

Rockrunner

Rotsvoël

Achaetops pycnopygius

The Rockrunner is found in central and north-western regions of Namibia as far north as Opuwo (1813BB), and its 59 000 km² range stretches eastwards to the Waterberg Plateau Park (2017A), where it is particularly common (Robertson 1993). Its Namibian population was estimated at c. 96 000 birds from atlas records and ground-truthed density estimates, with c. 7500 in three protected areas (Jarvis & Robertson 1997). The bird is a near-endemic to southern Africa, extending into the southern Huila Province of Angola, where it occurs sparsely in rocky areas (Pinto 1970).

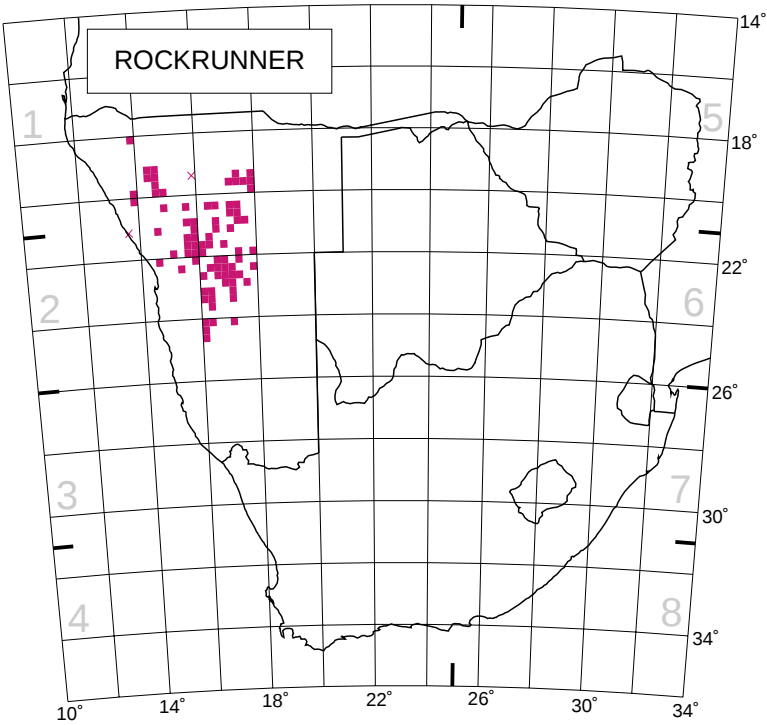
Previously known as the Damara Rockjumper, this elusive songster is probably commoner than its distribution or reporting rates suggest. In a survey of Namibian ‘specials’ in 1993, it was found in several grid cells where it had not been recorded in the previous 15 years (Robertson *et al.* 1995). It is found only in rocky outcrops where it often remains hidden in grassy tufts and rocky crevices; only in summer does it expose itself in prominent positions to sing and display.

The vegetation analysis found it associated with the Namibian Escarpment and Arid Woodland. Altitude and rainfall were the only variables found to explain variance in density estimates (Robertson *et al.* 1995).

No movements are known or suspected. Nests are difficult to locate and breeding was first described by Clinning & Tarboton (1972). Atlas breeding records were November–March, and egg-laying has been recorded November–April (Brown & Clinning in press); most birds breed January–March coincident with local rains.

Despite its relatively small range and population, the Rockrunner faces few threats and is well represented in protected areas in Namibia.

R.E. Simmons



Recorded in 81 grid cells, 1.8%
Total number of records: 683
Mean reporting rate for range: 15.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

