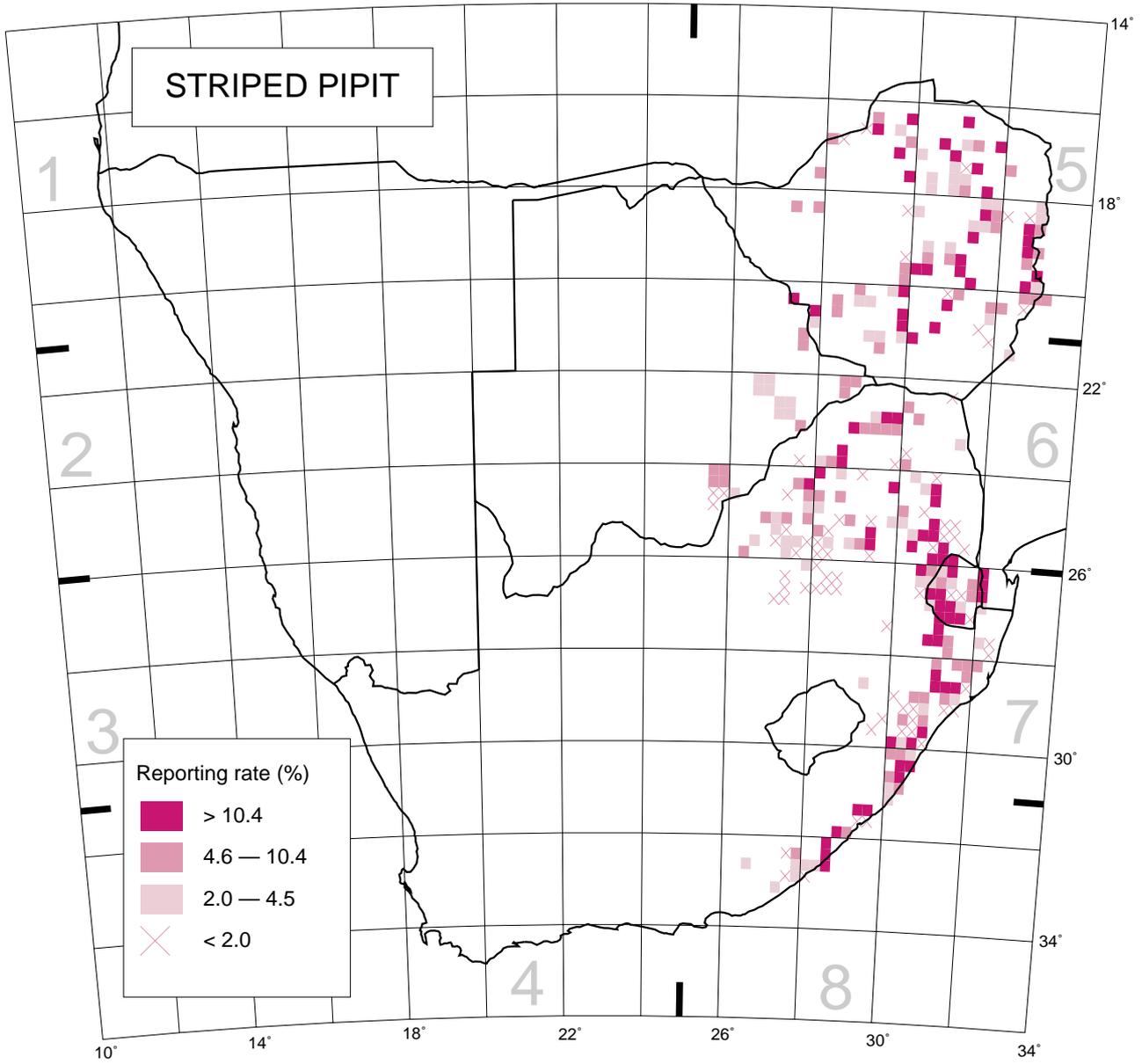
Historical distribution and conservation: The historical range is not known to be different from the present. Because the Striped Pipit prefers broadleaved woodland, particularly miombo, its conservation in Zimbabwe is connected to the future of that biome. The rocky and steep nature of some of its habitat makes it relatively safe from agricultural development.

P.A. Clancey

Recorded in 313 grid cells, 6.9%
Total number of records: 1588
Mean reporting rate for range: 4.7%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 0, 0, 0, 0, 225, 179, 235, 58; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 1, 2, 0.