



## Bokmakierie

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#### *Telophorus zeylonus*

This southern African endemic is restricted to the south and west of the atlas region, although it also extends marginally into southern Angola along the coast (Harris & Arnott 1988). The Bokmakierie occurs in western Namibia, the Cape Province, Free State, Lesotho, western Swaziland, KwaZulu-Natal and southern and central Transvaal. There is an isolated population in the Chimanimani Mountains (1933C) of Zimbabwe and neighbouring Mozambique (Irwin 1981). Four subspecies are recognized in the region (Clancey 1980b); two have widely continuous ranges, while *T. z. phanus* in the Kaokoveld of Namibia appears to be isolated by a small break. An isolated population of *restrictus* occurs in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. Jackson (1972) reported the population in the Chimanimani Mountains to consist of about 400 birds, but Irwin (1981) considered that only a few pairs occurred on the Zimbabwe side of the border.

The size of a breeding territory may be 5 ha (Harris & Arnott 1988). It is usually encountered in pairs. It is a conspicuous species owing to its bright coloration and its loud and frequent calls. Although it superficially resembles the Yellowthroated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*, and some of its calls can be confused with those of the Southern Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus* and the Olive Bush Shrike *T. olivaceus*, the distribution map is an accurate reflection of its range and relative abundance.

**Habitat:** The vegetation analysis shows that it is most abundant in the Karoo, the Fynbos and the grassland biomes, where it occupies scrubby habitat, and is commonly found among low bushes in association with rocky outcrops. It is also a common garden bird in urban areas throughout its range. The analysis clearly shows an avoidance of woodland types, with the exception of Valley Bushveld in the eastern Cape Province in which it is common. Around the edges of its range in the Transvaal, Swaziland, KwaZulu-Natal, the eastern Cape Province and southeastern Botswana (Penry 1994), it occurs at low densities in light mixed woodland and thorn savanna on stony ground.

**Movements:** The atlas data do not reveal any evidence of seasonal movements and it is believed to be resident throughout its range (Maclean 1993b). A total of 10 ringed birds have been recovered; in all cases the recoveries were within 5 km of the ringing site (SAFRING).

**Breeding:** The models show that breeding occurs mostly in spring/summer with occasional records in winter; many late records would have been of dependent fledglings. The models suggest that the breeding season commences slightly earlier in the southwestern and western Cape Province (Zones 3 and 4) where it is also briefer than elsewhere. Previous records indicate that egg-laying peaks August–November in the Transvaal (Zone 6) (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) and earlier in the southwestern Cape Province with a peak July–September (Winterbottom 1968a).

**Interspecific relationships:** Being a partly terrestrial bird of scrub rather than woodland, the Bokmakierie has little contact with other bush shrikes.

**Historical distribution and conservation:** It is not clear whether the population in the Chimanimani Mountains represents a recent colonization or the remnant of a wider distribution in prehistoric times (Jackson 1972). Elsewhere it is likely that the distribution has changed little in the historical past. There are no immediate threats: the Bokmakierie's preferred habitat for the most part does not coincide with prime agricultural land and it has benefited from the establishment of parks and gardens.

V. Parker

Recorded in 1801 grid cells, 39.7%  
Total number of records: 45 536  
Mean reporting rate for range: 45.4%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types



