

## Redbilled Teal

### Rooibekeend

#### *Anas erythrorhyncha*

This duck is widespread from South Africa to Ethiopia and the Sudan, and in Madagascar. It is common throughout its range in southern Africa, being absent only from the Namib Desert, southern Namibia, southwestern Botswana, the northern Cape Province and the Lesotho massif. It is a fairly common resident in the Free State (Earlé & Grobler 1987), but flocks rarely exceed 100 birds (Geldenhuys 1976a). It occurs throughout the Transvaal but mostly on the highveld where the population numbers about 50 000 birds in wet years; individual flocks at Barberspan (2625DA) may number 4700 birds (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It is uncommon in Swaziland (Parker 1994). It occurs widely in southern Mozambique, but sparsely on the littoral (Clancey 1971a). It is the most abundant and widespread duck in Botswana and Zimbabwe, where numbers fluctuate markedly both seasonally and from year to year according to rainfall (Smithers 1964; Irwin 1981). It forms about 40% of the annual game bag in Zimbabwe. Up to 500 000 birds were reported from Lake Ngami (2022B) in October 1954 (Smithers 1964) and Tree (1988a) recorded concentrations of up to 3600 birds on the Manyame lakes (1730DC,DD).

The Redbilled Teal may be confused with the Hottentot Teal *A. hottentota*, but it is larger, more buffy and has a red bill and a plain fawn to salmon-coloured speculum. The Cape Teal *A. capensis* also had a reddish bill, but lacks the dark crown of the Redbilled Teal and is much paler overall.

**Habitat:** It prefers shallow permanent or temporary eutrophic fresh waters, usually with grassy surroundings where the birds can nest. It exploits temporary waters and is widespread in Namibia and Botswana during wet years. Large flocks gather on permanent waters in the dry season. Farm dams are especially favoured after rains.

**Movements:** Though largely resident, it disperses to seasonal waters after rain. In the southwestern Cape Province it is a resident and partial migrant; birds ringed there have been recovered in Namibia and Zambia (Hockey *et al.* 1989). Birds ringed at Barberspan (2625DA) have been re-

covered from the southwestern Cape Province, Namibia, Angola, Zambia and Mozambique (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Zimbabwean recoveries have come from Mozambique, southwestern Cape Province, Zambia, Angola and Botswana, indicating some long-distance movements (Irwin 1981). Over 5% of recoveries indicate movements in excess of 1000 km (Oatley & Prÿs-Jones 1986). In Zone 1 the model suggests a summer influx.

**Breeding:** Egg-laying has been recorded in every month in Zimbabwe, but 90% of the records are from December–April (Irwin 1981). It has a clear breeding season in the western Transvaal (Dean 1978), breeding October–May with 90% of Transvaal egg-laying records also December–April (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Egg-laying in the southwestern Cape Province, however, is much earlier, largely spanning June–January, with an August–October peak (Winterbottom 1968a). The models accord with these egg-laying data; they also indicate a more protracted breeding season in the south (Zones 3, 4, 7 and 8) than in the north (Zones 1, 2, 5 and 6).

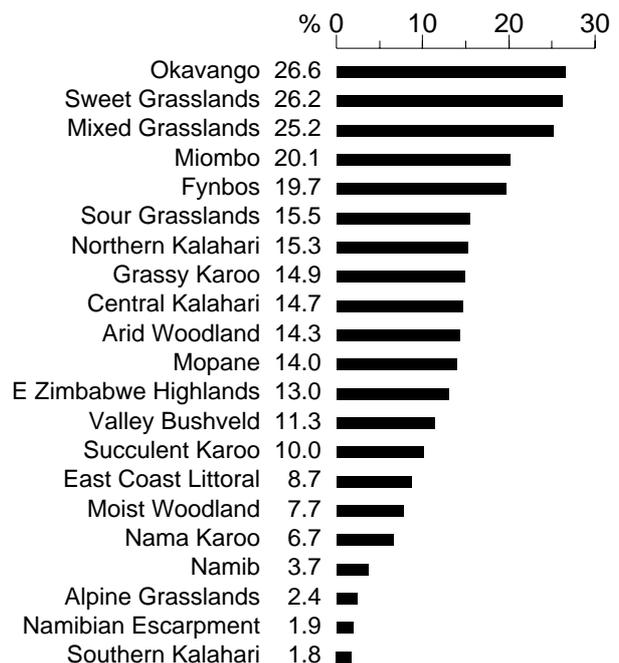
**Interspecific relationships:** It may associate at times with the Hottentot Teal (Smithers 1964; Irwin 1981), but the nature of this association is not clear.

