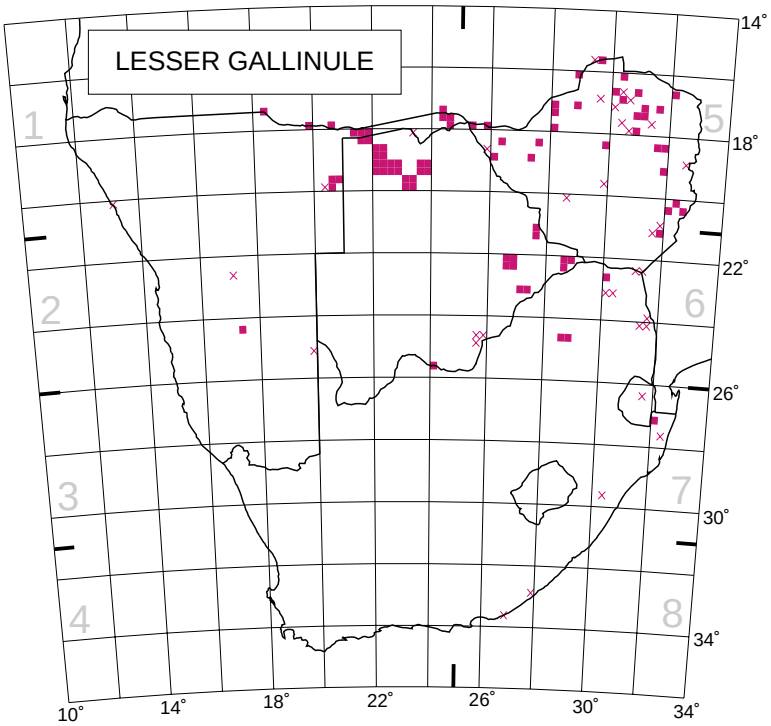
Lesser Gallinule

Kleinkoningriethaan

Porphyrula alleni



Recorded in 116 grid cells, 2.6%
Total number of records: 278
Mean reporting rate for range: 3.0%

This small gallinule is widespread and locally common in sub-Saharan Africa, but is absent from most of Somalia, northern Kenya and the arid central and southwestern regions of southern Africa; it occurs in Madagascar (Urban *et al.* 1986; Del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). In southern Africa it occurs mainly in the northeast, and regularly only as far south as the Nyl River floodplain (2428DA) (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Hines 1993; Maclean 1993b). Atlas data confirm this known distribution, and that the species is a vagrant farther south and west, even reaching coastal Namibia (Hockey *et al.* 1989; Maclean 1993b).

It inhabits freshwater marshes, rice fields, inundated grasslands, floodplains, reedbeds and rank grass beside open waters, normally preferring dense emergent cover interspersed with floating-leaved vegetation, and frequently occupying seasonal habitats (Cramp *et al.* 1980; Del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). The vegetation analysis shows the highest reporting rates in the most northerly vegetation types which contain suitable wetland habitats.

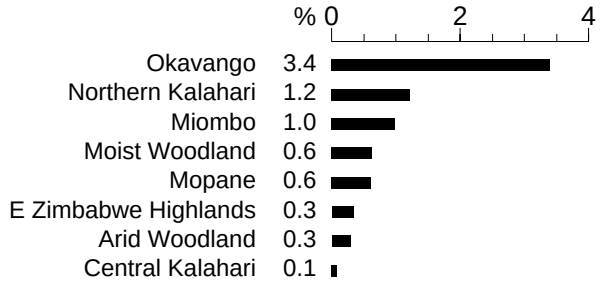
Some birds are resident in permanent wetlands (such as in the Okavango Delta) but most, in both the northern and southern tropics, migrate to higher latitudes to breed during the rains (Urban *et al.* 1986). It occurs in southern Africa mostly December–April and sometimes May (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Maclean 1993b) and the models show that most occurrences fell in the same period, peaking in February in Zones 5 and 6 with a few scattered occurrences July–October.

Breeding in southern Africa occurs in the wet season November–April, with Zimbabwe records also for September and May (Del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). Atlas data give evidence for breeding activity December–May in Zones 5 and 6 which include Zimbabwe and the Transvaal, the areas from which most breeding is known (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Maclean 1993b).

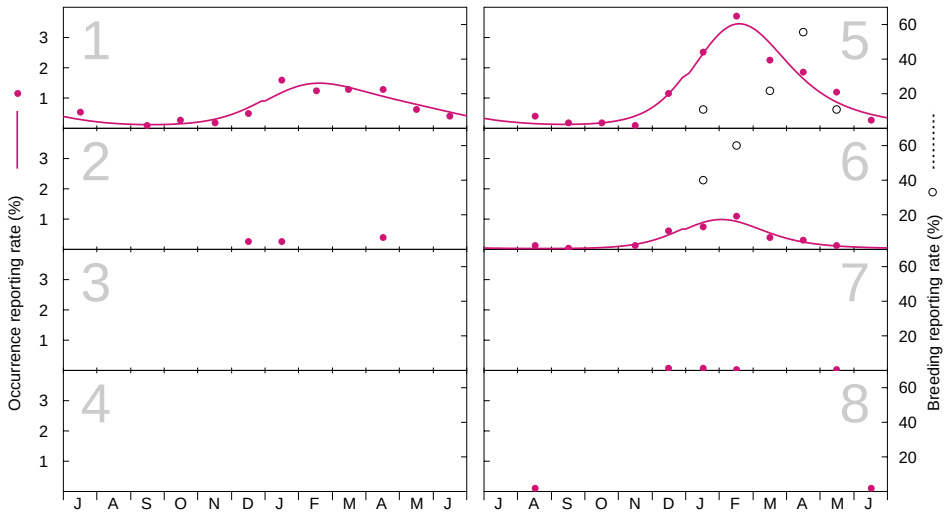
Numbers may have been reduced by loss of suitable wetland habitat. However, the Lesser Gallinule may breed locally in large numbers during years of good rainfall, and it may have become more widespread in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

P.B. Taylor

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: 60, 8, 0, 0, 129, 71, 6, 2; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 9, 5, 0, 0.