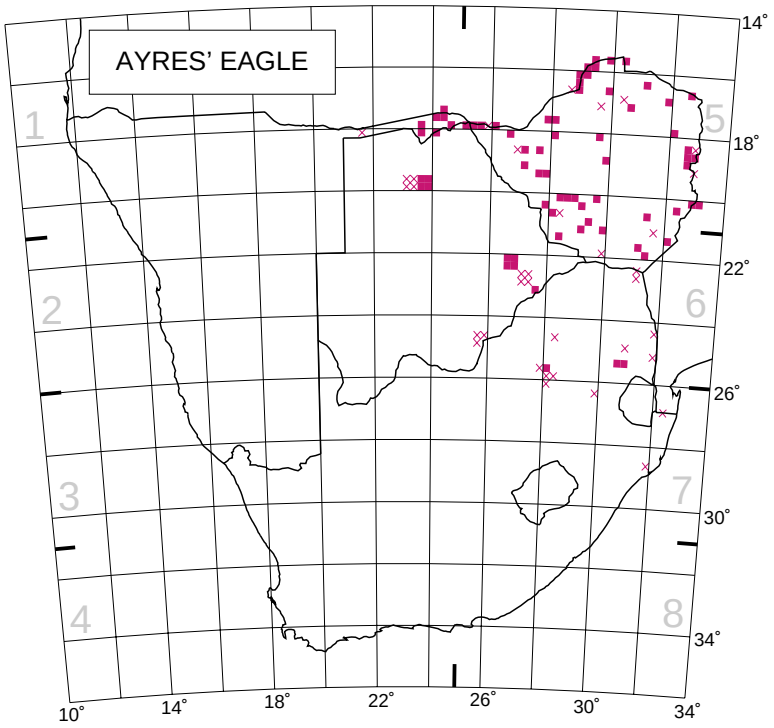
Ayres' Eagle

Kleinjagarend

Hieraaetus ayresii



Recorded in 106 grid cells, 2.3%
Total number of records: 222
Mean reporting rate for range: 2.2%

Ayres' Eagle has a wide range in moist woodlands and forested areas in sub-Saharan Africa, but is rare over its entire range (Brown *et al.* 1982; Steyn 1982b). It has been recorded breeding in Zimbabwe, and winter records in suitable habitat in northern Botswana suggest that it might breed there too (Herremans & Brewster 1994; Herremans 1994c). Scattered summer records from Botswana represent the western edge of its range in southern Africa (Herremans 1994c; Penry 1994). Elsewhere it occurs as a nonbreeding intra-African summer visitor. It occurs only as a vagrant south of northern KwaZulu-Natal (Boshoff *et al.* 1983; Hockey *et al.* 1989).

It may be confused with the Booted Eagle *H. pennatus* and, especially, with the larger, more common African Hawk Eagle *H. spilogaster*. Ayres' Eagle spends long periods of the day perched inconspicuously (Steyn 1982b), and may have been overlooked in some areas.

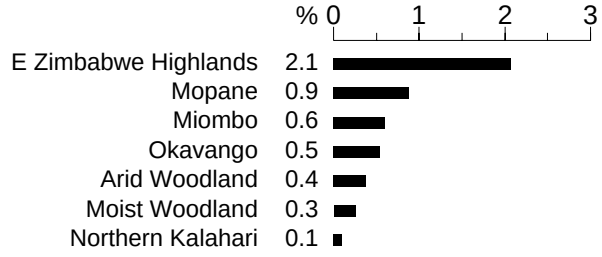
It requires large trees in which to nest and roost, and it prefers to hunt in and over relatively dense, moist woodlands (Irwin 1981). Steyn (1982b) emphasized its preference for hilly country.

The models show its absence during the winter in the southernmost parts of its range. Breeding has been recorded April–September in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981).

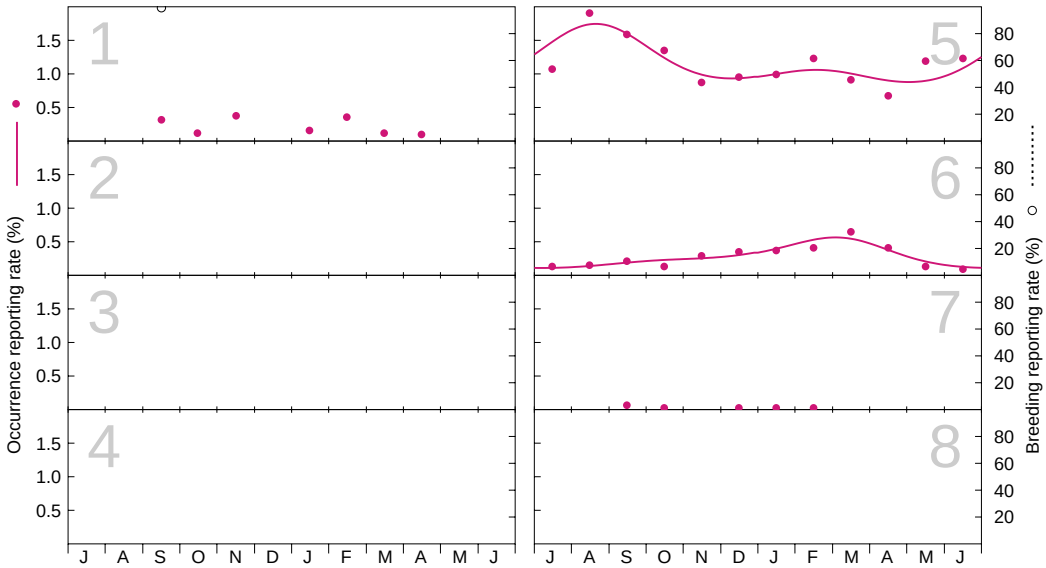
It preys mainly on small to medium-sized birds, many of which are caught in aerial pursuits (Steyn 1982b). Given its food and habitat requirements, the rarity of Ayres' Eagle is difficult to explain. As a predator of birds it may be susceptible to pesticide contamination. It has a tendency to enter suburbs and frequent the vicinity of pigeon lofts and chicken coops, particularly in Pretoria (2528C), Bulawayo (2028BA) and Harare (1731CC), and is sometimes shot as a pest (Irwin 1981; Steyn 1982b; Tarboton & Allan 1984). It may also be threatened in some areas by woodland degradation, especially the widespread clearance of miombo woodland, although it is able to breed successfully in exotic plantations (e.g. Dewhurst *et al.* 1988).

A.R. Jenkins

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Also marginally in East Coast Littoral.



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 11, 0, 0, 0, 136, 69, 6, 0; Breeding: 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.