



Jackal Buzzard

Rooiborsjakkalsvoël

Buteo rufofuscus

The Jackal Buzzard is endemic to southern Africa. It is found in southern and western Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and almost throughout South Africa, extending into Mozambique and Botswana peripherally. Reporting rates for the eight geographical Zones suggest a steady decrease in abundance from the southeast to the northwest.

Atlas data show it to be most commonly reported from the eastern Cape Province, Lesotho and the Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal. Mountainous areas in the northwestern and central Cape Province are other areas of concentration. It is absent from low-lying plains in the 'Great Karoo' in the southcentral Cape Province. Birds found away from hilly country are usually winter vagrants or immatures. In areas of prime habitat, it is often the most abundant raptor and certainly the most conspicuous.

Three population density estimates from areas in the Transvaal in which it was common were 3.3, 5.7 and 6.0 pairs/100 km² (Tarboton & Allan 1984). Extrapolation from these and other densities gives an estimated total population of *c.* 1100 breeding pairs in the Transvaal.

Habitat: Its preference for mountainous and hilly areas is reflected by high reporting rates in areas of highest relief, especially those covered by grass and other short vegetation. Barnard (1987a) found that strong winds and updrafts, characteristic of hilly country, were important determinants of hovering and therefore of hunting behaviour. About 70% of atlas checklists reported Jackal Buzzard in Alpine Grasslands, this being more than double that found in any other vegetation type. The majority of nest sites are on cliffs, but many nests in trees away from cliffs have also been found. Most cliff nests in the Transvaal face north, east or south (Tarboton & Allan 1984).

Movements: Atlas data do not suggest regular movements. Ringing data, however, reveal that Jackal Buzzards make frequent movements, often over large distances. Of 26 recoveries, two birds had moved more than 500 km, nine had moved 100–500 km, six had moved 20–100 km, and nine had moved less than 20 km. Most of these birds had been ringed as juveniles; adults seldom move away from established territories (SAFRING). For example, a juvenile ringed at Driebult (2729CD), Free State, was recovered 732 km away near Beaufort West (3123CD) two years later, while the ringing and recovery sites of an adult ringed near De Aar (3024CA) were 4 km apart after an elapsed time of 10 years (SAFRING). The absence of a seasonal pattern in the models suggests that movements are primarily nomadic, and consist mainly of juvenile dispersal and perhaps movements in response to fluctuations in the availability of rodent prey.

Breeding: It breeds from late winter to early summer throughout its range, most clutches being started August–September (Steyn 1982b), and this is reflected in the atlas data.

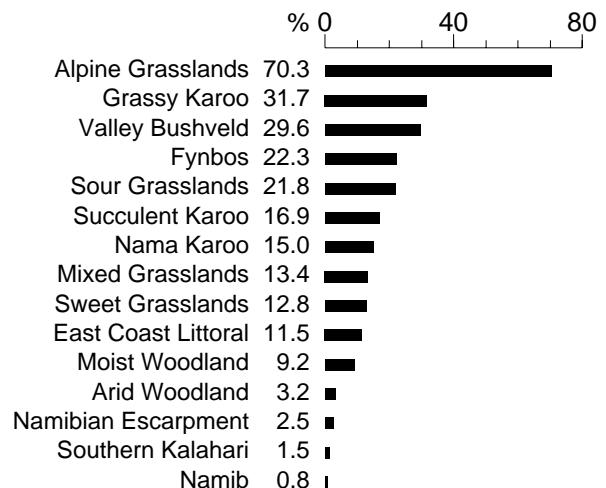
Interspecific relationships: It has been considered a subspecies of the Augur Buzzard *B. augur* (Brooke 1975a). The allopatric distribution patterns of the two taxa in the east support their being conspecific, but the sympatry in Namibia suggests that they are separate species. Isolated instances of hybridization between the two have been suggested in Namibia, but all such incidents remain unconfirmed.

