

The species is monotypic (Clancey 980b). A phylogenetic linkage with the Striped Pipit *A. lineiventris* because of the yellow edging to the wrist feathers, wing coverts, remiges and retrices cannot be sustained and the two species do not form a superspecies but differ widely in their plumage characters and ecology (Clancey 1990b).

It is a relatively robust but nondescript pipit resembling the Plainbacked Pipit *A. leucophrys* but is a warmer olive-brown over the upperparts and ruddier buff over the breast. In good light the characteristic lemon-yellow edging to the short feathers over the bend of the wing, under-wing coverts and the outer edges of both the tail- and wing-feathers can be seen.

Habitat: It occurs in the southern continental interior, in mountainous and karroid country, and in Alpine Grassland in the east. It is particularly centred on koppies in the central and eastern Grassy Karoo, and in the mountains of Lesotho where it ranges to an altitude of c. 3000 m.

Movements: No movements are known and it has not been recorded as seasonally gregarious. Seasonal fluctuations in reporting rates are presumably linked to increased vocalization during the breeding season.

Breeding: Very few breeding records have been reported. Egg-laying in Lesotho has been found during December and January (Osborne & Tigar 1990; Bonde 1993) and a single Transvaal record comes from December (Allan & Harris 1984). Most atlas records span October–March confirming summer breeding. There is an August atlas record from the winter-rainfall region (Zone 4).

Historical distribution and conservation: The Rock Pipit was originally described on the basis of a single specimen, allegedly taken in mountains near Cape Town (3318CD), but there have been few records from the southwestern Cape Province in recent times and therefore it has seemingly declined in the far west of its range. It is not endangered, however, as its habitat lies beyond the altitudinal and rainfall limits of crop agriculture.

