

Rüppell's Korhaan

Woestynkorhaan

Eupodotis rueppellii

Rüppell's Korhaan is largely endemic to Namibia, extending marginally into southwestern Angola as far north as Benguela. It is restricted to the western half of Namibia but can be fairly common within its range (Clancey 1973). In Kaokoland in northern Namibia, Viljoen (1983) reported densities of 1 bird/1319 ha on gravel plains, 1 bird/2667 ha on sandy plains and 1 bird/5934 ha in mountainous areas.

Rüppell's Korhaan has been considered a subspecies of the Karoo Korhaan *E. vigorsii* (e.g. Clancey 1980b), largely on the basis of an apparently intermediate subspecies *E. v. barlowi* (Roberts 1937). However, this race, which was described from a single atypical specimen, has been rejected. Rüppell's and Karoo Korhaans are now treated as 'paraspecies', i.e. separate species but of immediately common evolutionary origin and with parapatric distributions and little or no hybridization (Clancey *et al.* 1991).

This korhaan is usually found in pairs or groups of three or four, occasionally solitarily or in groups of up to eight birds (Viljoen 1983). Despite its cryptic coloration, it is fairly conspicuous in its sparsely vegetated habitat and has

a far-carrying and distinctive call. It is the only korhaan occurring over most of its range but it is sometimes confused with the Karoo Korhaan.

Habitat: Its habitat is scantily vegetated sandy and gravel plains in the Namib and Namibian Escarpment regions. It avoids river courses and the 'sand sea' of the Namib Desert, and in mountainous areas it is restricted to valleys and plateaus. Viljoen (1983) described its optimum habitat in Kaokoland as 'flat, dark basaltic gravel plains intersected by shallow watercourses with a low density of small desert-adapted shrubs and a low annual rainfall (30–120 mm)'.

Movements: It is not thought to undergo any regular seasonal migrations. Any movements that do occur are likely to be on an east–west axis and therefore would not be revealed by the models. These models do suggest an increase in reporting rates during the cooler winter months and this may be due to increased activity at this time.

Breeding: Most breeding records were in early winter, spanning March–July, with a May–July peak. Winterbottom (1971d) reported a half-grown chick in July. Clancey (1967b) claimed that it breeds at any time of the year, but especially September–February.

Interspecific relationships: The taxonomic and ecological relationships between Rüppell's and Karoo Korhaans require investigation in the region where their ranges abut, i.e. in southwestern Namibia, as do the exact limits of their respective ranges (see Karoo Korhaan text.)

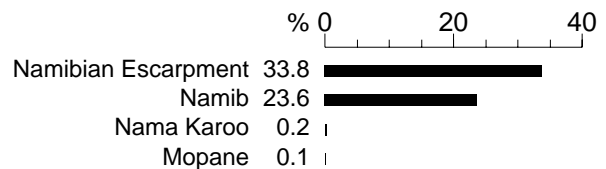
Historical distribution and conservation: Its distribution encompasses a very arid region largely unsuitable for extensive human development and there is no evidence that its range or abundance have decreased. Rüppell's Korhaan could, however, attract the attention of falcons from the Middle East, as have bustard populations elsewhere in the world (e.g. Mian 1986;

