

## Redcrested Korhaan Boskorhaan

*Eupodotis ruficrista*

The Redcrested Korhaan occurs in the northeastern parts of South Africa, eastern Swaziland, northern and eastern Namibia, throughout Botswana and in southern and western Zimbabwe. The subspecies *E. r. ruficrista* is largely endemic to southern Africa, extending marginally into southern Angola and southern Zambia. It is isolated from the other two subspecies to the north by the miombo woodland belt of Central Africa, and it may prove to be a separate species (Clancey 1977c, 1986a; Chappuis *et al.* 1979).

It is usually common in its habitat (e.g. Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) and densities of 2 birds/100 ha in *Acacia* woodland and 4 birds/100 ha in *Burkea* broadleaved woodland have been measured in the central Transvaal (Tarboton 1980b). In Botswana average densities of 1 bird/18 ha were recorded in various types of Kalahari bushveld and 1 bird/13 ha in Mopane scrub, but 1 bird/800 ha in *Acacia* and broadleaved woodland (M. Herremans unpubl. data). The Swaziland population has been estimated at about 200 birds (Parker 1994). It is usually solitary (Kemp & Tarboton 1976).

Its woodland habitat renders it inconspicuous but males have a distinctive call that is a characteristic sound of the woodland regions, at least during the breeding season. Males also have an eye-catching aerial display. It is frequently mistaken for the Blackbellied *E. melanogaster* and Whitewinged Black *E. afroides* Korhaans, and their distributions overlap widely. The atlas data were vetted carefully to remove suspect records.

**Habitat:** This is a species of bushveld and scrub within the woodland biomes, including both *Acacia*-dominated and broadleaved savannas, and it is found throughout the Kalahari, Arid, Moist and Mopane Woodlands. The highest reporting rates came from the centrally positioned Northern and Central Kalahari, Mopane and Arid Woodlands, with lower reporting rates in the drier western Southern Kalahari and Namibian Escarpment, and the wetter eastern Moist Woodland, and especially Miombo Woodland.

In the Southern Kalahari it inhabits rolling, grassy sand dunes that are largely devoid of tree cover and this is the only area where it occurs outside woodland. Clancey (1977c) has suggested a fourth African subspecies *ochrofacies* for this form, but this has received little support (e.g. Urban *et al.* 1986; Johnsgard 1991). The unusual habitat of this form and an apparent difference in its vocalizations (pers. obs) suggest that the taxonomic status of the birds inhabiting this region requires further investigation.

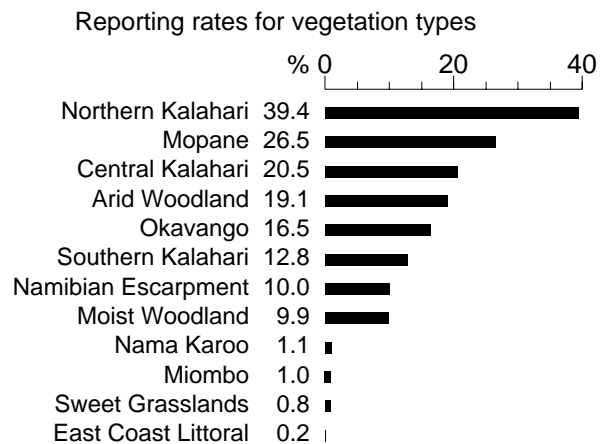
**Movements:** It is thought to be entirely sedentary (e.g. Urban *et al.* 1986; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Maclean 1993b). The marked seasonal increase in reporting rates virtually throughout the range in the summer is probably due to increased vocalizations and displays by males during the summer breeding season. Curiously, this pattern is not as pronounced in Zones 3 (northern Cape Province) and 5 (Zimbabwe).