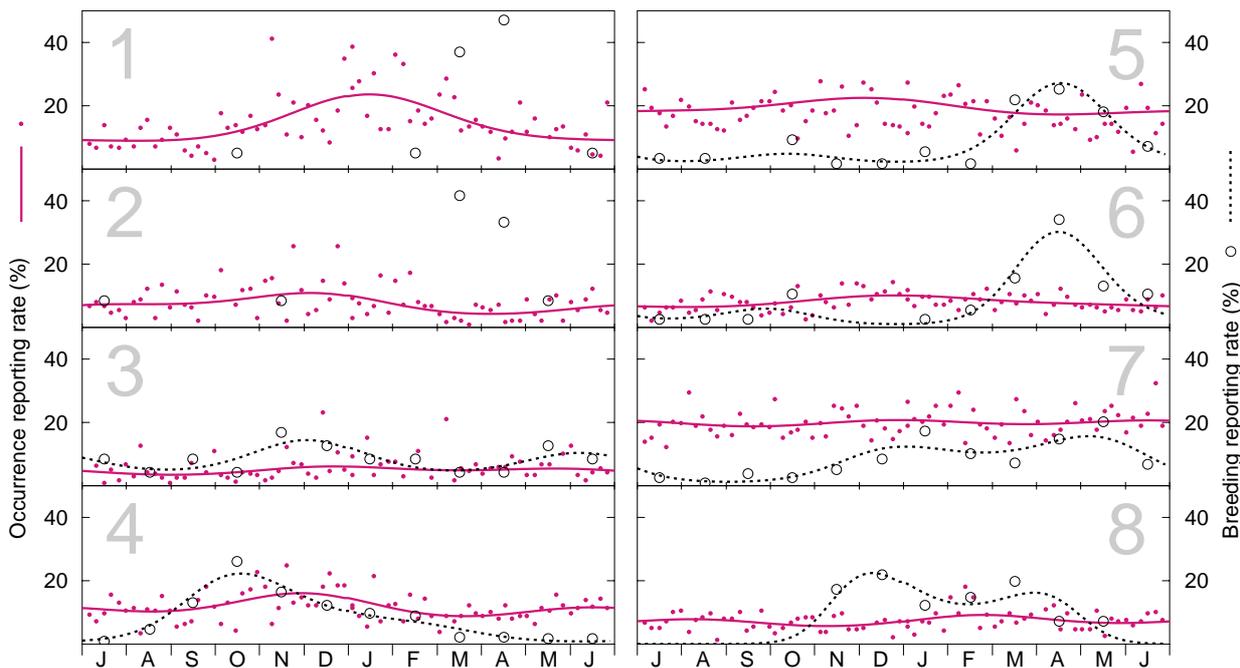
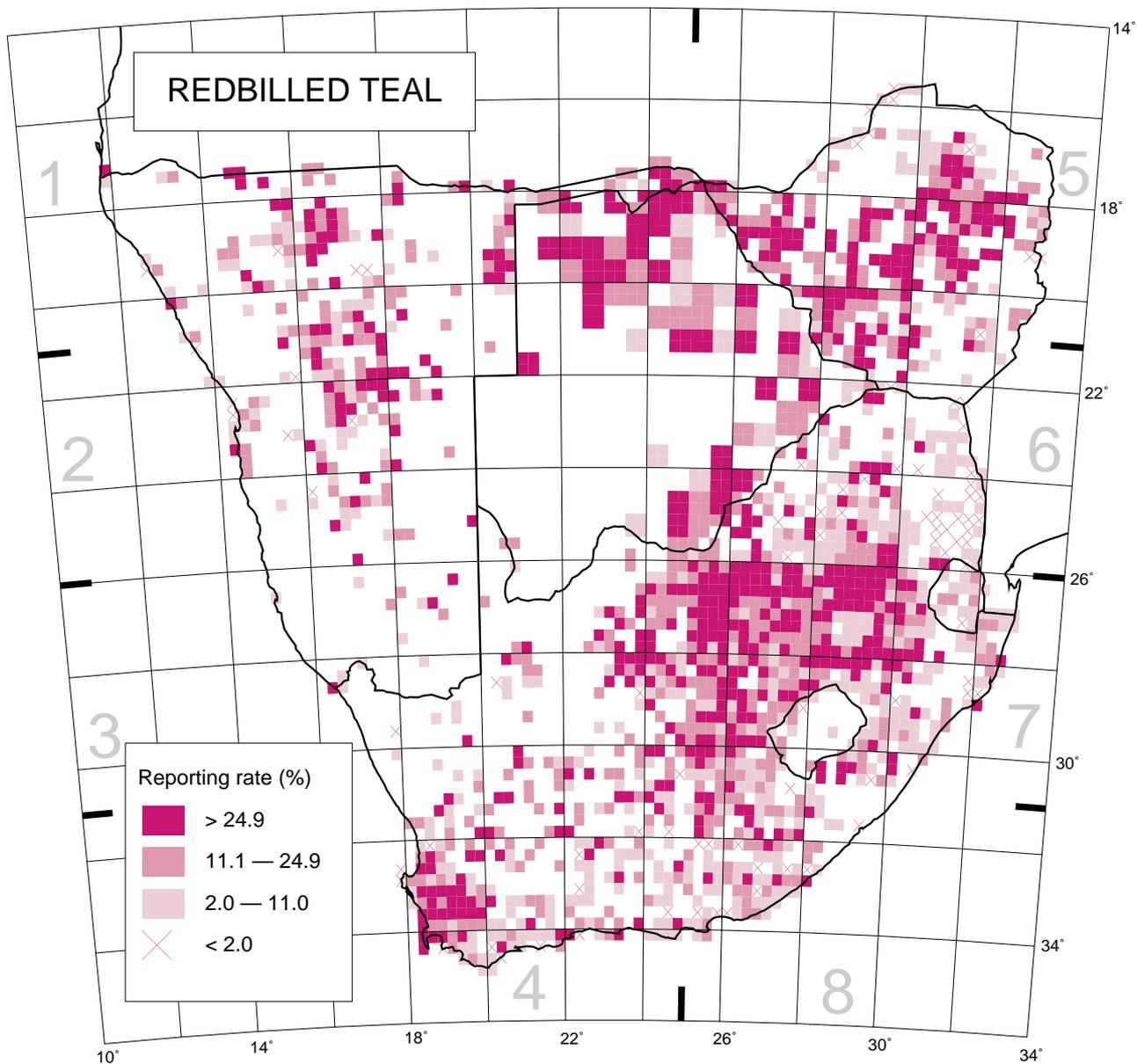
**Historical distribution and conservation:** There appears to have been no change in the distribution of the Redbilled Teal in historical times, though its density must have increased with dam building. It poses no conservation problems.

G.L. Maclean

Recorded in 1856 grid cells, 40.9%  
Total number of records: 22 052  
Mean reporting rate for range: 18.6%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 433, 249, 267, 1013, 1697, 919, 3890, 399; Breeding: 19, 12, 24, 123, 55, 38, 184, 41.