

A CLOSER LOOK AT LBJS

KAROO SCRUB ROBIN

The Karoo Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas coryphoeus* is endemic to the Karoo and drier parts of the fynbos biome, extending marginally into the southern Kalahari where it overlaps with the much paler Kalahari Scrub Robin. It often occurs adjacent to Cape Robin-chats, but prefers shorter scrub vegetation. Unlike most robins, it is not a great songster, mostly uttering a variety of chattering calls, but it does include some mimicry.

Its Afrikaans name *Slangverklipper* refers to its noisy mobbing of predators. Sadly, this doesn't appear to be very effective as breeding success is generally low, with many nests falling victim to snakes. It is unusual among scrub robins in occasionally having helpers at the nest. Pairs defend territories year round and appear to be sedentary. The Karoo Scrub Robin feeds mainly on insects and manages to get enough water from its food to survive without the need to drink. However, it is not immune to drought and in recent years its numbers have fallen in drought-stricken areas of the Karoo.

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