

## Key to southern African pipits

The dichotomous key that is featured on the shaded pages that follow prompts readers to select from two (or occasionally three) options that best describes the bird in question. The selected option will then refer you either to a new question number or provide a possible result (in bold). Readers should be warned that the use of such a key is deceptively tricky as it is based on a very small number of characters. The key should always be used in conjunction with the species accounts and the colour plates and the final result obtained from the key should be treated merely as a likely possibility – not an ultimate endpoint!

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | Throat bright yellow.....   | 2                                       |
|    | Throat white, buffy, brown or other colour.....   | 3                                       |
| 2  | Black breast band; much of wing yellow; unfeathered tibia.....                                | <b>male Golden Pipit</b>                |
|    | No black breast band; wing mostly brown; feathered tibia.....                                 | <b>br. Yellow-breasted Pipit</b>        |
| 3  | Outer tail feathers white.....  | 4                                       |
|    | Outer tail feathers buffy or light brown.....   | 11                                      |
|    | Outer tail feathers not seen.....   | 20                                      |
| 4  | Habitat woodland.....   | 5                                       |
|    | Habitat open grassland.....   | 7                                       |
| 5  | Above greyish, greenish or olive-brown.....   | 6                                       |
|    | Above pale golden brown.....  | <b>Bushveld Pipit</b>                   |
| 6  | Size smallish; strong facial markings; streaking on flanks thin.....                          | <b>Tree Pipit</b>                       |
|    | Size large; weak facial markings; streaking on flanks bold; rocky areas.....                  | <b>Striped Pipit</b>                    |
| 7  | Flanks streaked.....  | 8                                       |
|    | Flanks unstreaked.....  | 9                                       |
| 8  | Very small; squat; no obvious supercilium; very short tail.....                               | <b>Short-tailed Pipit</b>               |
|    | Size medium; elongated; clear supercilium; medium tail; face and throat sometimes rufous..... | <b>Red-throated Pipit</b>               |
| 9  | No yellow on belly; facial markings rather distinct.....                                      | 10                                      |
|    | Bright yellow spot on belly or distinct yellowish wash on belly; no malar stripe.....         | <b>juv/non-br Yellow-breasted Pipit</b> |
| 10 | Size smallish; slim, rises steeply when flushed; typical pipit <i>tschissik</i> .....         | <b>African Pipit</b>                    |
|    | Size medium; generally flies low; single, measured, repeated callnote.....                    | <b>Kimberley Pipit</b>                  |
| 11 | Wags tail deeply when stationary, upperparts unmarked.....                                    | 12                                      |
|    | Tail wagging weak or infrequent, upperparts marked or plain.....                              | 14                                      |