P.A. Clancey

Rock Pipit

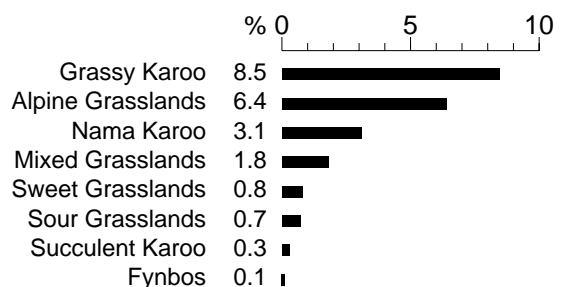
Klipkoester

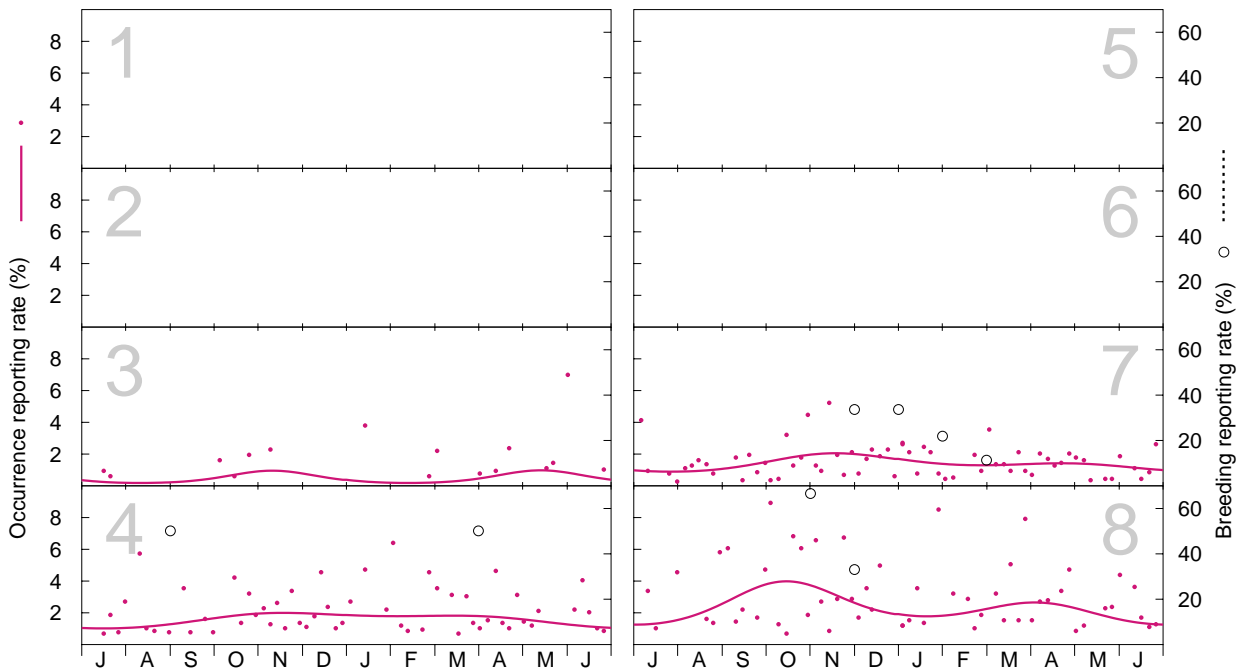
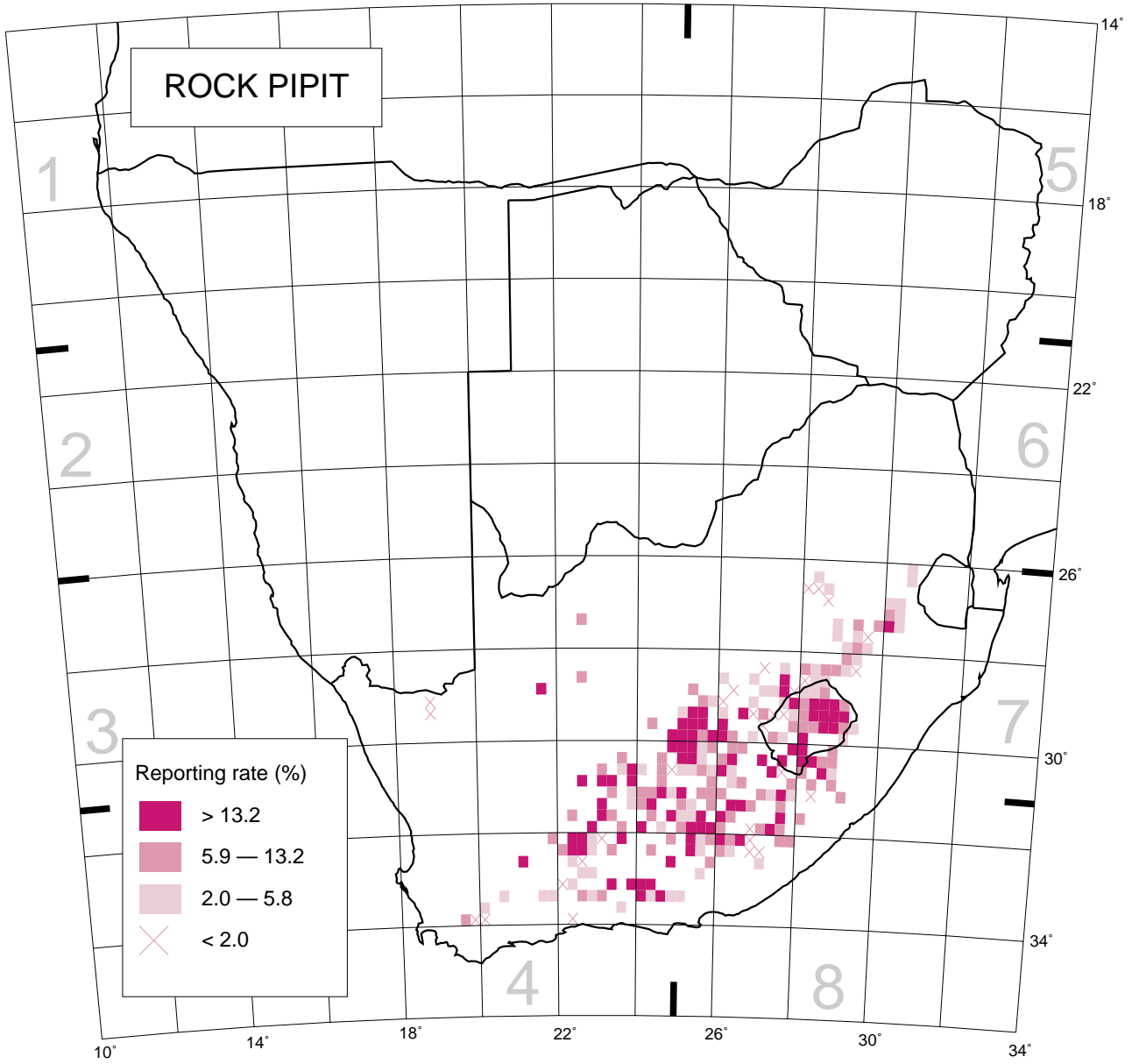
Anthus crenatus

The Rock Pipit is a southern African endemic which is tenuously distributed from the mountains of the southwestern Cape Province eastwards along the southern mountain ranges and koppies of the Karoo to the Drakensberg massif in Lesotho and further along the escarpment to c. 26°S. Its northern range limits are centred on the Transvaal Drakensberg. It is widely distributed in suitable country in the eastern Cape Province, the Free State and particularly in the highlands of Lesotho where it is one of the commoner terrestrial passerines. In KwaZulu-Natal it is largely concentrated in the Drakensberg foothills and escarpment country in the west. The outlying records in the northern Cape Province were carefully vetted and can be considered accurate. It is generally to be found singly or in pairs and is local and sparse. It is perhaps commonest in Lesotho.

Recorded in 266 grid cells, 5.9%
Total number of records: 999
Mean reporting rate for range: 8.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 0, 0, 27, 138, 0, 0, 275, 131; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 9, 3.