



Banded Martin

Gebande Oewerswael

Riparia cincta

The Banded Martin has a strikingly fragmented distribution. There is a relatively isolated population in the intensively cultivated regions of the southwestern Cape Province and it is markedly more abundant in the Swartland of the west coast than along the south coast. There are additional scattered records extending eastwards across the southern Cape Province, especially along the coast. It is widespread in the grasslands of South Africa and Swaziland, especially the moister sour grasslands in the east, but it avoids the higher grasslands in Lesotho. There are, however, numerous records from the central Transvaal woodlands and along the eastern seaboard. An apparently isolated population occurs in the Kuruman (2723AD) area on the Ghaap Plateau. Another largely isolated population is centred on the Etosha Pan area in northern Namibia. It occurs at relatively high reporting rates in the Okavango region in northern Botswana and in the Caprivi Strip of Namibia. Elsewhere in Botswana, it is found in the Makgadikgadi Pans area and in the southeast around Gaborone (2425DB) and Lobatse (2525BA). In Zimbabwe, most records come from the higher-lying central parts of the country. There are many records from other parts of the sub-continent and many of these are likely to represent birds on passage.

It has an extensive range in sub-Saharan Africa. The birds breeding in northern Botswana, Namibia and possibly north-western Zimbabwe are of the race *R. c. xerica*; *suaelica* breeds in northern Zimbabwe; and *cincta* breeds in South Africa, southeastern Botswana and southeastern Zimbabwe (Clancey & Irwin 1966; Turner & Rose 1989). It is conspicuous but could be confused with the Sand Martin *R. riparia*. It is usually found in pairs or small flocks.

Habitat: It occurs in natural grassland and cultivated or cleared land. The isolated populations occur mostly in open grassland, large floodplains and intensively cultivated areas that are surrounded by woodland, arid areas or other unsuitable habitat. It is often associated with water but is not restricted to wetland habitats; it will inhabit areas far from water when suitable earthen banks or Aardvark *Orycteropus afer* burrows are available for breeding.

Movements: Arrival in the southwestern Cape Province (Zone 4) is in August, almost two months ahead of the late

September–early October arrival in the rest of South Africa (Zones 6, 7 and 8). Departure from South Africa is also asynchronous, and is completed by March in the southwestern Cape Province, by mid-April in the eastern Cape Province (Zone 8), and only by late May–early June in eastcentral South Africa (Zone 7). Interestingly, departure occurs relatively early, by May in the central Transvaal (Zone 6). Tree (1986b) noted that flocks occurred on northward passage through Mashonaland in Zimbabwe April–May and that no clear southward movement through Zimbabwe in spring had been recorded. Northward movement through Botswana also peaks April–May, while less obvious return movement has been recorded in November (Herremans 1994d). Overwintering is extremely rare in the southernmost parts of its range but more common further north.

The nonbreeding areas are poorly known. Most birds are believed to overwinter in central Africa between Angola and northern Mozambique (Turner & Rose 1989), but the presence of a substantial wintering population in the Okavango extends our knowledge of the wintering area. The race *xerica* is thought to winter to the north (Aspinwall 1983), but is either resident in the Okavango and Caprivi regions, or replaced there in the winter by another race. Both the wintering areas and migration routes of the various races require further study.

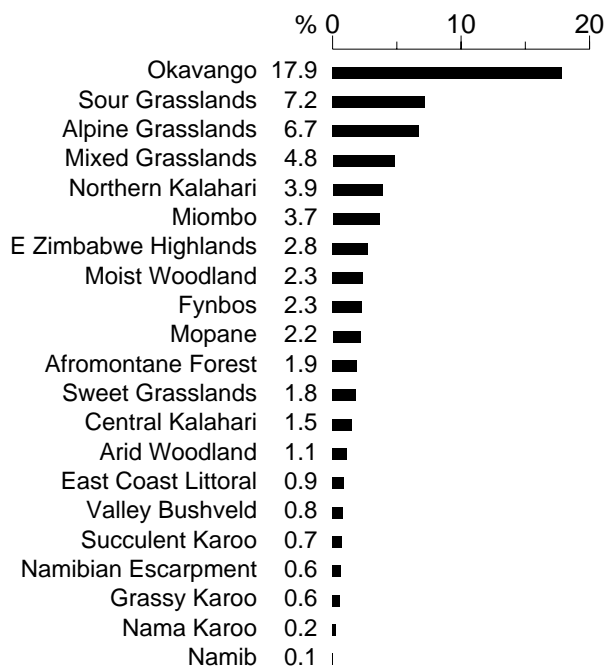
Breeding: Most breeding occurred during the summer months September–April with an early breeding peak in the winter-rainfall southwestern Cape Province (Zone 4).

