



## Dark Chanting Goshawk

### Donkersingvalk

*Melierax metabates*

In southern Africa, the Dark Chanting Goshawk is distributed throughout Zimbabwe, northern Botswana, the eastern and far northern Transvaal, northern Swaziland and northeastern Namibia. Its range extends northwards to the Sahara, from Senegal eastwards to the Sudan and southern Arabia, but excludes the forested regions of Zaire and the deserts of the Horn of Africa, with an isolated population in southwestern Morocco (Brown *et al.* 1982; Steyn 1982b). In southern Africa the species is fairly common throughout its range. Simmons (1994) reported densities of 2 pairs/100 km<sup>2</sup> and 0.3 pairs/100 km<sup>2</sup> in the Transvaal lowveld, and 0.2 pairs/100 km<sup>2</sup> in Zimbabwe. Birds are found both singly and in pairs (Maclean 1993b).

This is a distinctive species and the adult can be confused only with the Pale Chanting Goshawk *M. canorus*. The ranges of these two species, however, overlap only slightly and the latter can be distinguished by its pure white rump. The Dark Chanting Goshawk perches more within the canopy of tall trees and is less inclined to perch on poles than the Pale Chanting Goshawk (Brown *et al.* 1982); this makes it less conspicuous than the latter species. Although the reporting rates probably underestimate the relative abundance of the Dark in comparison with the Pale Chanting Goshawk, the atlas data are reliable and comprehensive.

**Habitat:** This species inhabits a variety of woodland habitats but tends to avoid both arid and forested areas (Steyn 1982b). The vegetation analysis reflects the preference for tall, well-developed woodland, such as miombo.

**Movements:** In tropical areas it is sedentary but irregular and nomadic movements have been recorded in drier areas (Brown *et al.* 1982). Given that eggs are laid in August–November (Steyn 1982b), the seasonal distribution patterns in their southern African range are probably the result of an increase in the number of observable birds as

juveniles reach independence (May–July), and a decrease in observable birds, especially females, as they are confined to their nesting sites in the breeding season (August–December). In the Kruger National Park a decrease in numbers, possibly associated with movements to the north, has been recorded in dry years (G. Benn pers. comm.). In Zimbabwe it is suspected to have west to east movements in the dry season of dry years (A.J. Tree pers. comm.).

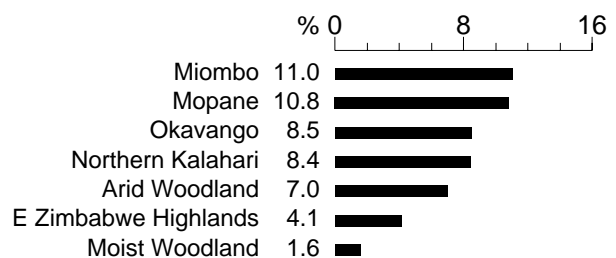
**Interspecific relationships:** The range of the Dark Chanting Goshawk overlaps marginally with that of the Pale Chanting Goshawk in the far northern Transvaal, northern and eastern Botswana and in southwestern Zimbabwe where the former species tends to inhabit denser and taller woodland habitat than the latter species.

