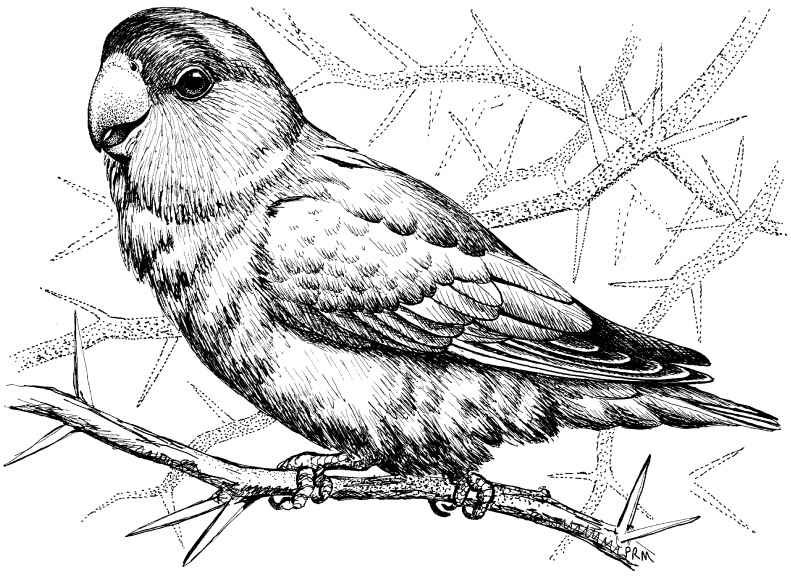


Rosyfaced Lovebird

Rooiwangparkiet

Agapornis roseicollis

The Rosyfaced Lovebird is colourful and noisy, and occurs commonly throughout central and western Namibia. It is found mainly wherever both water and rocky outcrops are available and it is then conspicuous and gregarious, gathering in large flocks to visit watering points. Its range extends from just south of the Orange River, through central Namibia, and in a northwesterly swath into Angola. Records well outside this known range are probably escapes because it is common in aviaries and is easily bred in captivity. Subsequent to atlas fieldwork, it occurred in Zimbabwe near Harare (1731CC), but has not been proved to breed there (Haugaard 1995). The mention of a feral population on the Cape Peninsula (3418AD) in Brooke (1984b) and perpetuated in Fry *et al*. (1988) appears to have been based on a misunderstanding (T.B. Oatley pers. comm. to L.G. Underhill). Surprisingly, it has not yet been recorded in Botswana (Penry 1994); the record at Union's End (2420CC) in the northern Kalahari Gemsbok Park was on the South African side of the border.

Confusion with other species within the region is unlikely, even in the Caprivi Strip where the closely related Blackcheeked Lovebird *A. nigrigenis* occurs. The two species are entirely allopatric.

Habitat: By far the most important vegetation type in which it is found is Namibian Escarpment. Reporting rates in this rocky region were seven times that in Arid Woodland and the Southern Kalahari. Like all parrots in this region, it is highly water dependent and this may explain occurrence away from rocky highlands where it congregates around farm dams and reservoirs. It avoids open habitats such as the dwarf scrub savanna around the Etosha Pan and the Namib Desert sand sea; its presence on the Namib Desert coastline also arises from association with humans in Oranjemund (2816CB), Lüderitz (2615CA), and Walvis Bay (2214DC).

It is a colonial breeder with natural breeding sites in the inaccessible and often vertical cracks found in steep rock-faces on exfoliating granite or sandstone koppies. The only indication of the exact location is the bullet-like entrance of a bird as it streaks upwards into these dark recesses. However, it is highly adaptable and it nests and roosts in Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius* nests (Forshaw 1989), as well as artificial structures and junction boxes on telephone poles in otherwise inappropriate habitat.

Movements: It is likely that local movements occur as natural water sources dry up in the dry winter months in Namibia, and birds move in search of perennial water. The models suggest this in the lower reporting rates in winter in the southern periphery of its range (Zone 3), and correspondingly slightly higher rate in central Namibia (Zone 2) where farming activities and artificial water sources are more concentrated.

Breeding: Peak egglaying months from atlas data and the Namibian nest record scheme are February–March (Brown & Clinning in press). It has the extraordinary ability to breed when it is only two months old (Dilger 1960), so extended breeding may occur when conditions are favourable after rainfall.

