

## Wood Sandpiper

### Bosruiter

#### *Tringa glareola*

Records of Wood Sandpiper in southern Africa are scattered throughout the region anywhere wetlands are available, but are concentrated in the wetter areas, noticeably the Okavango Delta, the Transvaal (but conspicuously avoiding the escarpment between Tzaneen (2330CC) and Barberton (2531CC)) and the adjoining hardveld of eastern Botswana, and Zimbabwe. In the Palearctic, it is a characteristic species of the northern part of the taiga zone, extending into forest-tundra and shrub-tundra. The preferred breeding habitat is boggy openings in pine forests (Rogacheva 1992). The breeding range stretches from Scotland to eastern Siberia. It migrates to Africa south of the Sahara and to India, with relatively few going south-east to Australia (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

The population breeding in Europe was estimated by Rose & Scott (1994) to exceed one million individuals, but is decreasing. The size of the population breeding in Asia is unknown. The coastal population in southern Africa was estimated by Summers *et al.* (1987a) to be 930 birds, but the overwhelming majority occur on wetlands in the interior.

It may be confused with the Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* which is a scarce migrant to southern Africa (for identification features, see Hayman *et al.* 1986).

**Habitat:** It occurs along marshy shorelines, especially of ephemeral pans, vleis, dams, streams, floodplains, and the upper reaches of estuaries. Emergent or floating vegetation are preferred feeding habitats. It is uncommon on intertidal habitats and occurs only exceptionally on the seashore.

**Movements:** Arrival is from late July, but mostly August–September; departure is mainly March–April; a few birds remain throughout the austral winter (Taylor 1979; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Herremans 1994d).

A total of 3422 have been ringed in southern Africa (SAFRING). Two recoveries have been made on the breeding grounds during the breeding season: a bird ringed at Lake Manyame (1730DC) on 25 October 1986 was recov-

ered near Belomorsk (64°N 34°E), Karelia, north-western Russia, on 15 May 1987, and a bird ringed at Lake Chivero (1730DD) on 6 August 1974 was recovered just east of the Ural Mountains, at Kazym (64°N 65°E) on the Ob River, Russia, on 27 May 1979. Four recoveries provide information on migration routes: a bird ringed near Pisa (44°N 10°E), Italy, on 10 May 1977 was recovered at Henties Bay (2214AB) (an exceptional coastal locality) on 5 February 1978; a first-year bird ringed at Inacovce (49°N 22°E), Slovakia, on 3 August 1991 was recaptured five months later at Chegutu (1830AA), on 11 January 1992; a bird ringed at Lake Nakuru (0°S 36°E), Kenya, on 11 September 1971 was recovered near Norvalspont (3025CB) on 20 November 1980; a first-year bird ringed at Lake Chivero on 1 September 1974 was recaptured at Marievale (2628BC) on 21 September 1975. These data, though sparse, suggest that Wood Sandpipers migrate to southern African along an inland route from breeding grounds in eastern Europe and western Asia.

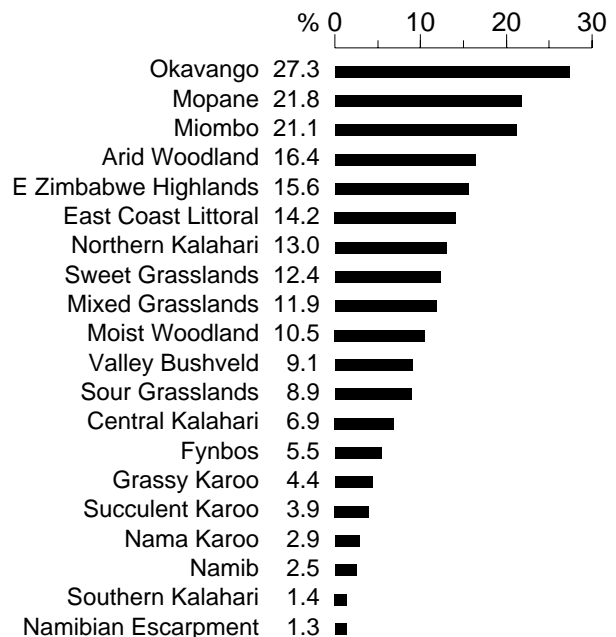
#### Historical distribution and conservation:

