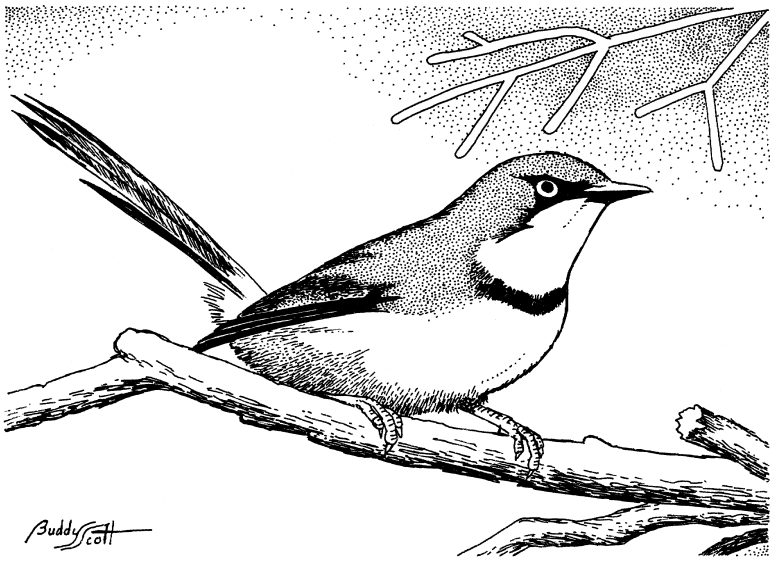


Barthroated Apalis

Bandkeelkleinjantjie

Apalis thoracica

The Barthroated Apalis occurs over much of Africa south of the equator in many distinct subspecies. It is widespread in the wetter eastern and southern parts of southern Africa. It is found throughout KwaZulu-Natal (except the subtropical lowlands), the northern and eastern Free State, Swaziland, the Transvaal (except most of the lowveld), eastern Botswana, and the southern and southwestern Cape Province. It is absent from northwestern Zimbabwe. Thirteen subspecies have been described for the region (Clancey 1980b); the ranges of some coincide with centres of high reporting rates; most have continuous ranges on the present map.

Habitat: It is adaptable with a catholic choice of wooded habitats. It appears to be equally at home in the interior of evergreen or semi-evergreen forests, forest fringes, woodland and even Karoo scrub and grassveld (Serle 1955; Irwin 1981). The vegetation analysis shows that the highest reporting rates were from Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands, Afromontane Forest, Valley Bushveld, and Miombo. It may even occur in grassland biomes if suitable woodland or bush occurs therein, for example, along drainage lines. In eastern Botswana it is found in hilly areas with cover along drainage lines and in the eastern Transvaal highveld it even occurs in alien plantations (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). In some areas it is a common garden bird in the suburbs. It occurs in pairs or small groups, remaining mostly hidden in the foliage of dense vegetation in search of insects.

Movements: The models show almost uniform reporting rates throughout the year, apart from the southern Cape Province (Zone 8) where there were lower reporting rates during midsummer. This could possibly be related to the fact that birds are less vocal then or it could indicate some degree of altitudinal movement. Such movements are also suspected in Zimbabwe where some movement southwards during winter, into lower lying areas in the Limpopo and Save river drainages, is believed to occur (A.J. Tree *in litt.*). In Zimbabwe an individual was retrapped almost exactly three years after being ringed at the same locality (Irwin 1981). It would appear to be resident in most of its range. In a species with nearly continuous distribution, a high level of sedentariness seems essential to maintain the remarkable geographic, though clinal, variation in the colours of the crown, back, abdomen and flanks; besides races, local demes are also discernible (Irwin 1981).

Breeding: Breeding was recorded mainly October–February from the southern Cape Province to the Transvaal (Zones 6–8). Breeding starts considerably earlier in the winter-rainfall area of the southwestern Cape Province (Zone 4), and in Zimbabwe (Zone 5). Peak breeding activity for all areas is November–December. Atlas data confirm published information on breeding seasonality (Winterbottom 1968a; Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Interspecific relationships: It frequently occurs at the same localities as the Yellow-breasted Apalis *A. flavida*. Bevan (1944) showed that Barthroated and Rudd's *A. ruddi* Apalises do not usually occur together in the same area. In Swaziland, Rudd's Apalis was found at lower altitudes and in drier vegetation types than Barthroated Apalis (Parker 1994). In the forests of the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, the Barthroated Apalis occurs together with Chirinda Apalis *A. chirindensis* (Irwin 1981). No cases of competition between species of apalis have been documented.

