



Threestreaked Tchagra

Driestreetjagra

Tchagra australis

The Threestreaked Tchagra is distributed through most of sub-Saharan Africa, including the northern half of the atlas region. It occurs in northern Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, the Transvaal, Swaziland, the northern Cape Province, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Five subspecies in the region (Clancey 1980b; Clancey *et al.* 1991) have essentially continuous ranges. Its breeding densities have been recorded as 1 pair/20 ha in *Acacia* and 1 pair/25 ha in broadleaved woodland at Nylsvlei (2428DA) in the central Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The actual size of a breeding territory may be 4 ha (Harris & Arnott 1988). It is usually encountered in pairs.

It spends much of the time hidden in the undergrowth and, when spotted, is not easily distinguished from the Black-crowned Tchagra *T. senegala* with which it overlaps widely, and the Southern Tchagra *T. tchagra* with which it overlaps only slightly. It does, however, have a distinctive call and display flight, and the atlas data can be considered comprehensive and reliable.

Habitat: It occurs in woodland and scrub where it is mostly restricted to the undergrowth. The woodland types it inhabits include *Acacia* woodland, Mopane woodland and some broadleaved woodlands. The atlas data do not support the assertion that it avoids miombo woodland (Harris & Arnott 1988). Its absence from higher altitudes in the Transvaal, KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland seems to coincide with the limits of occurrence of *Acacia* thickets. It does not occur at altitudes much above 1500 m and is absent from areas with average annual rainfall below *c.* 200 mm.

Movements: Slight declines in reporting rate towards the end of the breeding season probably reflect reduced vocalization during moult; it is probably resident throughout its range. This is further supported by recoveries of three ringed birds, one adult and two juveniles: all three were recovered within 1 km of the ringing site (SAFRING).

Breeding: The models show that breeding occurs throughout the summer. Egg-laying peaks October–December in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) and in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), but breeding is mostly after December in Namibia (Brown & Clinning in press).

Interspecific relationships: The ecological separation between this species and the Black-crowned Tchagra, over their large area of sympatry, is not clear. The Threestreaked Tchagra tends to occur in denser bush than the latter, and also extends into drier regions, but the two species are often encountered in close proximity within the same habitat. The range of this species overlaps only marginally with the Southern Tchagra; where they occur in the same vicinity, the Southern Tchagra is confined to forest edge and broadleaved thicket, and the Threestreaked Tchagra to *Acacia* and mixed woodland.

Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence that the past distribution is different to the present. It appears slightly more widespread in KwaZulu-Natal than indicated by Cyrus & Robson (1980), but this may be attributable to improved observer expertise, particularly in recognizing the call.

V. Parker

Recorded in 1929 grid cells, 42.5%
Total number of records: 14 283
Mean reporting rate for range: 21.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