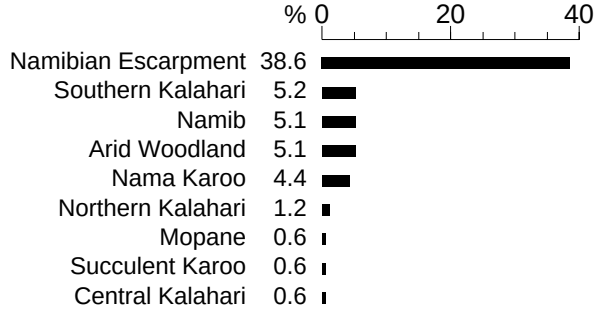
Interspecific relationships: During breeding, it may be associated with and breed alongside Sociable Weavers (which have a similar distribution), and Whitebrowed Sparrowweavers *Plocepasser mahali*. In winter, its dependence on water may fortuitously bring it together with other Psittacidae such as Rüppell's *Poicephalus rueppellii* and Meyer's *P. meyeri* Parrots.

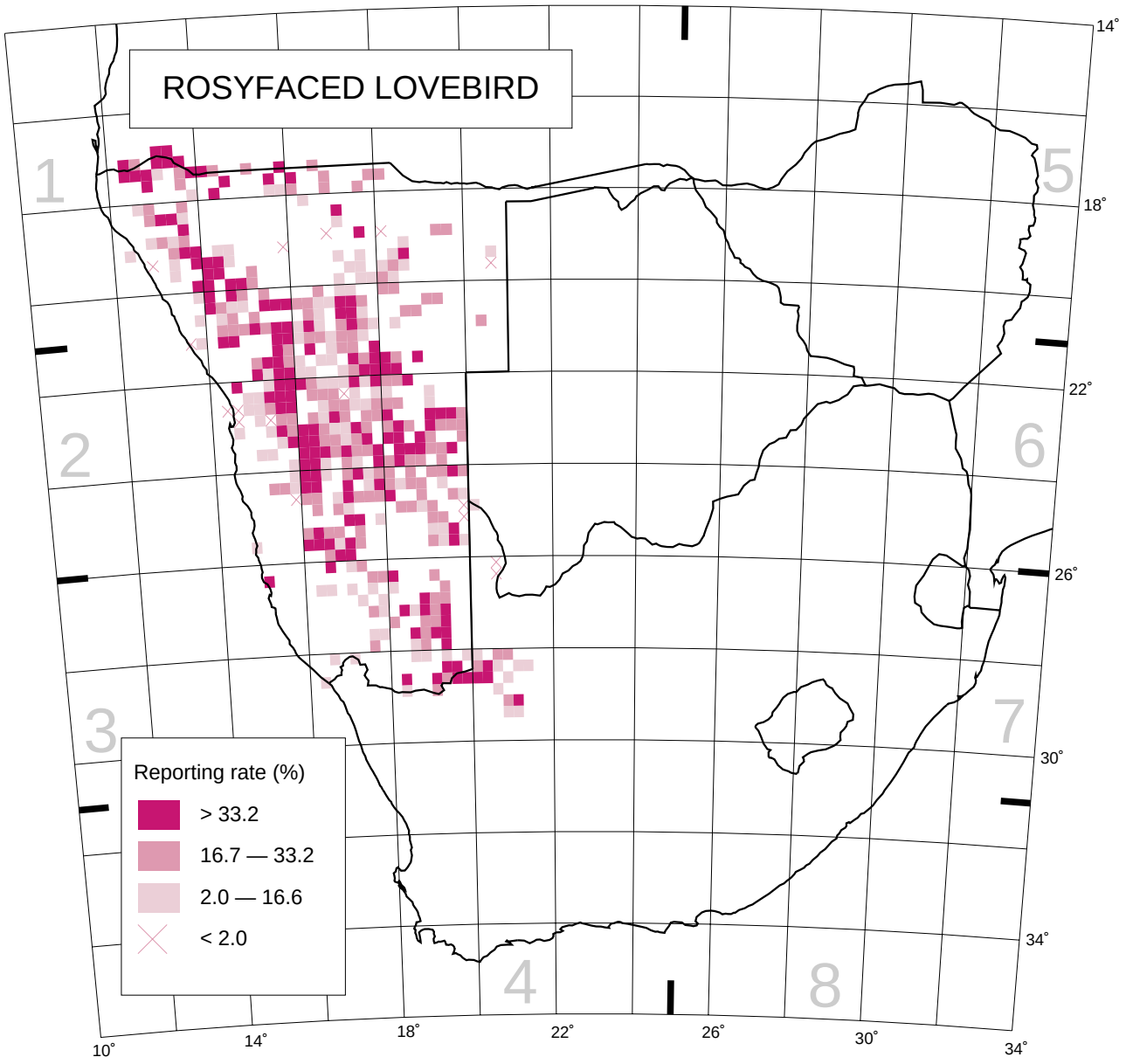
Historical distribution and conservation: It is unlikely that any range contraction has occurred during the 20th century; indeed, it is more likely that populations have increased with the provision of water points in previously dry areas, and artificial structures in which it can nest. While the Rosyfaced Lovebird is a common aviary bird, it breeds well in captivity and is widespread and abundant in the wild; therefore trade, at present levels, is unlikely to affect natural populations.

