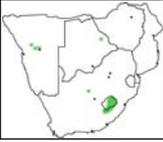


Mountain Pipit *Anthus hoeschi*

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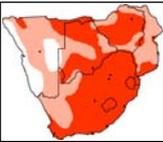
A summer migrant to the Lesotho highlands and adjacent Drakensberg, the Mountain Pipit is most likely to be confused with the African Pipit, with which its summer distribution overlaps in a narrow altitudinal band. Larger & heavier than that species; with darker, broader streaking on the breast and mantle; a pink (not yellowish) base to the lower mandible; and buffy (not white) outer tail feathers. Best distinguished by voice. Also overlaps with Long-billed Pipit, but Mountain overall darker, with more prominent breast streaking and bolder facial markings.

Sexes. Similar. **Juv.** Darker than adult, with a heavily blotched breast and almost black upperparts. **First-winter.** Similar to adult, but unlikely to be encountered in southern Africa. **Status.** Common summer visitor in the Lesotho highlands (Oct-Apr). Localized and uncommon in South Africa. Can occur north and north-west of its breeding range during migration. Winters in Central Africa. **Habitat.** Breeds in short montane grasslands and karroid heathlands >2000m. **Call.** In flight or during social interactions utters typical *tschisik* notes very similar to those of African Pipit, but deeper and fuller. **Song.** Identification is best based on characteristic aerial song flight, which recalls that of African Pipit, but accompanying song is much slower, deeper & more raspy. Often gives slowly repeated, single *tchi-ree* notes (rather than a short series of notes as in African Pipit).

3.1 Adult hoeschi. Typical form. Note somewhat rufous ear-coverts and dusky flanks. Rarely some individuals show rich orange-buff underparts. The colour and intensity of the breast markings also varies considerably.

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*

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The most common pipit in the subregion. Smaller and more slender than other 'Large pipits', this species shows a clearly streaked mantle and breast (paler in western races). The breast streaking is neat and rather narrow, forming a necklace on the border of the throat and breast. The crisp white outer rectrices are a good identification feature, but can be difficult to see in the field and are sometimes entirely absent. Distinguished from larger Long-billed Pipit by much clearer facial markings; less uniform underparts; bolder breast markings & malar stripe; darker mantle streaking; and weak bill. Similar to Mountain Pipit (which see for differences). On the ground it moves rapidly, showing an upright posture, and giving rather lethargic, irregular tail wagging motions. Often perches on boulders or fences, but rarely in trees.

Sexes. Similar. **Juv.** Shows blotchy breast markings and pale feather edges which create a scaled effect on the mantle and crown. Flanks often weakly streaked. **First-winter.** Similar to adult. **Status.** Common resident or altitudinal migrant. **Habitat.** Virtually any type of open grassland from sea level to 2200m. **Call.** Characteristic *tschisik* note, or variations thereof, given in flight and from the ground. **Song.** Utters a repeated series of 3-6 short notes, *trrii-trrii-trrii-trrii*, during an undulating display flight. The pitch, tempo & quality of the song is variable.

- 3.2 Adult rufuloides.** Widely distributed over much of the southern & eastern regions.
- 3.3 Adult bocagii.** Replaces the previous subspecies in the arid western areas. Much paler above & below, with indistinct breast streaking.
- 3.4 Adult lichenya.** Northern areas. Birds of the subspecies *A. c. rufuloides* tend to become redder in the north of their range where they occur in proximity to this subspecies.

Juvenile. Note dark, blotchy breast markings; incomplete malar stripe; lightly streaked flanks; and scalloped mantle. This bird's median wing-coverts, greater wing-coverts and tertials are heavily bleached and worn as evident from their white edges.

