



Karoo Korhaan

Vaalkorhaan

Eupodotis vigorsii

The Karoo Korhaan is endemic to western South Africa and southern Namibia. This species and Rüppell's Korhaan *E. rueppellii* were previously considered conspecific (Clancey 1980b) but are now regarded as separate species (Clancey *et al.* 1991). Densities measured in the South African Karoo were about 1 group/0.5–3.3 km² (Hockey & Boobyer 1994), with the largest groups occurring in low-rainfall areas where group density is lowest. The total South African population has been estimated at hundreds of thousands of individuals (Siegfried 1992).

It is usually encountered in pairs, occasionally in groups of three, four and even five birds, and very rarely solitarily (Hockey & Boobyer 1994). It is easily overlooked owing to its cryptic plumage. This is compensated for by its loud and frequent vocalizations, which are similar to those of the Blue Korhaan *E. caerulescens*. The Karoo Korhaan can also be confused with Rüppell's Korhaan and both species occur in close proximity in parts of southern Namibia.

Habitat: It occurs in the dwarf shrublands on the open plains of the semi-arid Karoo. Within this region it is most common throughout the Nama Karoo. It is also common in the Grassy Karoo ecotone between the grassland and Karoo biomes. It is less common in, and is absent from large areas of, the winter-rainfall Succulent Karoo. It has also colonized the planted pastures and cereal croplands along the southern coast of the Cape Province in the fynbos biome, this being the only region where it is found outside karroid vegetation.

Movements: Urban *et al.* (1986) and Johnsgard (1991) both stated that it probably moves, but the sources of these statements are not given. Boobyer & Hockey (1994) found it to be sedentary, at least in South Africa. The models show increased reporting rates during the winter throughout the range. Allan (1993) found Karoo Korhaans to be more conspicuous during road counts in the winter in South Africa and suggested that this may be due to increased activity at this time, and that decreased conspicuousness during the summer may be compounded by the secretiveness of breeding birds. Groups of Karoo Korhaans comprise a pair of adults and one or more subadult males, suggesting that there may be extensive dispersal by subadult females (Hockey & Boobyer 1994).

Breeding: Breeding was recorded July–April, mainly during the summer, October–March.

Interspecific relationships: The Karoo Korhaan is replaced in the arid Namib by Rüppell's Korhaan. Some of the Namibian atlas information was collected during the period when these two species were considered conspecific. For this reason it is impossible to determine from the atlas data the precise distribution limits of each species in southern Namibia. This issue requires further investigation, and the records shown in the area of apparent overlap on the distribution maps for both species, should be regarded with caution. In the South African

grasslands to the east, the Karoo Korhaan is replaced by the Blue Korhaan and these two species have a broad area of overlap in the Grassy Karoo ecotone.

Historical distribution and conservation: Boobyer & Hockey (1994) suggested that the Karoo Korhaan has increased in abundance in the Karoo owing to livestock grazing practices, as it favours disturbed conditions. It has also extended its range into the agricultural areas of the fynbos biome along the southern coastal plain (Uys 1981). Siegfried (1992) estimated that only 101–500 individuals of this common species are protected in South African nature reserves.

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Recorded in 644 grid cells, 14.2%
Total number of records: 3629
Mean reporting rate for range: 26.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



