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BIRD SIGHTING

AFRICAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER ON THE MOVE

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Figure 1 - The beauty of an African Paradise-flycatcher, ringed along the Omaruru river.

Introduction

African Paradise-flycatchers *Terpsiphone viridis* (Figure 1) occur quite scattered over Namibia: They are regularly seen in a few

pentads in the northern part of the country, such as around the Waterberg, around Etsoha, and in the vegetation along rivers, which are places of preference, like the Omaruru, the Cunene and in the eastern Caprivi. As Windhoek is home to a number of birders participating in the SABAP and offers gardens and trees, this bird species is also recorded in the city.

Sighting

On 28 February 2017 we observed two quite vocally active African Paradise-flycatchers in eastern Namibia, a few kilometers north of Witvlei (at 22°21'S 18°31'E). This was the first time ever we had heard and seen them in this location. The birds spent the afternoon moving through the pine and gum trees in front of the living-room. Watching their movements for hours and - unsuccessfully - trying to catch them for ringing, it seemed like they were arriving from further south and perching, hunting and feeding slowly on their way northwards through the branches. In the late afternoon they were gone.

Both individuals appeared to be young males, with tails growing (Figure 2,3).



Figure 2a,b - The short streamers indicate a young male.



Figure 3 - The second bird, also a young male, growing the long tail feathers.

Discussion

Parts of the breeding population in South Africa to Namibia (race *plumbeiceps*) undertake a post-breeding migration north to equatorial regions in the western part of Africa, like Cameroon, Gabon and DR Congo, others fly more easterly. The birds start leaving in mid-February, after their main breeding season which peaks mainly from November to December (Moeliker 2017).

It is likely that the two young males that were observed, were already on migration.

Acknowledgements

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References

Moeliker K 2017. African Paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone viridis*). In: del Hoyo J, Elliott A, Sargatal J, Christie DA & de Juana E (eds.).

Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/59194> on 30 April 2017).

SABAP2 map for African Paradise-flycatcher (Retrieved from http://sabap2.adu.org.za/species_info.php?spp=682#menu_left on 30 April 2017).

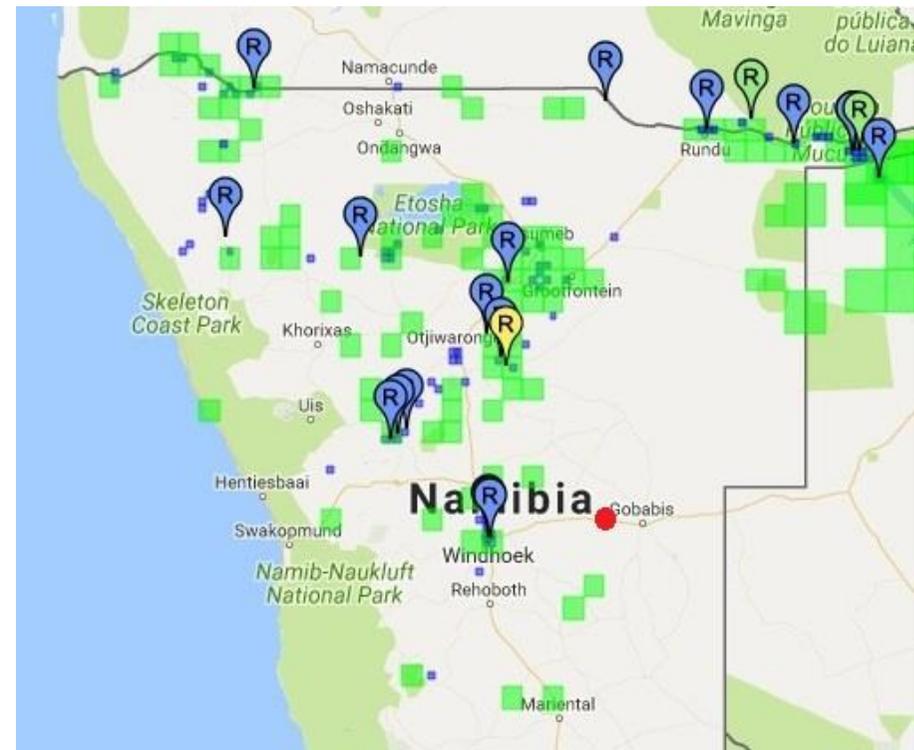


Figure 4 – Scarce in distribution - and scarcely being observed? Distribution of the African Paradise-flycatcher in northern Namibia. Large green grids = SABAP1 records, small blue grids = SABAP2 records, R = ringing records (marker colour: yellow 1950-1979; green 1980-1999; blue 2000-2017).

