

### Delegorgue's Pigeon

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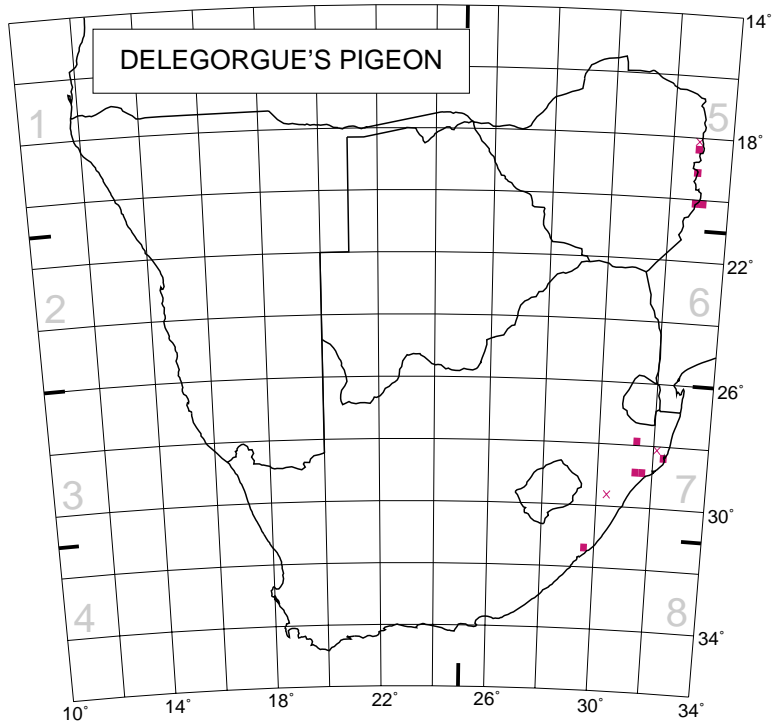
*Columba delegorguei*

Delegorgue's Pigeon is endemic to the Afrotropics and has a discontinuous distribution from Sudan to South Africa, occurring locally in climax coastal, lowland, mid- and high-altitude forest (Urban *et al.* 1986). Localized in the south of its range, this shy species of the forest canopy remains largely undetected unless males are calling. Confusion with the larger Rameron Pigeon *C. arquatrix* and the Cinnamon Dove *Aplopelia larvata*, sympatric in some forests in southern Africa (Rowan 1983), may result in erroneously reported sightings (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Low reporting rates indicate its scarcity; relatively high rates in the Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands probably result from sightings in lowland evergreen forests where it is still fairly common.

Higher reporting rates during summer coincide with calling activity and do not imply seasonal movement. Certain populations may show seasonal altitudinal movements; birds encountered during summer in the Karkloof (2930AD) were not found in winter (pers. obs). Ginn *et al.* (1989) mentioned birds occurring in lowland and coastal evergreen forests in winter, while local movements are also suggested for populations in Kenya (Rowan 1983). There are breeding records for November, January and April (Clancey 1964b; Benson & Irwin 1966).

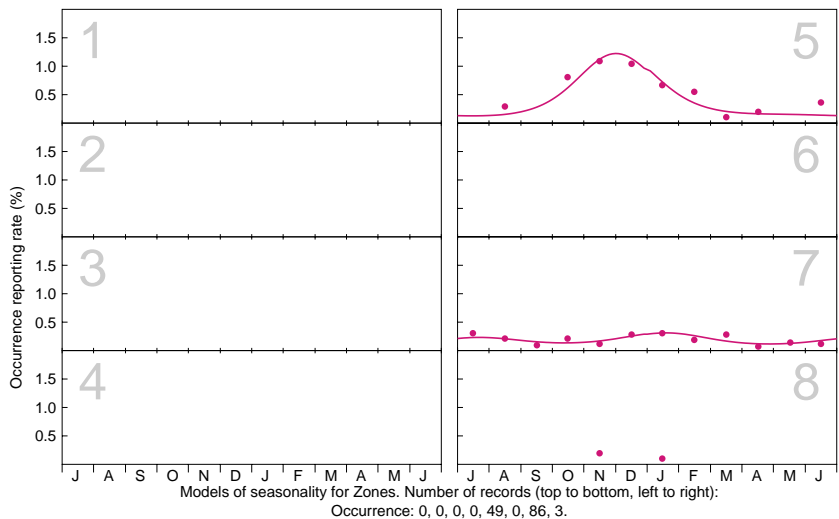
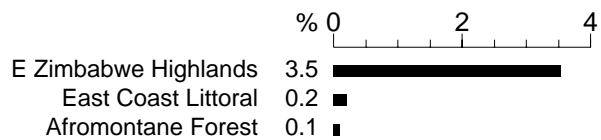
Atlas data indicate localized contraction, probably through deforestation, of the historic range. The species was described originally from the forested Berea Hills of present-day Durban (2930DD) in the 1840s (Clancey 1964b). The lack of Transvaal records during the atlas period suggests absence from this area, even though historic sight records from the Transvaal escarpment exist (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Although its conservation status is regarded as 'indeterminate' in South Africa (Brooke 1984b), it is not listed by Collar *et al.* (1994). The restricted and fragmented nature of the range of Delegorgue's Pigeon suggests that its status should be carefully monitored. Conservation of remaining suitable habitat, prevention of undue disturbance, and research into the general biology and possible seasonal movements should be a priority, particularly for the southern African subspecies *C. d. delegorguei*.



Recorded in 12 grid cells, 0.3%  
 Total number of records: 138  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 7.8%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types



R.J. Nuttall