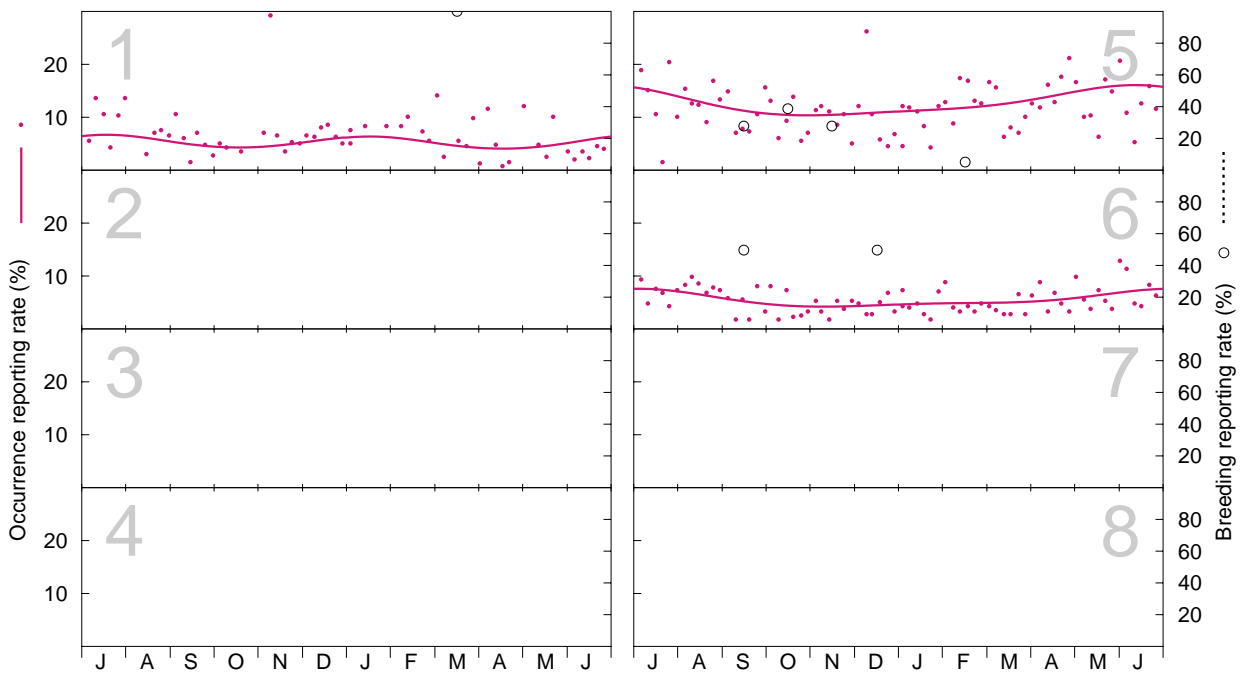
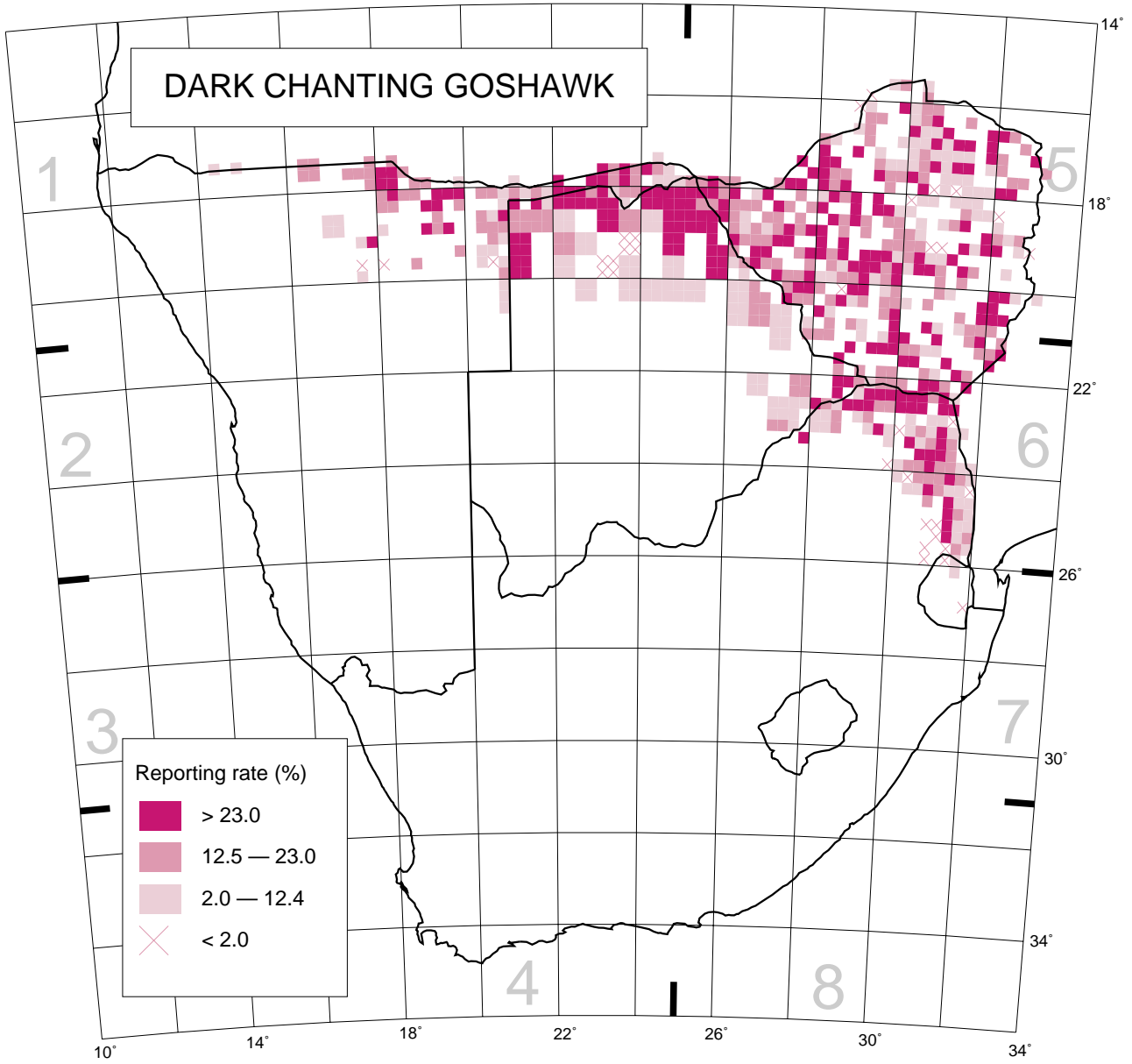
**Historical distribution and conservation:** The Dark Chanting Goshawk has a relatively restricted range in southern Africa but is fairly common within this range. There is no evidence that numbers are declining (e.g. Tarboton & Allan 1984) but the destruction of woodland habitat has a negative impact locally (Brown *et al.* 1982).

G. Malan

Recorded in 705 grid cells, 15.5%  
Total number of records: 3235  
Mean reporting rate for range: 14.3%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 172, 0, 0, 0, 1106, 627, 0, 0; Breeding: 1, 0, 0, 0, 18, 2, 0, 0.