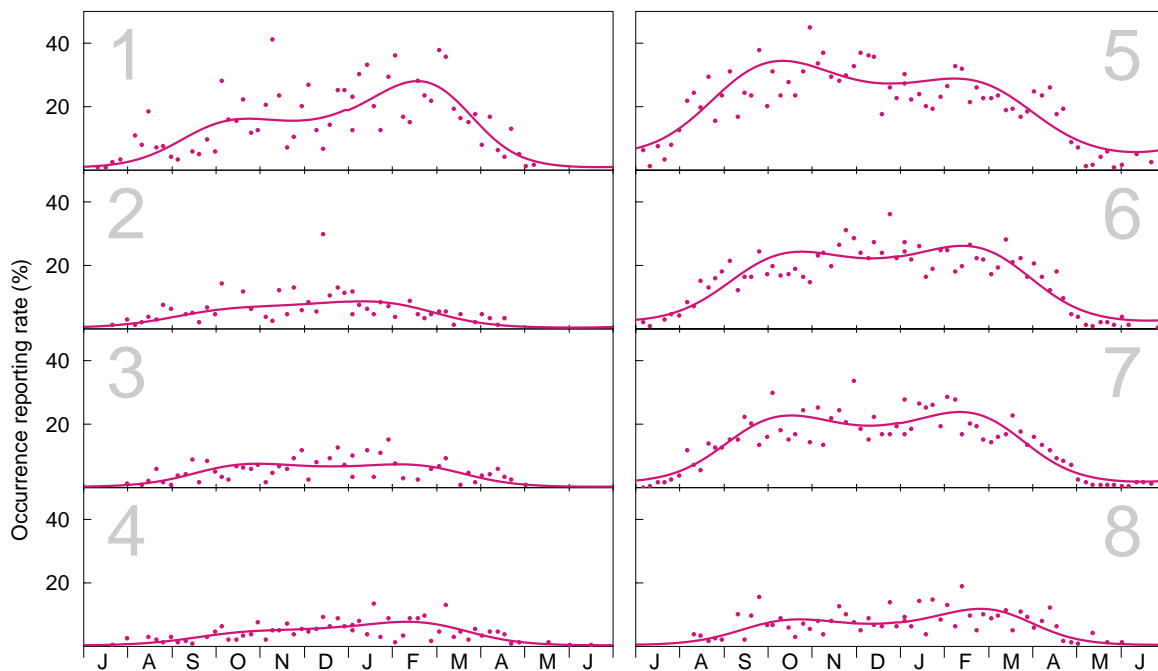
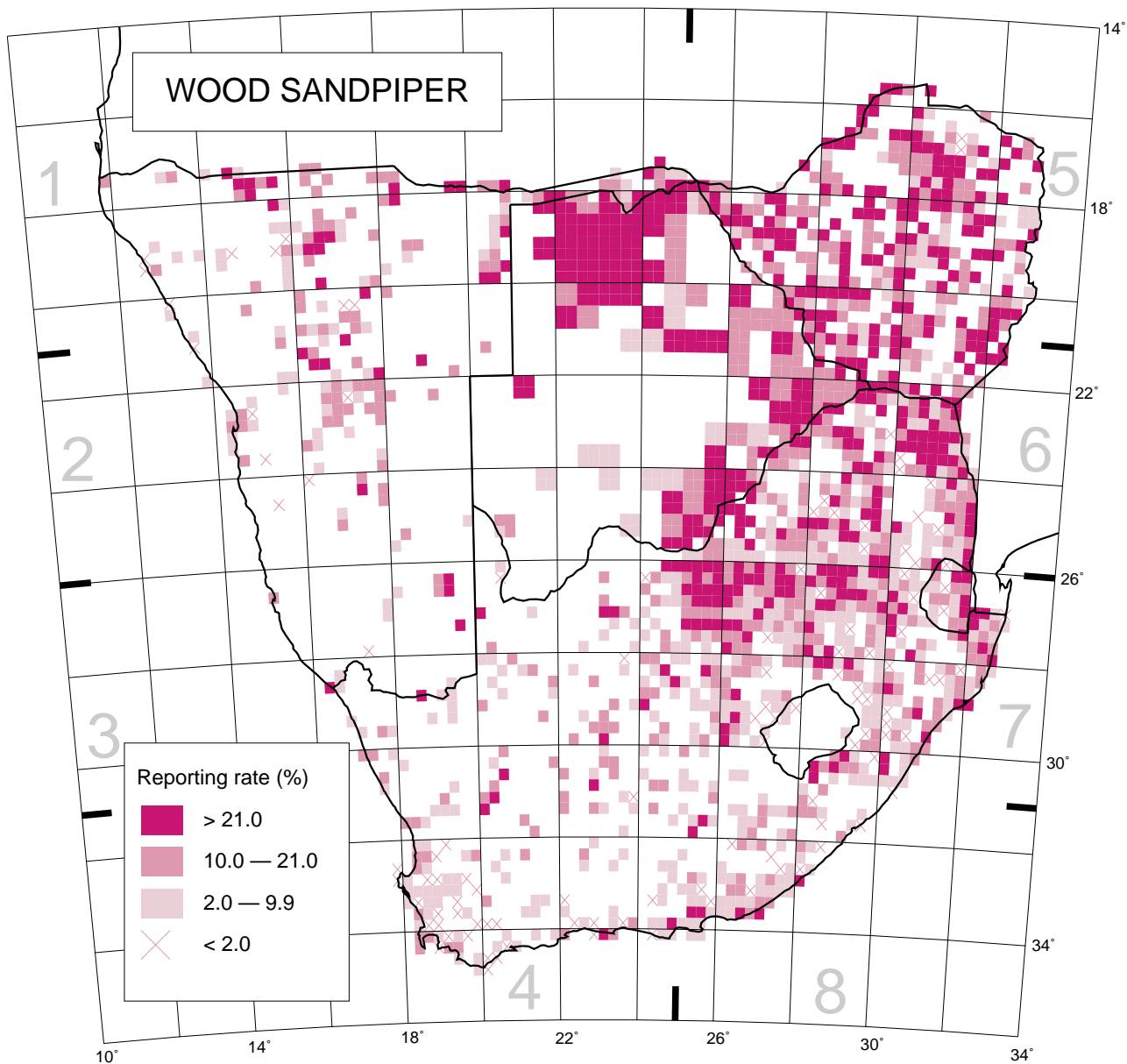
There is no evidence of a change of status in southern Africa. At the start of the 20th century, Stark & Sclater (1906) reported it as 'fairly abundant where suitable conditions exist' and this description remains apt. Although many natural wetlands in southern Africa have been destroyed, the Wood Sandpiper utilizes degraded wetlands and has adapted well to artificial habitats, from sewage works to rice paddies.

L.G. Underhill

Recorded in 1791 grid cells, 39.5%  
Total number of records: 15 863  
Mean reporting rate for range: 13.8%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 360, 130, 200, 300, 1895, 1793, 2757, 318.