



Little Banded Goshawk

Gebande Sperwer

Accipiter badius

The Little Banded Goshawk is widespread in the woodlands of southern Africa, except for those of the eastern Cape Province. It is the most tolerant of arid conditions of all *Accipiter* species in the region, and it is common in the denser Kalahari woodlands. To the north of southern Africa, it occurs widely in the savannas of Africa extending to West Africa and it is also found in tropical Asia where it is known as the Shikra. It is the commonest accipiter in most woodland regions (e.g. Tarboton & Allan 1984). In a study area in the central Transvaal, 3–7 pairs occurred in 350 km² (Tarboton & Allan 1984). Its habit of frequently perching on exposed sites probably related to its predominantly reptilian diet (Tarboton 1978), renders it more conspicuous than most other accipiters (Tarboton & Allan 1984) but it can be confused with other similarly plumaged members of this group.

Habitat: It occurs in all woodland types, except for Valley Bushveld. Although it will nest in dense copses of alien trees in woodland regions, it also nests in relatively open woodland. Therefore, unlike the other accipiters which are reliant on tall, dense cover for breeding and roosting, and which have been able to expand their ranges into regions with the introduction of alien trees, the Little Banded Goshawk has not shown any such range expansion (Allan & Tarboton 1985). This accipiter is also unique in southern Africa in its reliance on a largely reptilian diet (Tarboton 1978) and this may partially explain its deeper penetration into more arid regions compared with other members of the genus *Accipiter*.

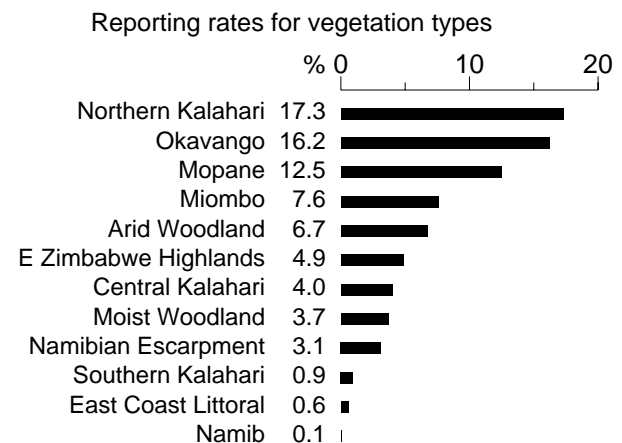
Movements: The movements of this species are poorly understood. The subspecies *A. b. sphenurus* found in West and East Africa is migratory in the former region but apparently resident in the latter (Brown *et al.* 1982). At one study site in the central Transvaal, the southern African subspecies *polyzonoides* did not show any regular seasonal migration and was present throughout the year, but the number of breeding pairs fluctuated annually and the species was believed to be highly nomadic in the Transvaal (Tarboton & Allan 1984). In the Kruger National Park (Kemp 1974) and the northwestern Transvaal (Schmitt *et al.* 1982), however, it was found to be more common in the early winter. The models suggest a pattern of higher reporting rates in late summer and early winter, which agrees with the aforementioned observations.