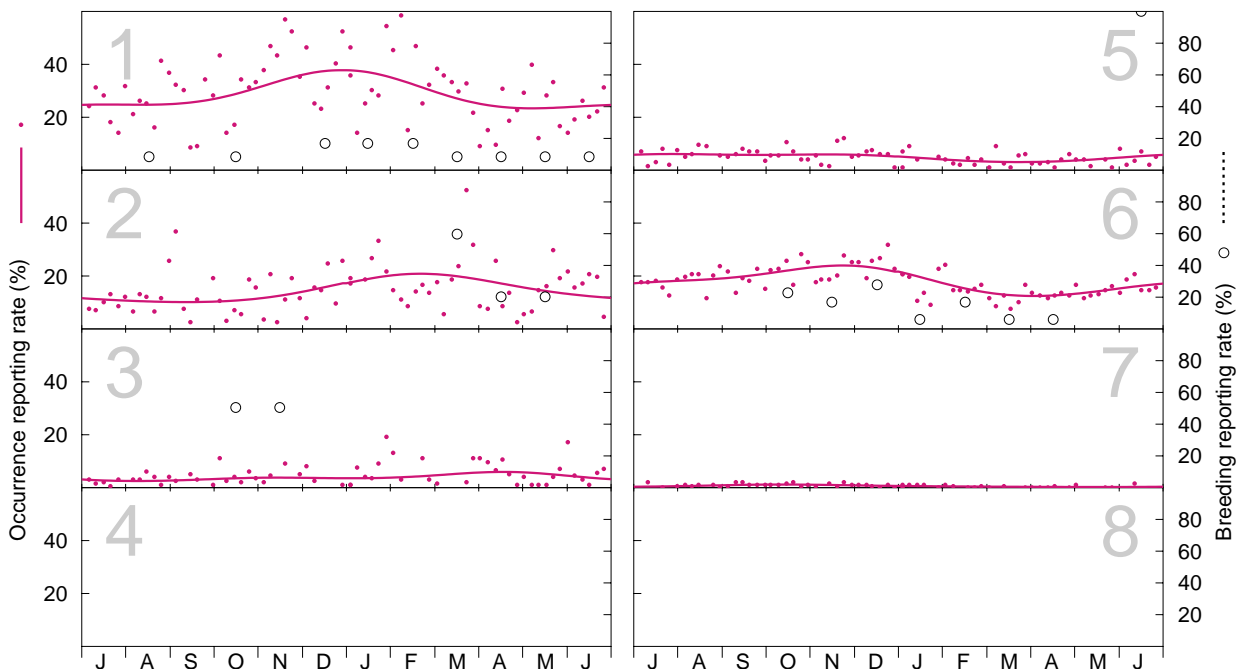
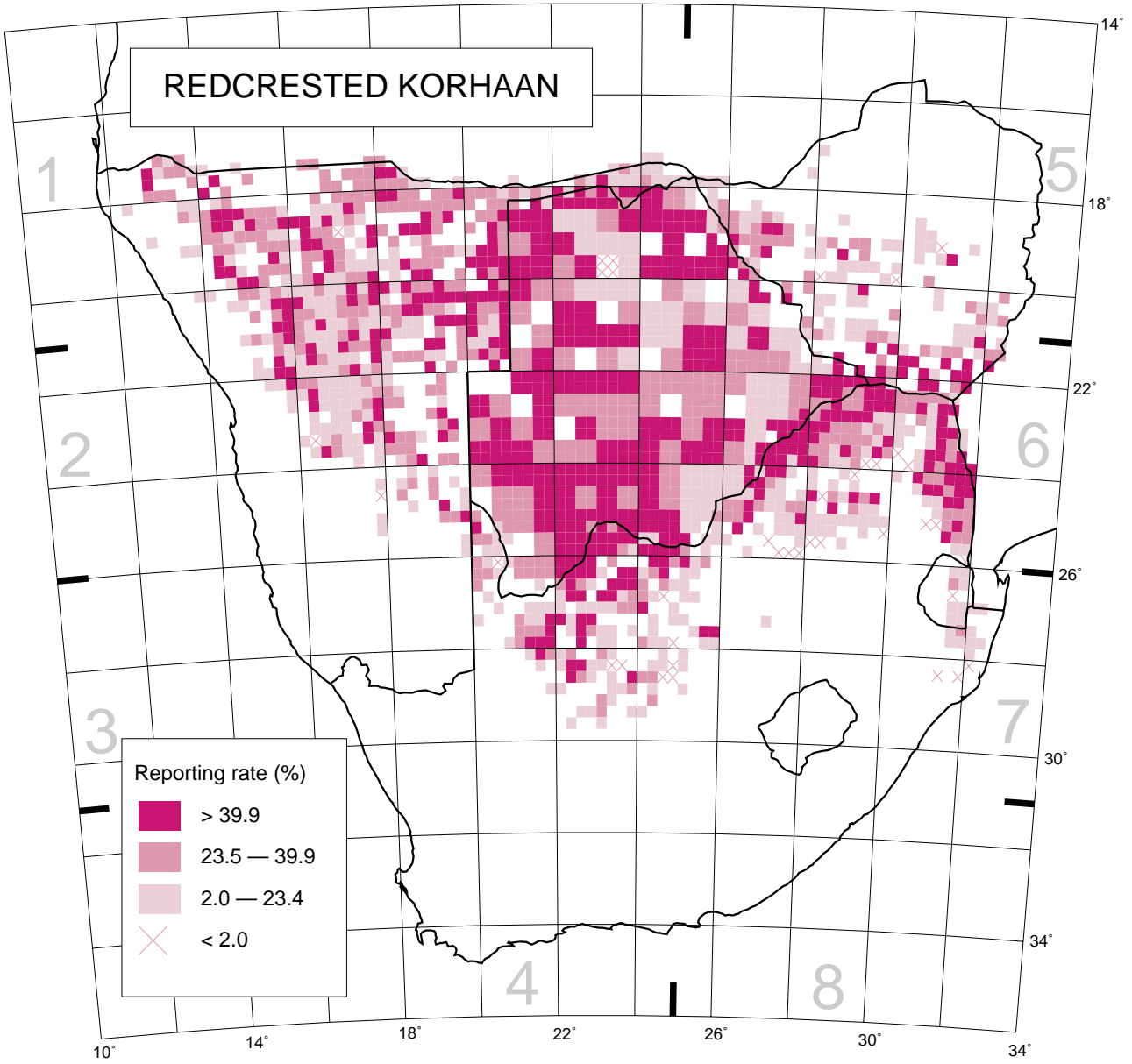
**Breeding:** Breeding was recorded in virtually every month, but especially October–May. There is a tendency for later breeding in the western Zones. Egg-laying in Zimbabwe spans September–February with a December–January peak (Irwin 1981). Egg-laying in the Transvaal spans September–March with an October–November peak (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Breeding in Namibia spans January–February (Winterbottom 1971d), confirming later breeding in the west.

**Historical distribution and conservation:** The Redcrested Korhaan is not considered to be of conservation concern, showing no significant reduction in range, although it may have decreased locally in parts of Zimbabwe, the Transvaal, eastern Swaziland and in northern KwaZulu-Natal because of hunting and habitat destruction brought about by crop farming and overgrazing by domestic stock (Clancey 1973; Irwin 1981). However, in Botswana, where overgrazing has led to bush encroachment, it benefits from the availability of scrub (M. Herremans pers. comm.).

D.G. Allan

Recorded in 1778 grid cells, 39.2%  
Total number of records: 9303  
Mean reporting rate for range: 23.9%





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 908, 534, 220, 0, 434, 2046, 120, 0; Breeding: 12, 5, 2, 0, 1, 18, 0, 0.