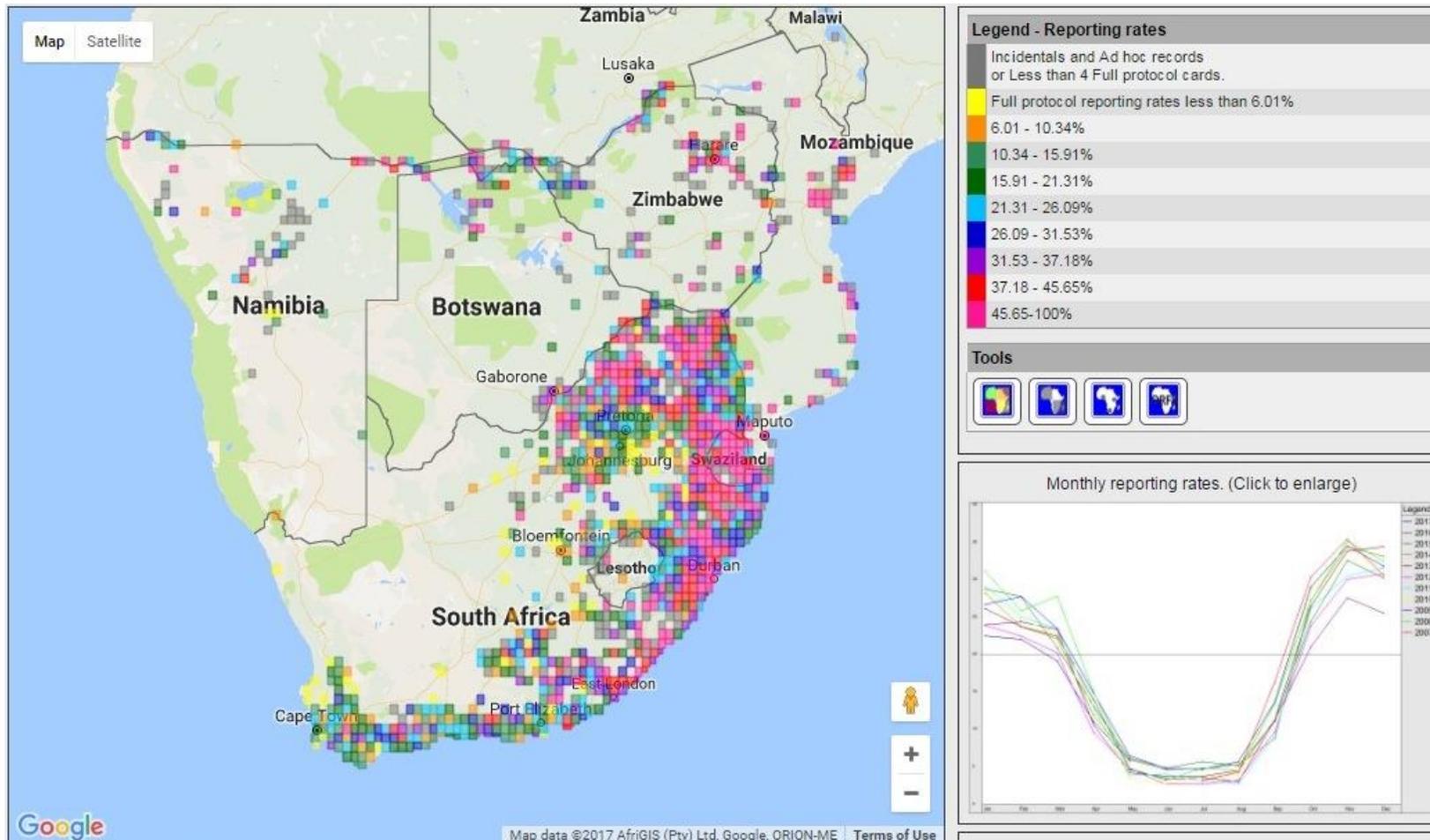


Figure 5 - SABAP2 distribution map for the African Paradise-flycatcher, downloaded 2 May 2017. Pentads with four or more checklists are either shaded white, species not recorded, or in colour, with shades based on reporting rate: yellow 0-10.5%, orange 10.5- 22.6%, light green 22.6- 34.7%, dark green 34.7- 50.9%, light blue 50.9- 70% and dark blue 70- 100%.