



Klaas's Cuckoo

Meitjie

Chrysococcyx klaas

Klaas's Cuckoo ranges widely throughout tropical Africa, from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east and South Africa in the south (Fry *et al.* 1988). In southern Africa it is widespread in mesic woodlands and occurs throughout the region east of 26°E, except in Lesotho, the mountains of the eastern Cape Province and the Free State, and the southeastern Transvaal highveld. It extends west of this longitude with scattered records from northern Botswana and northern and central Namibia, and it is well represented along the coastal belt of the eastern, southern and southwestern Cape Province. High reporting rates come from Swaziland and adjacent lowland KwaZulu-Natal, while it is only thinly distributed in the Transkei.

It is solitary and easily overlooked when not calling (Maclean 1993b). The Afrikaans name is onomatopoeic for the well-known vocalization of the male. The atlas data are probably spatially reliable, but not seasonally comprehensive. **Habitat:** It is found in forest, moist woodland and savanna. Reporting rates confirm preference for forest and lush woodland habitat; it was most frequently reported from East Coast Littoral, Valley Bushveld, Miombo, Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands, Arid Woodland, Fynbos and Moist Woodland. However, the species was recorded regularly from many other vegetation types, which suggests that these contain well-wooded components or that human modifications of parts of those regions have made them attractive to Klaas's Cuckoo. For example, in the Cape Province, it is frequently found in suburban parks and gardens (Rowan 1983; Hockey *et al.* 1989).

Movements: It is predominantly an intra-African migrant in southern Africa. However, the data cannot distinguish between genuine arrival and apparent arrival at the start of territorial calling, but they probably coincide. Apart from Zones 1 and 2, the seasonal patterns of vocalization differ only slightly between Zones. Arrival appears synchronized and peak conspicuousness is reached in October or November; departure, or at least the cessation of calling, from the southern Zones 4, 7 and 8, is about a month earlier than in Zones 5 and 6. In the more arid areas (Zones 1 and 2), it is

reported only from late October onwards (see also Herremans 1994d), and the presence here is shorter than in all other Zones.

It may winter in coastal lowlands, going as far north as Kenya (Fry *et al.* 1988). Parker (1994) described it as resident in Swaziland. In parts of the Cape Province it is considered a winter visitor (Rowan 1983; Hockey *et al.* 1989). In most other areas some may be found all year (Cyrus & Robson 1980; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Maclean 1993b; Herremans 1994d). These may not necessarily be the same individuals; in Zimbabwe, Irwin (1981) thought that there were two populations, one moving north after breeding in summer, to be replaced by unobtrusive nonbreeding visitors, presumably from South Africa. There are no ring recoveries to assist in unravelling these complex patterns of movement (SAFRING).

Breeding: Egg-laying generally spans September–April, with an October–December peak, but somewhat later in the arid west (Winterbottom 1968a; Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Rowan 1983; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Brown & Clinning in press), but may start as early as July in the southwestern Cape Province (Rowan 1983; Hockey *et al.* 1989). The atlas records average somewhat later because they are biased towards the recording of fully fledged young with their hosts, rather than egg-laying.

Interspecific relationships: It is a brood parasite with a wide range of small insectivorous hosts, with warblers, flycatchers and sunbirds being the most frequent (Fry *et al.* 1988; Maclean 1993b). It inhabits less dense and moist vegetation than its congener, the Emerald Cuckoo *C. cupreus*, and denser vegetation than the Diederik Cuckoo *C. caprius* (Irwin 1981; Fry *et al.* 1988).

Historical distribution and conservation: The present distribution map shows more records further west into arid areas as compared with Rowan (1983), but this may be due to better coverage rather than to a real change in distribution. Klaas's Cuckoo is not of special conservation concern in the region.

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Recorded in 1144 grid cells, 25.2%

Total number of records: 12 004

Mean reporting rate for range: 12.3%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