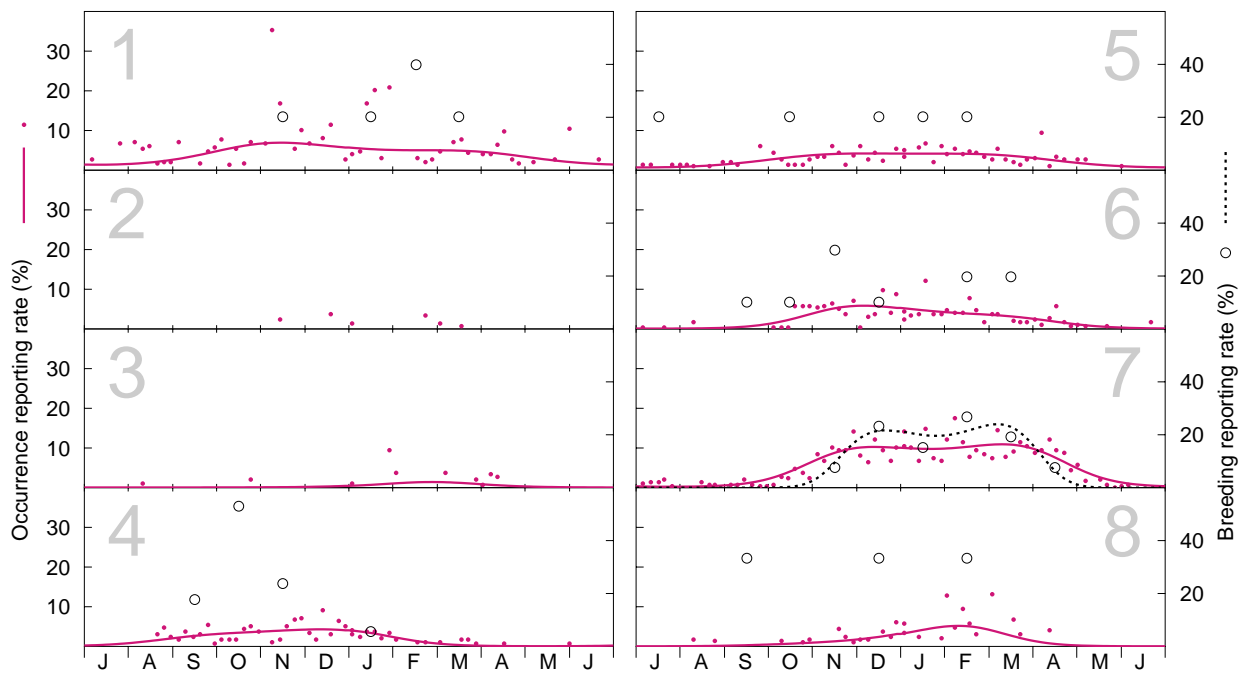
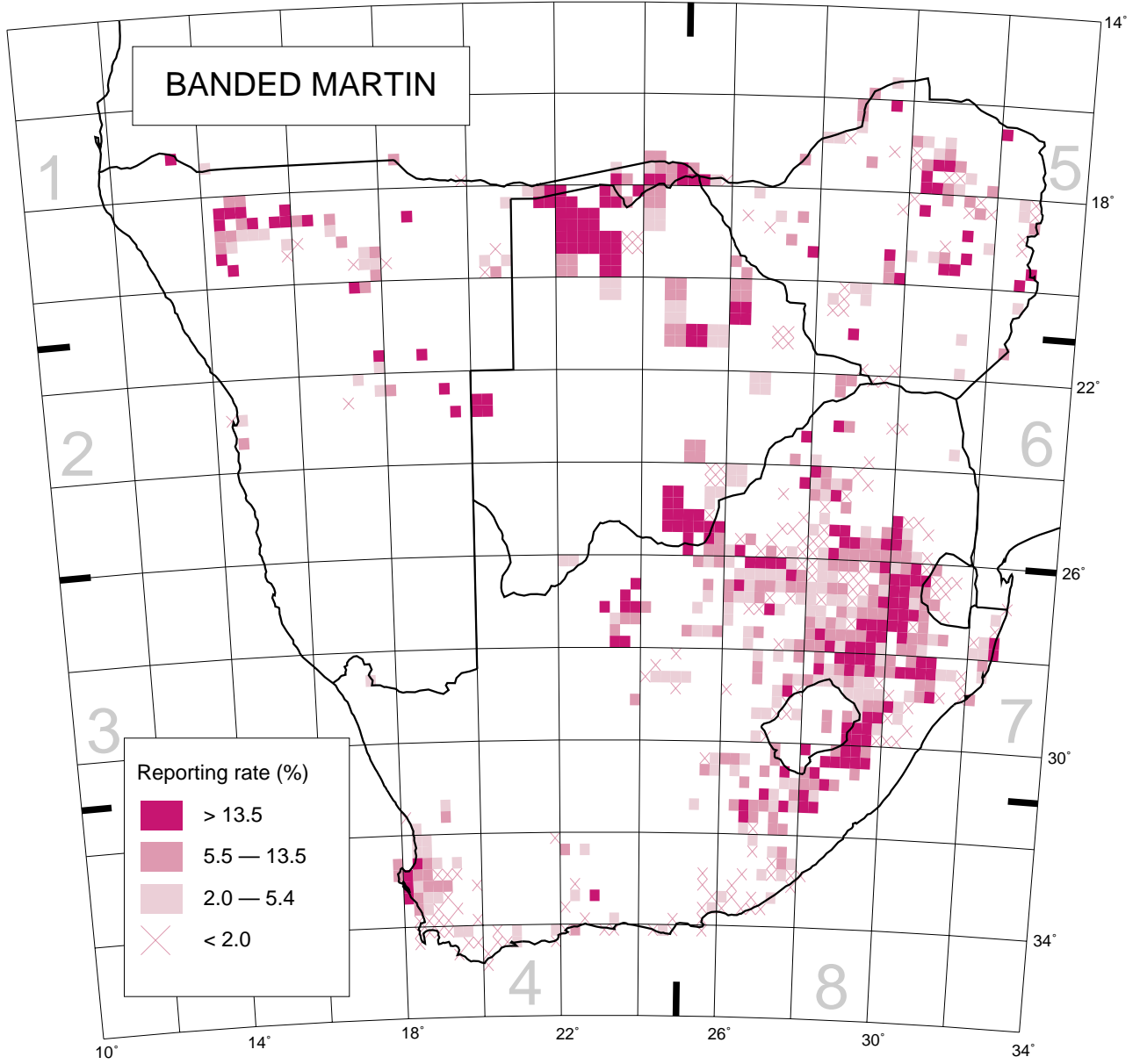
Historical distribution and conservation: The Banded Martin has not adapted to nesting in man-made sites such as quarries and sandpits to any substantial degree. However, its association with intensively cultivated areas in the southwestern Cape Province suggests that it may have increased in, and possibly even colonized this region, owing to agricultural development there.

