

Threebanded Courser

Driebanddrawwertjie

Rhinoptilus cinctus

One of two completely nocturnal coursers found in southern Africa, the Threebanded Courser is generally much commoner, where it occurs, than the Bronzewing Courser *R. chalcopterus* (pers. obs), although the opposite is true in northern Namibia. Its distribution in the region is centred in Zimbabwe with sporadic records in eastern Botswana and northcentral Namibia. In the Transvaal it occurs only peripherally and rarely. North of the atlas region it extends discontinuously through Zambia to Somalia and Sudan (Urban *et al.* 1986).

Most records were probably collected at night when it favours the bare surfaces of dirt roads to find prey, but during breeding it can be located by its distinctive call.

It is a bird of open lowveld woodland, especially Mopane and *Acacia*-covered alluvial soils (Ginn *et al.* 1989). In the Zambezi Valley it appears to prefer poorly developed or elephant-damaged Mopane or mixed scrub with many open patches of bare soil. On the plateau it occurs locally in Miombo; the reason for this localized occurrence is not known but may be related to a paucity of open bare ground in this woodland type (Ginn *et al.* 1989).

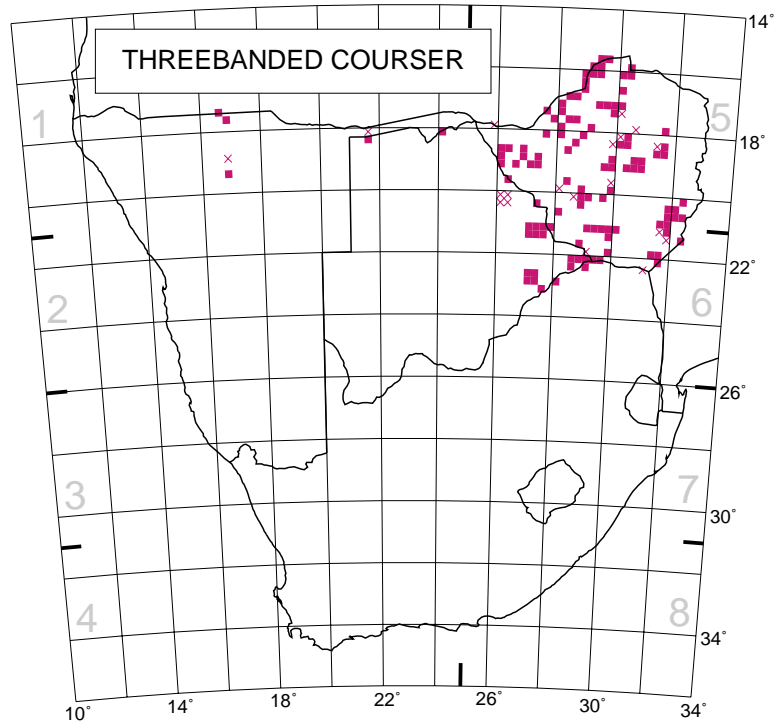
There has been controversy as to whether this courser is migratory. In Zimbabwe it is considered to be resident at lower altitudes with the higher-altitude populations occurring either irregularly or possibly seasonally (Irwin 1981). In Zambia it is considered resident (Benson *et al.* 1971). The atlas data are few but suggest a summer influx at the southern edge of the range. Brewster (1993, 1994a) indicated an expansion to the south in wet years.

Atlas breeding records were from May–November, which agrees well with Irwin (1981).

Although sometimes found almost alongside the Bronzewing Courser, it is not known what degree of ecological separation exists between these species.

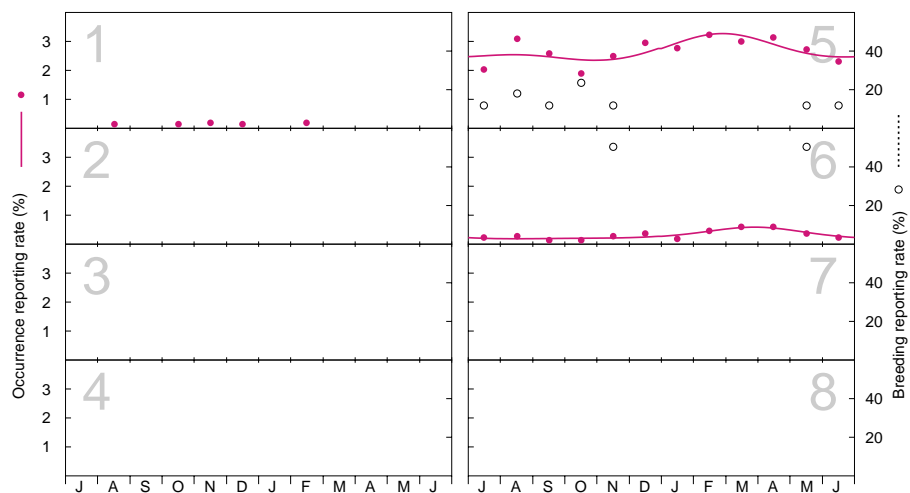
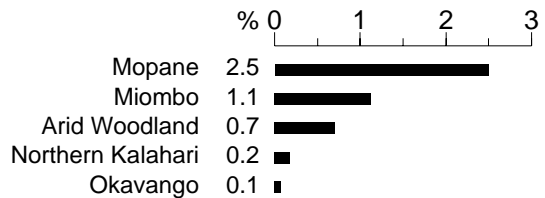
The historical distributional limits are unlikely to have differed much from today's, although destruction of *Acacia* woodland on alluvial sands in southeastern Zimbabwe may have caused local declines (Ginn *et al.* 1989).

A.J. Tree



Recorded in 134 grid cells, 3.0%
 Total number of records: 395
 Mean reporting rate for range: 6.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 5, 0, 0, 0, 309, 78, 0, 0; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 17, 2, 0, 0.