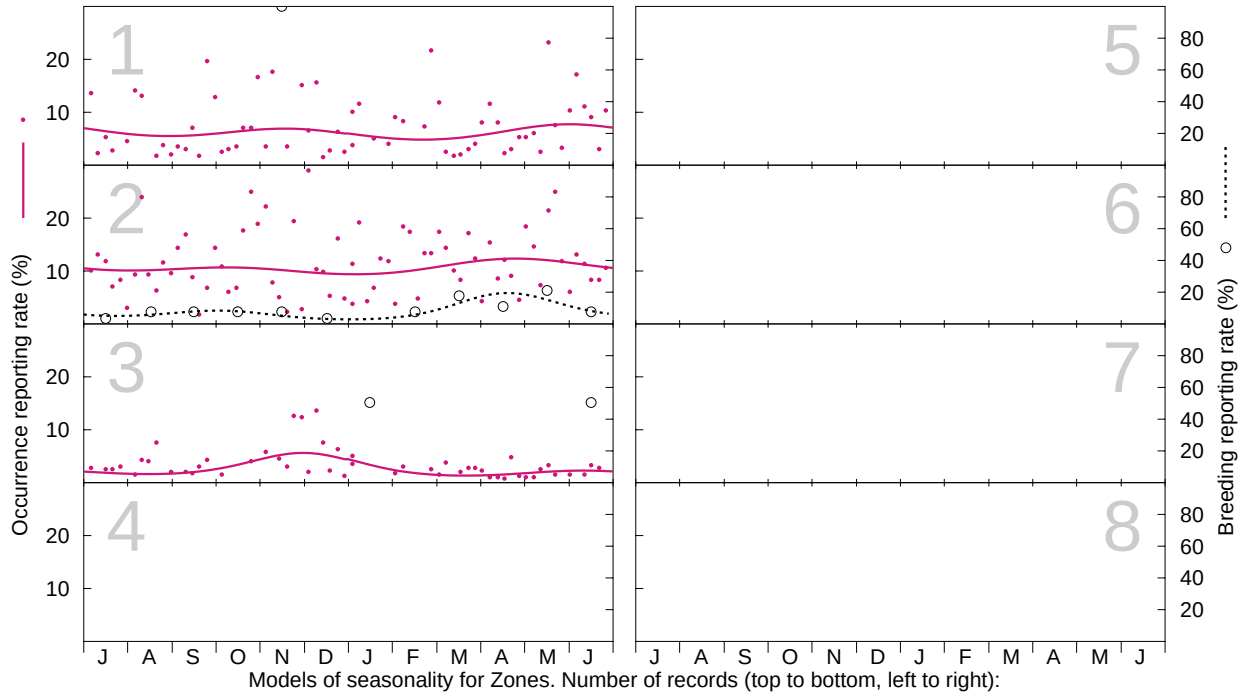
R.E. Simmons

Recorded in 460 grid cells, 10.1%
Total number of records: 2890
Mean reporting rate for range: 24.7%

Reporting rates for vegetation types







Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 207, 390, 137, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0; Breeding: 1, 28, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.