

Angola Pitta

Angolapitta

Pitta angolensis

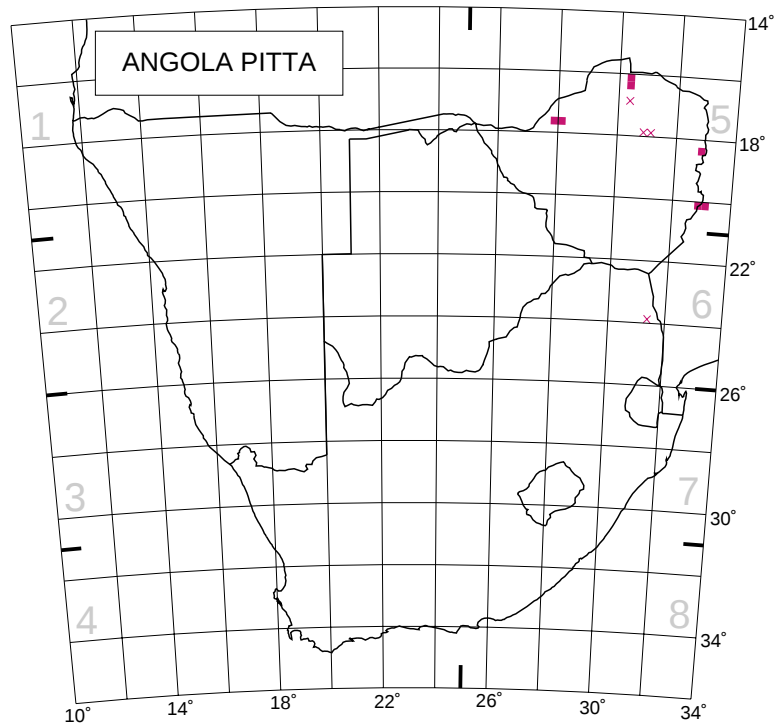
This uncommon intra-African breeding migrant from equatorial Africa is known to occur regularly in southern Africa at only a small number of sites in Zimbabwe, despite being sought after by birders. Although the known breeding range in Zimbabwe is restricted, it is likely that many more breeding localities exist undetected because this is a remarkably inconspicuous species, in spite of its brightly coloured plumage.

Although it may be found in any patches of bush or woodland when on migration, its favoured habitat is that of lowland evergreen riparian forest with patches of dense bush understorey and small open glades. Fallen dead trees and branches are favoured as perches from which it can perform its strange puppet-like displays. Its peculiar nest is an untidy dome of small sticks and grass which one can pass without realizing its identity.

It arrives from late October with the main influx in November and early December, departing again in February after a short breeding season, but with occasional records to April (Irwin 1981). During southward migration, overshooting is not uncommon, particularly when moist tropical air masses are moving southwards (pers. obs), and this probably accounts for the records from the north-eastern Transvaal and the Zimbabwean plateau.

Egg-laying takes place November–December (Irwin 1981) and there was a single atlas breeding record from December.

In the Zambezi Valley it is found more commonly on the Zambian side of the river where there are fewer game animals interfering with the vegetation (D.R. Aspinwall pers. comm.), while on the Zimbabwean side most of the valley falls into the National Parks estate and the opening up of the riparian woodland by elephants may reduce its habitat.



Recorded in 11 grid cells, 0.2%
Total number of records: 20
Mean reporting rate for range: 2.3%

A.J. Tree

