

upper mandible (see Fig. 100). In this regard it resembles the Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*, which inhabits the mountainous regions of the Middle East and Asia. In fact, these two species are perhaps related—genetic research by Voelker (1999), suggests that the Upland Pipit forms the basal unit to a dis-

tinct division within the 'Large pipits' group, which includes the sister species pair, African Rock and Striped Pipits and strangely the Mountain Pipit. The bill is also markedly thicker and less sharply pointed terminally when compared to other pipits, and the nostrils are more slit-like than other pipits, which

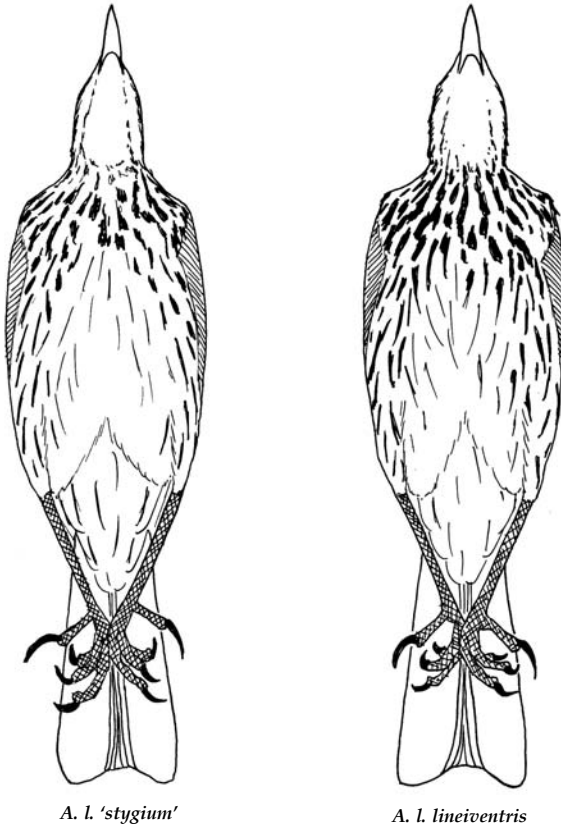


Fig. 101. Striped Pipit geographical variation. Clancey (1990) recognized 4 subspecies of the Striped Pipit (of which two occur in southern Africa), but it is now believed that the variation he described was actually of a clinal nature, with birds from the wetter south and east of the range (corresponding with the subspecies *A. l. 'stygium'*) being slightly darker above when compared with birds from the northern interior of South Africa. In addition, '*stygium*' is said to be slightly paler below (less buffy) with less intense streaking. The distribution patterns of the two taxa are not clearly separated by any ecological or physical barrier (see also *Geographical variation* for more information).