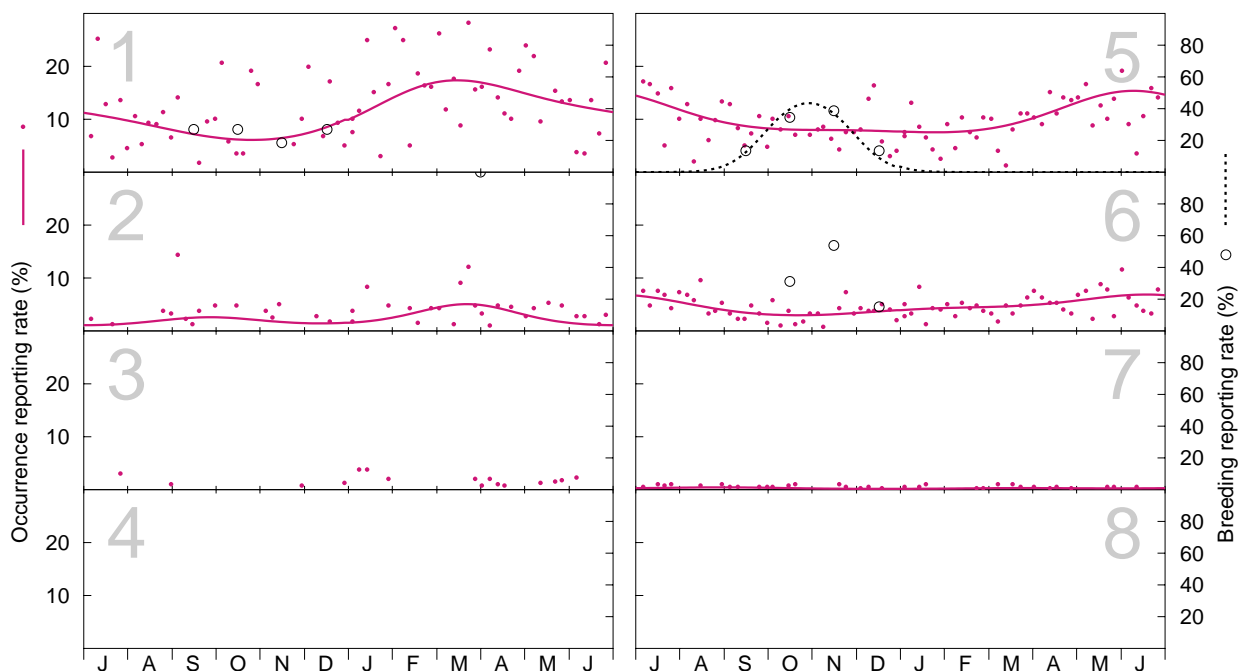
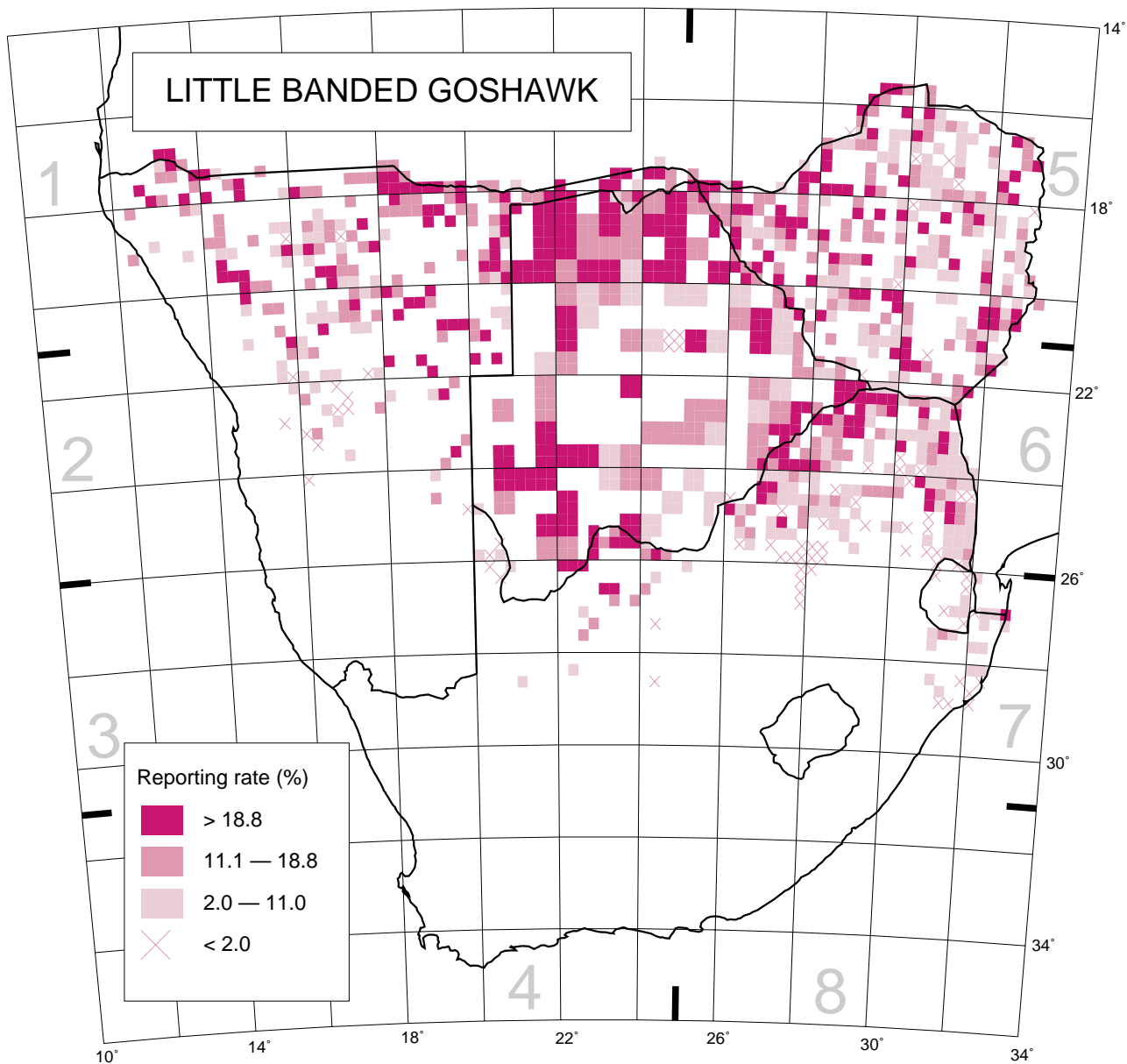
Breeding: The models suggest a discrete breeding period September–December. In the northernmost parts of southern Africa, i.e. northern Namibia and Botswana, and Zimbabwe (Zones 1 and 5), breeding appears to be initiated a month earlier than in the Transvaal (Zone 6). Egg-laying dates from Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), Namibia (Brown & Clinning in press) and the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b), however, do not reflect regional differences. Egg-laying in Zimbabwe spanned August–December, in Namibia September–January, and in the Transvaal August–April, with all three regions showing an October peak.

Historical distribution and conservation: The cluster of records from the northern Cape Province contradicts the statement by Boshoff *et al.* (1983) that it is a 'rare vagrant to the Province'. The nature of the Little Banded Goshawk's diet may also provide some protection from pesticide contamination. This common and widespread hawk is not considered to be threatened in the region (e.g. Tarboton & Allan 1984).

D.G. Allan

Recorded in 1166 grid cells, 25.7%
Total number of records: 3989
Mean reporting rate for range: 8.2%





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 388, 92, 20, 0, 886, 531, 53, 0; Breeding: 11, 1, 0, 0, 23, 13, 0, 0.