



Mangrove Kingfisher

Mangliedvisvanger

Halcyon senegaloides

The Mangrove Kingfisher is found along the coast of the Transkei and KwaZulu-Natal, through Mozambique to Somalia, usually within 20 km of the coast (Fry *et al.* 1988). It is similar to the widespread Woodland Kingfisher *H. senegalensis* and the Bluebreasted Kingfisher *H. malimbica* of central and western Africa.

It is localized and easily overlooked in its preferred habitats, but calls loudly during summer. Although there have been inland records of this species, confusion with immature Woodland Kingfishers or with birds with aberrant bill colour (Hanmer 1983, 1984a, 1989c) probably accounts for these. Tarboton *et al.* (1987b) did not accept any records from the Kruger National Park. All inland and dry woodland records from South Africa should be treated as presently unproven.

Habitat: It occurs in summer along the banks of forested rivers and streams, at or near the coast. In winter it occurs in stands of mangroves, along wooded lagoons and even in suburban gardens and parks, presumably while on migration. Elsewhere in Africa it may occur in woodlands further away from water.

Movements: The models show that it occurs in the Transkei (mainly Zone 8) in summer and is absent June–August, while it is absent or rarely reported November–March in KwaZulu-Natal, indicating a seasonal movement between the Transkei and KwaZulu-Natal. Berruti *et al.* (1994a) analysed atlas data to document this movement in more detail. The atlas records for the Transkei confirm earlier reports in which the species was recorded mainly in summer with occasional breeding records (Jonsson 1965; Pike 1966; Quickelberge 1989; Cooper & Swart 1992). In KwaZulu-Natal, it was previously regarded as a breeding species which moved inland to breed, despite the fact that nearly all records are from the coast in winter (Clancey 1964b, 1965d, 1971c; Cyrus & Robson 1980; Maclean 1993b), and there were no breeding records (e.g. Clancey 1965d; Dean 1971). However, it is possible that it used to be a rare breeding species in KwaZulu-Natal (Clancey 1965d). The atlas and other available data clearly show that it is a nonbreeding migrant to KwaZulu-Natal from the Transkei. Clancey (1965d) suggested that most movement took place in March. Berruti *et al.* (1994a) showed that it apparently did not overwinter in KwaZulu-Natal south of Durban (2931CC), presumably because of the lack of mangroves in this area.

Breeding: There were no atlas breeding records. It breeds in the Transkei October–January (Quickelberge 1989; Maclean 1993b).

Interspecific relationships: The Woodland Kingfisher is almost allopatric with the Mangrove Kingfisher in South Africa, but the species overlap further north in Mozambique, and hybridization may occur (Hanmer 1984a, 1989c).

Historical distribution and conservation: It has been reported as far west as Port Elizabeth (3325DC) (Brooke 1984b) although this was probably a vagrant. The mangrove habitat used in winter in KwaZulu-Natal, particularly in Durban Bay, has been greatly reduced. If it did once breed in KwaZulu-Natal, the degradation of rivers and riverine vegetation has almost certainly eliminated it as a breeding species, effectively isolating the Transkei breeding population.

The species' status was given as 'indeterminate' in South Africa and it is not listed in the African Red Data book because it is more common in East Africa (Brooke 1984b; Fry *et al.* 1988; Collar *et al.* 1994). The status of the Mangrove Kingfisher in South Africa should be changed to 'vulnerable', because the breeding population is small, isolated and vulnerable to the loss of breeding and wintering habitat.

A. Berruti

Recorded in 24 grid cells, 0.5%
Total number of records: 104
Mean reporting rate for range: 1.7%

