

*Spotted Thrush*

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Natallyster

*Zoothera guttata*

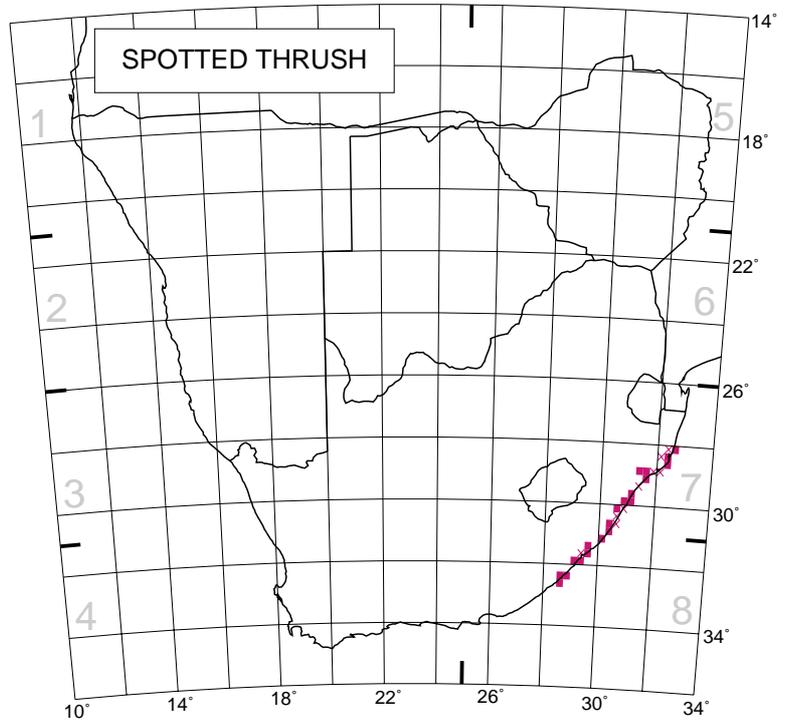
The Spotted Thrush has an extremely fragmented range in Africa. The largest population occurs in South Africa, breeding in the Transkei and at scattered KwaZulu-Natal localities: Oribi Gorge (3030CB), Ngoye Forest (2831CD,DC), 20–25 pairs at Dhlizna Forest (2831CD) (H. Chittenden pers. comm.), and Entumeni Forest (2831CD) (Harebottle 1994). Clancey (1992–93) considered birds north of the Tugela River (2931AB) to be different from the nominate race, but this was not supported by Harebottle (1994).

It may be confused with the Groundscraper Thrush *Turdus litsitsirupa* which inhabits drier open areas and to which inland records invariably refer. Secretive when breeding, the Spotted Thrush is easily overlooked in its forest habitat and was under-reported, but it may be more conspicuous in winter.

In summer it breeds in large (>100 ha) patches of mature coastal forest (Transkei) or coastal scarp or valley forests (KwaZulu-Natal) with a closed canopy and relatively open lower strata (Harebottle 1994). In winter it occurs in mature coastal lowland, coastal scarp, dune forest and secondary growth, and occasionally in suburban gardens.

Reporting rates peak in winter in KwaZulu-Natal (Zone 7), corresponding to winter immigration from the Transkei (Clancey 1955, 1964b; Cyrus & Robson 1980; Berruti *et al.* 1994a; Harebottle 1994). A corresponding winter decline in reporting rates in Transkei (Zone 8) is not clear, partly because it is secretive when breeding and also because of the small number of records from this Zone. Birds breeding in KwaZulu-Natal are possibly altitudinal migrants to the coast, but some birds breeding in Dhlizna Forest overwinter there (Ginn *et al.* 1989). Many birds are killed at night by colliding with buildings during migration, which is inferred to take place April–May and September (Clancey 1992–93).

Breeding occurs October–February (Harebottle 1994). It no longer breeds in the forests around Durban (2931CC) (Chubb 1914) and occurs there only in winter. Breeding records from



Recorded in 29 grid cells, 0.6%  
 Total number of records: 257  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 3.7%

Ndumu Game Reserve (2632CD) and Isipingo (2930DD) (Maclean 1993b) are rejected because they are attributable to other species (unpubl. data).

The Spotted Thrush is listed as 'vulnerable' in South Africa (Brooke 1984b) and as 'endangered' in Africa (Collar *et al.* 1994). In South Africa it has suffered extensive range reduction, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, and it is threatened by further clearing of forests.

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