

Wood Pipit

Miombokoester

Anthus nyassae

The Wood Pipit is confined to broadleaved woodlands in southcentral Africa, and was believed to be conspecific with the Longbilled Pipit *A. similis*. It differs from the Longbilled Pipit in its choice of habitat and in a range of morphological characters as defined in Clancey (1988b). The Wood Pipit is moderately polytypic, with two subspecies in the region, one in miombo woodlands of Zimbabwe, and another in northern Namibia and probably northern Botswana (Clancey 1988b); in between it is absent from *Baikiaea* woodlands in western Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981).

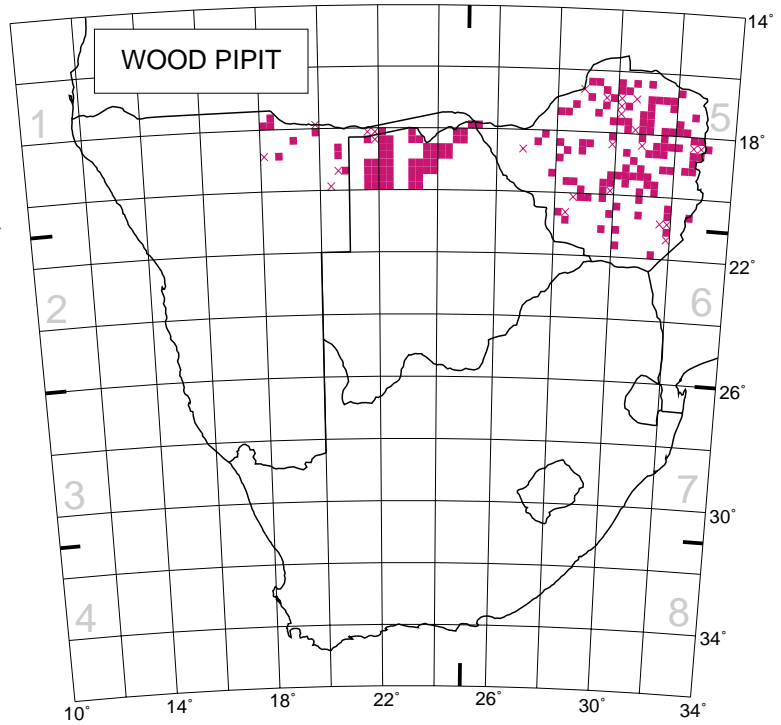
It was not recognized as a species during the atlas period and the present map has been generated by renaming all alleged Longbilled Pipit records from the broadleaved woodland biomes. This leads to the anomaly that many records are shown for northern Botswana, a country where the Wood Pipit is not on the official list (Borello 1992b; Penry 1994). Also bearing in mind the problematic field identification of the larger pipits (see text for Longbilled Pipit), the present map and analysis should be considered only as working hypotheses.

It prefers a lightly grassed understorey of broadleaved woodland savanna, especially miombo woodland (*Brachystegia-Julbernardia*), e.g. in Zimbabwe, while in Namibia and Botswana it occurs in *Burkea-Baikiaea* and *Pterocarpus* woodlands (Brown 1990a, 1993). It feeds on the ground, and flies up into the mid-storey of tree cover when flushed. It is usually silent, and rather sparse, even where well represented. Difference in habitat, a whitish eyestripe and white ventral parts with dark shaft-streaking could probably help in separating the species from congeners in the field, except perhaps the Striped Pipit *A. lineiventris* which prefers rocky substrates.

Wood and Longbilled Pipits are currently believed not to overlap (Clancey 1988b), but further research is needed, particularly in Zimbabwe where suitable habitat for both exists and where records from the eastern highlands, currently included with the Wood Pipit, are said to come from grasslands with rocky outcrops and bushes (Irwin 1981), elsewhere the typical habitat of the Longbilled Pipit.

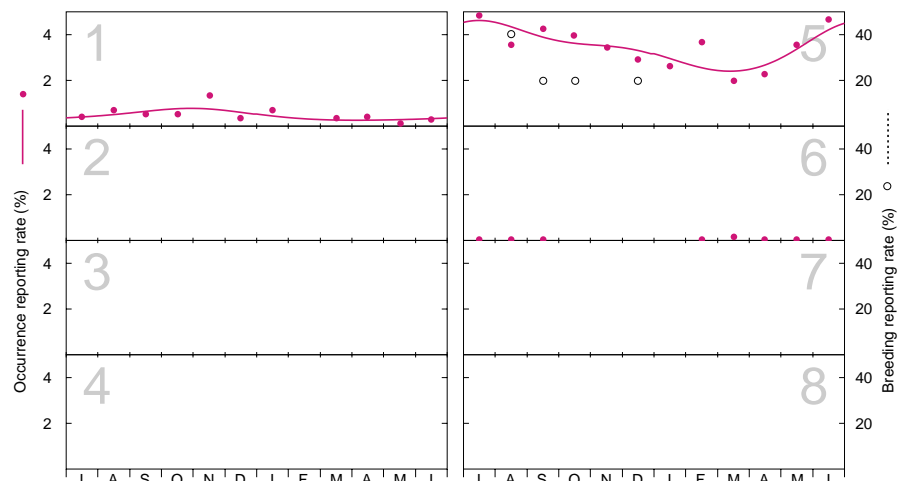
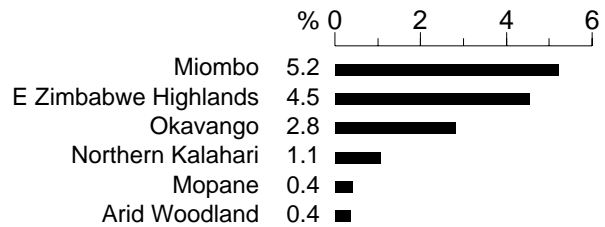
Taking Irwin's (1981) information on Longbilled Pipit in Zimbabwe to be relevant to the Wood Pipit, the latter breeds in early spring and summer, July–February, particularly September–November. As far as has been established, the Wood Pipit is sedentary. Similar to the Longbilled Pipit, it is not as markedly gregarious as many other pipits in Africa during the nonbreeding season. Its current status is uncertain, but further destruction of miombo and other broadleaved woodlands could endanger the Wood Pipit.

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Recorded in 193 grid cells, 4.3%
Total number of records: 466
Mean reporting rate for range: 6.6%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 41, 0, 0, 0, 401, 10, 0, 0, 0; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 5, 0, 0, 0.