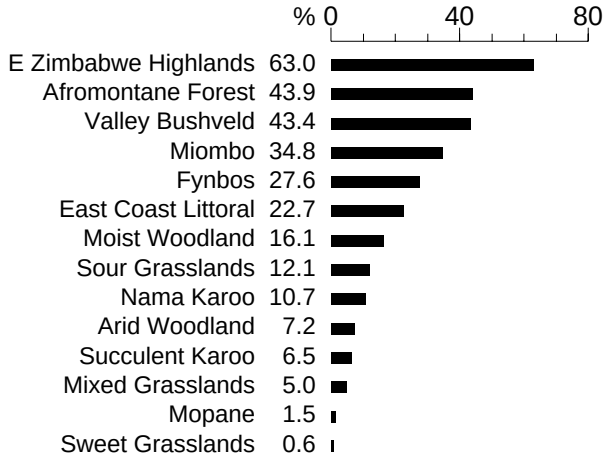
It is parasitized by Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*, and is the second most frequently recorded host of this cuckoo in the southwestern and eastern Cape Province (Rowan 1983).

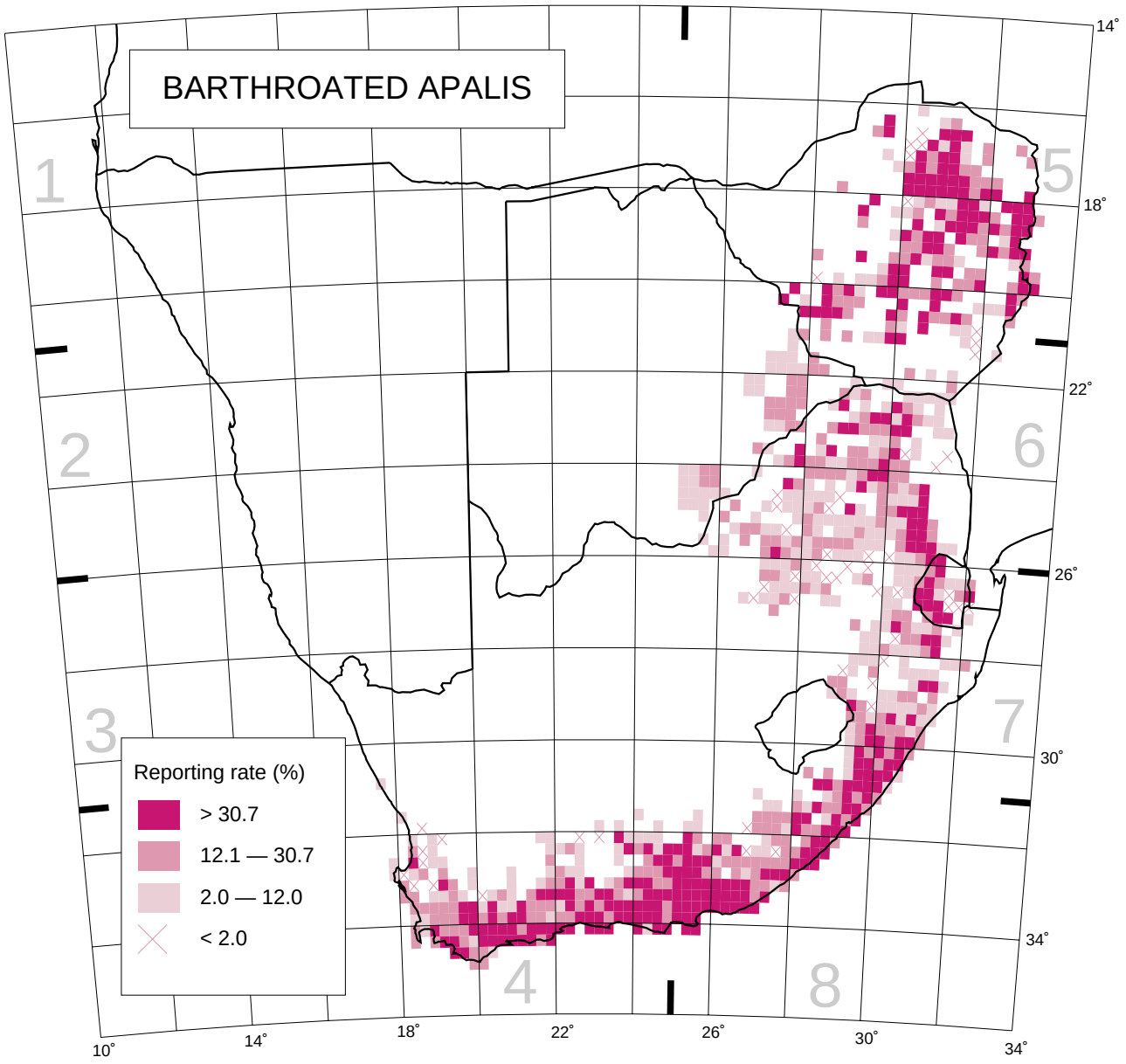
Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence to suggest that the historical distribution was any different from the present; however, the spread of alien trees has allowed its expansion into some previously treeless regions. The Barthroated Apalis is common through much of its range and does not appear to be under any particular threat.