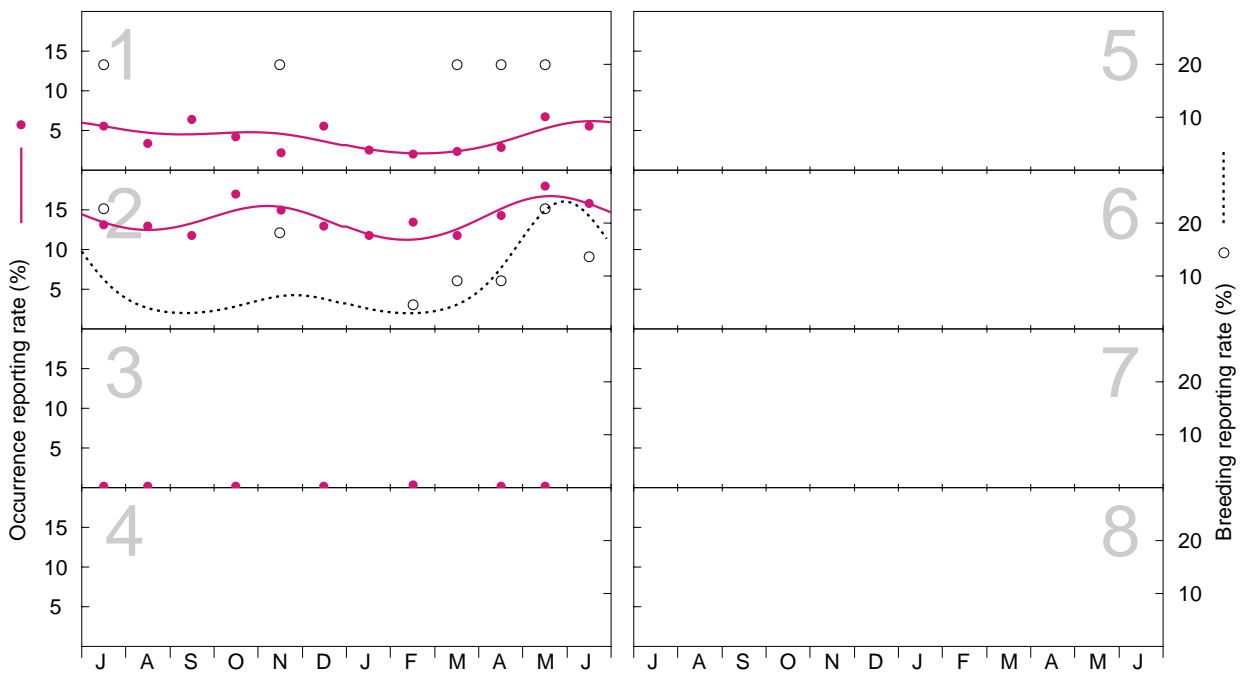
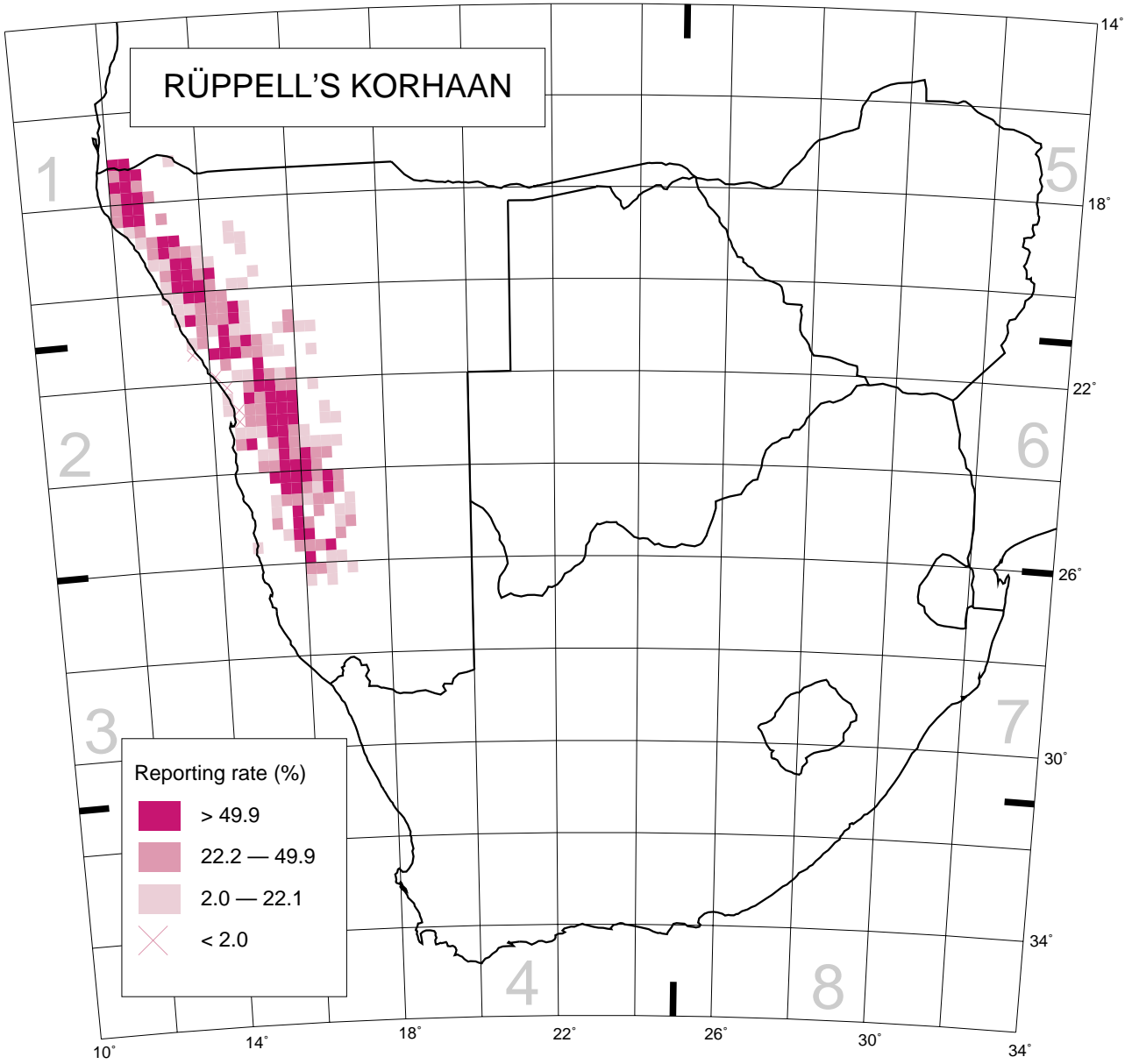
Newby 1990). This is potentially a cause for conservation concern and vigilance.

D.G. Allan

Recorded in 215 grid cells, 4.7%
Total number of records: 1888
Mean reporting rate for range: 32.3%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 387, 1487, 9, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0; Breeding: 5, 22, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.