

Scarce Swift

Skaarswindswael

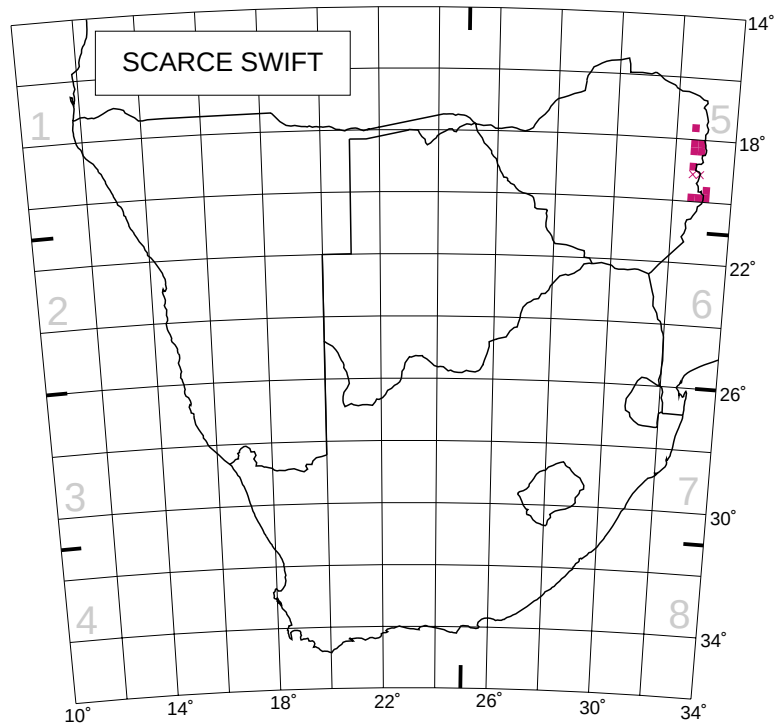
Schoutedenapus myoptilus

The Scarce Swift occurs patchily from Zimbabwe to Ethiopia with an isolated population on Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea (Brooke 1971a). In southern Africa it is found in the wetter parts of the mountainous border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It belongs to the group of plain dark swifts whose identification is always tricky, and it is probably under-recorded as a result, but there is no evidence for misidentified records in the atlas data.

The atlas data suggest what was not previously suspected: that it is a breeding summer visitor, with very few records March–July. Its absence at the Mtarazi Falls (1832BD), where it breeds, was noted on 23 May 1965 (pers. obs.) without the conclusion being drawn that its presence is seasonal (cf. Tree 1988d).

It breeds in cracks under overhanging rocks but neither the nest nor the eggs nor the young have ever been found and described. There has been no known change in its southern African distribution; apparently it has not yet adapted to breeding on man-made structures. The remote and inaccessible breeding sites of the Scarce Swift ensure that human persecution is limited, and local changes to the environment are unlikely to have major negative effects.

R.K. Brooke



Extent of range: 12 grid cells, 0.3%

Total number of records: 36

Mean reporting rate for range: 4.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

