



Olive Bush Shrike

Olyfboslaksman

Telophorus olivaceus

The Olive Bush Shrike is virtually confined to southern Africa, its range extending only marginally into East Africa (Harris & Arnott 1988). Within the atlas region, it has been reported from the eastern Zimbabwe highlands, the eastern Transvaal (largely associated with the escarpment), Swaziland, KwaZulu-Natal and the eastern and southern Cape Province. Three subspecies in the region have rather distinct ranges (Clancey 1980b): birds in eastern Zimbabwe are *T. o. interfluvius*, the nominate race occurs along the coast, and *taylori* occupies the escarpment from the Transvaal to Swaziland, probably including the birds in the highlands of northwestern KwaZulu-Natal.

Both its density in suitable habitat (in eastern Transvaal forests) and typical territory size have been estimated at 1 pair/1.5 ha (Harris & Arnott 1988). It remains hidden in foliage most of the time and is not easily spotted. Although it calls loudly and frequently, its calls may be confused with those of the Orangebreasted Bush Shrike *T. sulfureopectus* and Bokmakierie *T. zeylonus* and are distinguished by relatively few observers. It has two plumage forms, one of which is highly distinctive and another which resembles the Orangebreasted Bush Shrike. Nevertheless, the atlas data appear to be reasonably accurate.

Habitat: Its range in southern Africa corresponds roughly to areas below 2000 m altitude with average annual rainfall of at least 600 mm. It is a forest species which also occurs in some dense, moist woodlands. It utilizes the fringes as well as the depths of forests (Harris & Arnott 1988). It occurs rarely in some alien plantations (Harris & Arnott 1988), including alien *Acacia* thickets in the southwestern Cape Province

(Hockey *et al.* 1989). The vegetation analysis suggests that it is most common in the forests of the Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands.

Movements: The models show that it was recorded more frequently during spring/summer; this is likely to be due to its being more vocal at that time. It appears to be resident over most of its range, but it is believed to move to lower-lying areas in winter in eastern Zimbabwe (Harris & Arnott 1988).

Breeding: Breeding has been reported December–January in the eastern Cape Province, September–December in KwaZulu-Natal, November–February in the Transvaal, and October–January in Zimbabwe (Maclean 1993b). The few atlas records suggest a long summer breeding season.

Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence to suggest that its overall range has changed much from historical times, but the Olive Bush Shrike must have suffered local extinctions where deforestation has accompanied human population pressure and intensive agriculture, especially in the coastal regions of KwaZulu-Natal and the southern Cape Province.

V. Parker

Recorded in 332 grid cells, 7.3%
Total number of records: 3705
Mean reporting rate for range: 9.7%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



