



Greencapped Eremomela

Donkerwangbossanger

Eremomela scotops

The Greencapped Eremomela occurs in southcentral Africa, from southern Uganda and Kenya, and southern Zaire, through Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe to northern South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. Within southern Africa it is widely distributed in Zimbabwe, occurring as high as 1550 m in the east (Irwin 1981), and is locally common to the west in northern Botswana and the Caprivi, and sparsely distributed from northern Transvaal to Swaziland and northern KwaZulu-Natal. It is locally common in miombo in Mozambique (Clancey 1971c). Three subspecies are recognized in the region (Clancey 1980b), but from the present map there appear to be several relatively isolated populations which do not correspond to the subspecies' putative ranges.

It is regarded as one of four closely related eremomelas (Hall & Moreau 1970), including the Karoo Eremomela *E. gregalis* of southern Africa and two species which occur further north in Africa.

It usually occurs in pairs or small groups of 3–8 birds, and joins mixed feeding groups during the nonbreeding season (Vernon & Vernon 1978). It is active and vocal, but it may present difficulties in identification because it lacks marked plumage characteristics. The distribution shown in the atlas is probably accurate.

Habitat: It occupies the canopy of woodlands, mainly in Miombo and Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands vegetation types. Its centre of abundance is in the miombo woodlands of Zimbabwe, but it occurs more locally in *Baikiaea* woodland, and also in tall alluvial *Acacia* and riparian fringing forest in the southeast (Irwin 1981). In northern South Africa it usually occurs in hilly areas in deciduous broad-leaved or mixed woodland, notably mixed woodland characterized by *Faurea saligna*, *Acacia caffra* and *Combretum* spp. (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). In Botswana it occurs mainly in miombo and *Baikiaea* woodland (Penry 1994), and in the riparian woodlands of the Okavango.

Movements: It is resident; there is no indication of movements from the models or in the literature. It is vocal throughout the year, and this is also shown in the absence of seasonality in reporting rates.

Breeding: Atlas records show a prolonged spring–summer breeding season, with a November–December peak in Zone 5 (Zimbabwe). This is substantiated by Irwin (1981), who recorded egg laying August–February (peak September–November) in Zimbabwe, and Maclean (1993b) who gave the breeding season as July–February, with a peak September–November. There are three breeding records from South Africa, two nests with eggs in October and one nest with hatchlings in November (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). This species breeds communally (Vernon & Vernon 1978).

Interspecific relationships: It occurs alongside the Yellowbellied Eremomela *E. icteropygialis* in miombo in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), and the degree of competition between the two is unclear.

Historical distribution and conservation: The distribution is not known to have differed substantially from the present, but it was probably under-recorded in the past. The Greencapped Eremomela is not regarded as threatened in South Africa, but is listed as worthy of monitoring because it is not common (Brooke 1984b). Ongoing destruction of its woodland habitat, particularly in Zimbabwe, is presumably having a negative impact.

A. Berruti

Recorded in 316 grid cells, 7.0%

Total number of records: 1494

Mean reporting rate for range: 9.0%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



