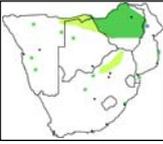


## Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

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This secretive Palearctic visitor is easily overlooked in its woodland haunts, but when seen the elegant, streamlined appearance and weak bill is striking. It shows olive-tinged upperparts that contrast well with the white or pale buff belly and yellowish wash on the breast. Unlike Bushveld Pipit (p. 98), the breast streaking is bold and blotchy, extending markedly onto the flanks (where the streaks are noticeably thinner than on the breast). Tree also shows a longer, broader tail; paler edges to the wing-coverts; and lacks Bushveld's golden-brown upperparts. The dark and pale

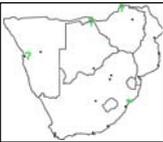
spot on the back of the ear-coverts is only visible at close range. Wags tail incessantly in a shallow, rhythmic manner when nervous and when perched. Walks with a distinctive, crouched gait, keeping the knees deeply bent and the belly close to the ground. When disturbed, immediately takes refuge in a tree where it walks confidently along the lengths of the branches.

**Sexes.** Similar. **Juv.** Very similar to adult. Best told on different degree of feather wear, but ageing in the field is doubtful. **First-winter.** Very similar to adult. **Status.** Uncommon, localized summer visitor from the Palearctic. Rarely overwinters. May occur in reasonable numbers in suitable habitat, especially just prior to migration. **Habitat.** Limited to wooded, park-like environments, preferring areas of moist woodland with an open understorey. Most common in miombo woodlands, especially in mountainous regions. **Call.** Generally quiet, but may give a short, explosive *beez* note in flight. Alarm call is a soft *sweet*. **Song.** Gives a melodious, canary-like series of rising and falling whistles and trills, delivered from a perch or in a short aerial display. The song is seldom heard in southern Africa.

- 2.1 **Adult *trivialis* worn plumage.** Approximately Dec - Feb. Note slightly paler, greyer upperparts and whiter underparts. The dark streaking tends to contrast more with the pale feather edges in worn plumage and the edges of the wing-coverts are often very pale or even white. Worn plumage is more likely just prior to the partial pre-breeding moult that occurs on the non-breeding grounds (Jan-Apr).
- 2.2 **Adult *trivialis* fresh plumage.** Approximately Sept - Dec. Illustrated in alert posture as when disturbed while foraging. Note the darker, browner upperparts (contrasting less with the dark streaking); buffy (not whitish) edges to the wing-coverts; buffier underparts; and darker throat. Recently arrived birds show fresh plumage as the complete post-breeding is completed on the breeding grounds just prior to southward migration.

## Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

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This species is named after the diagnostic rufous or pinkish throat, supercilium and upper breast of both sexes of adults. This plumage is maintained throughout the year and is not lost during the non-breeding season. However, juveniles, first-winters and a few adults (mostly females) lack rufous on the head altogether. In all plumages the bold, black streaking on the mantle; two paler, creamy lines on the side of the mantle; and boldly streaked flanks are diagnostic. The bill is thin and weak, almost conical. Although difficult to see in the field, the streaking on the

back, rump and uppertail-coverts is diagnostic. However, note that Tree Pipit also shows darker centres to the uppertail-coverts, but unlike that species, Red-throated shows an unbroken eye-ring; pale lores; and much bolder, more extensive ventral streaking.

**Sexes.** Female often shows less rufous on the throat and bolder breast streaking, but much overlap exists. **Juv.** Unlikely to be seen in southern Africa, as the post-juvenile moult is completed prior to the southward migration. **First-winter.** Lacks any rufous on the face. **Status.** Very rare summer vagrant. **Habitat.** Moist, open grassland habitats. Breeds in tundra. **Call.** An explosive, pure, *peez* in flight. Alarm call is a short *tsip* note. **Song.** Song is a long series of canary-like notes, but unlikely to sing in Africa.

- 2.3 **First-winter *cervinus*.** Worn plumage, showing whitish underparts and pale edges on the wing-coverts.
- 2.4 **First-winter *cervinus*.** Fresh plumage, illustrated in resting pose with head and legs retracted.
- 2.5 **Adult *cervinus*.** Both sexes commonly look like this. Note the complete lack of a malar stripe.
- 2.6 **Adult *cervinus*.** Most likely to be male. Note the thin breast streaking and extensive rufous breast. In extreme cases virtually all the black streaking can be absent.
- 2.7 **Adult *cervinus*.** Most likely to be female. Note malar stripe and broad breast streaking. A few first-winters may show some pink on the throat, thus resembling this adult female.