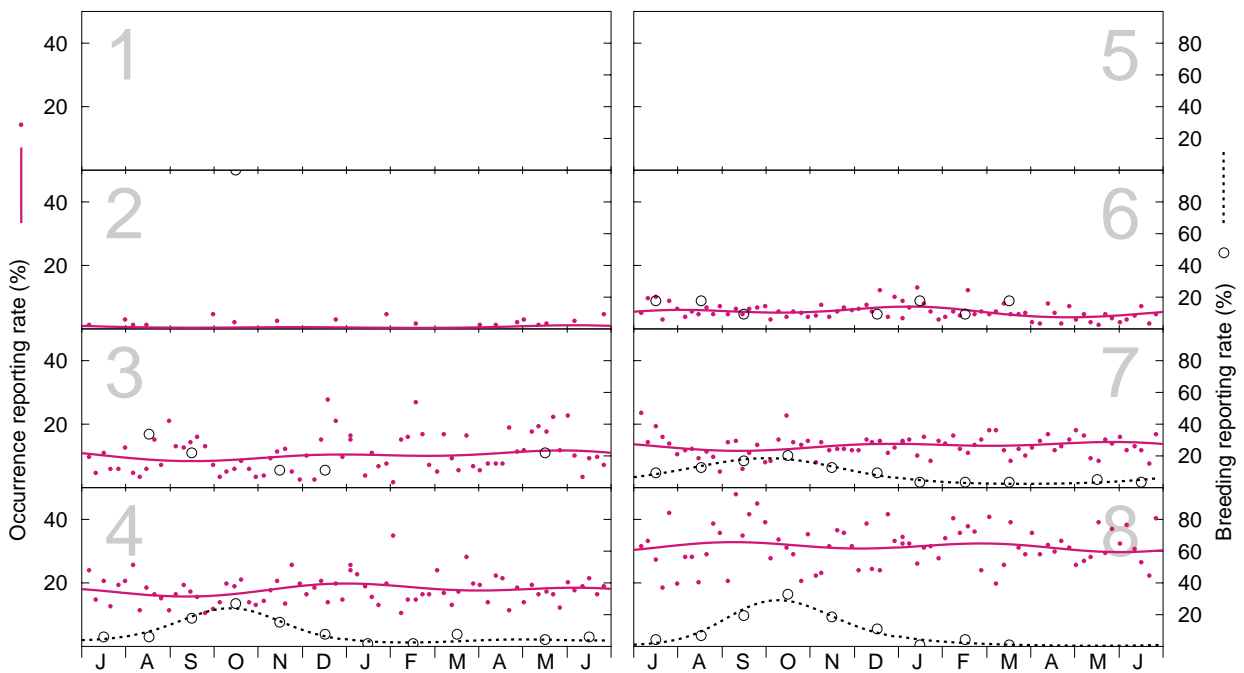
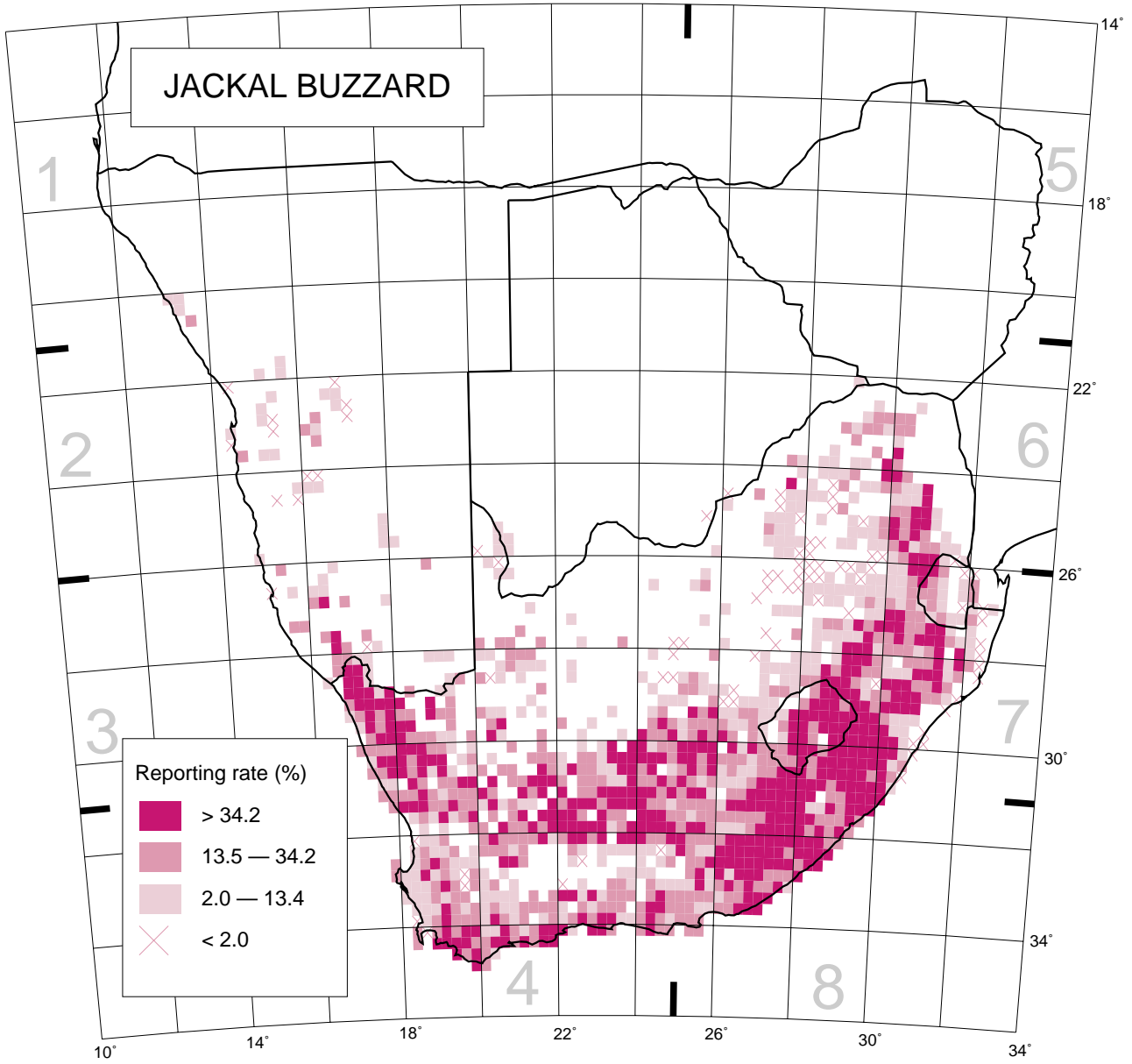
Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence that either the distribution or overall numbers have changed much in historical times. Most of the range occupied has not been modified radically by human development, so major changes in status are unlikely to have occurred. The Jackal Buzzard remains abundant, even where large-scale afforestation of highland areas has occurred, and thus it probably does not present any conservation problem, although reports of poisoned individuals (e.g. Schmitt *et al.* 1987) are a cause for concern.

J.M. Mendelsohn

Recorded in 1305 grid cells, 28.8%
Total number of records: 19 394
Mean reporting rate for range: 20.4%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 0, 22, 560, 1551, 0, 611, 2579, 1727; Breeding: 0, 2, 9, 52, 0, 11, 55, 71.