R.A. Earlé

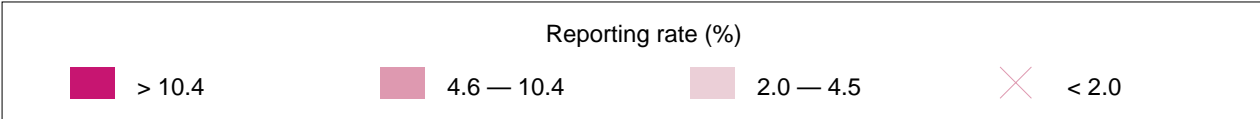
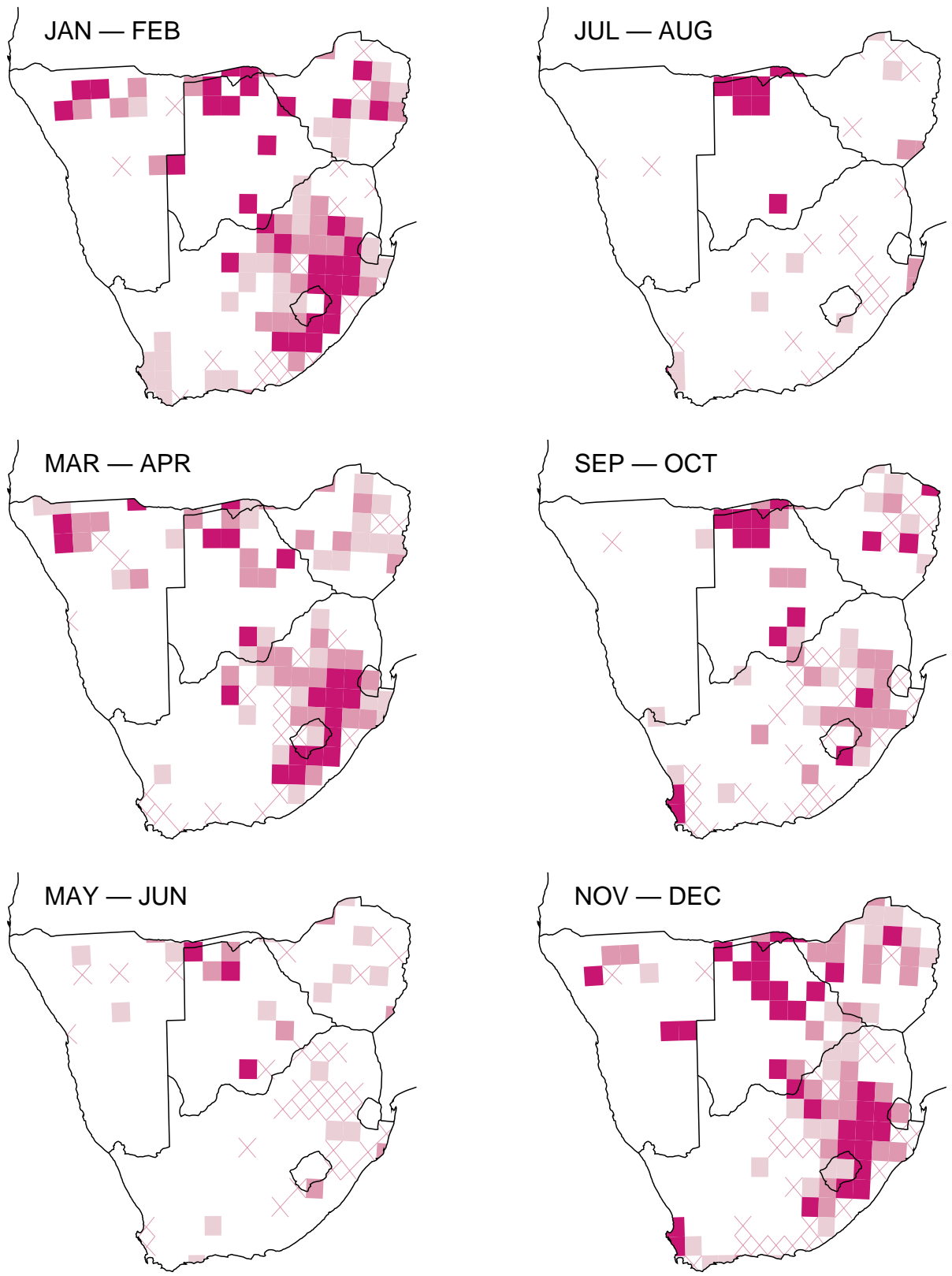
Recorded in 814 grid cells, 17.9%
Total number of records: 4290
Mean reporting rate for range: 5.7%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





BANDED MARTIN



Seasonal distribution maps; one-degree grid.