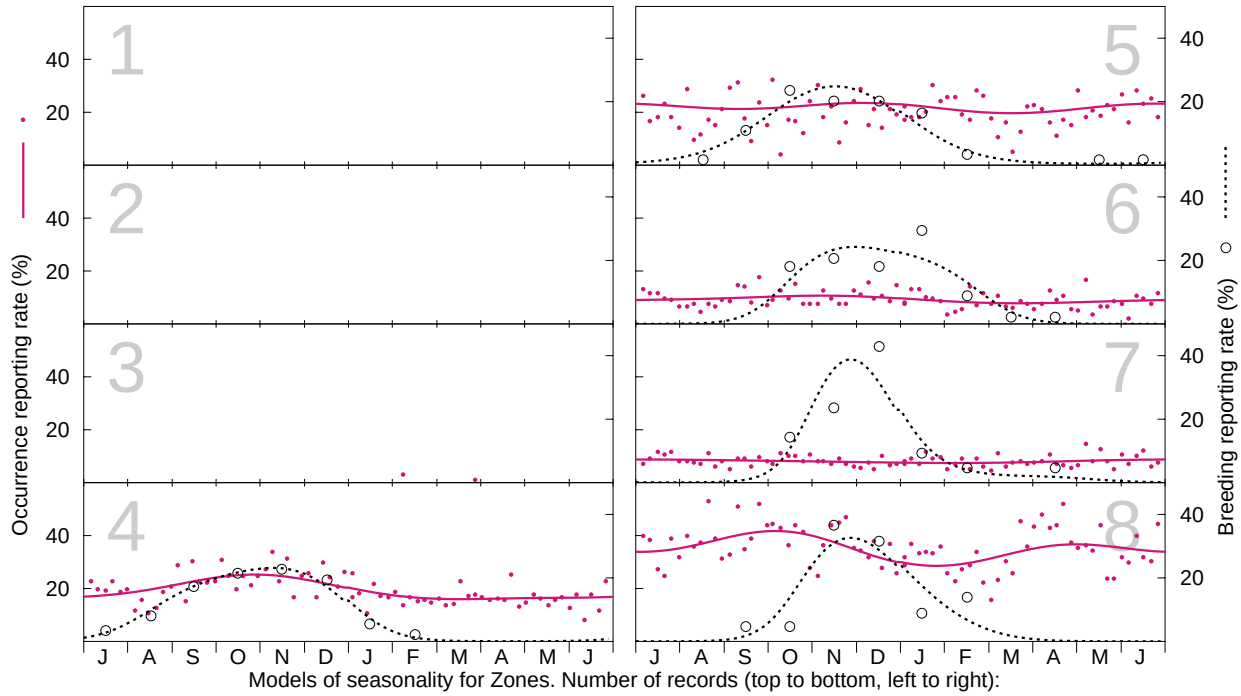
D.H. Day

Recorded in 968 grid cells, 21.3%
Total number of records: 20 169
Mean reporting rate for range: 23.0%

Reporting rates for vegetation types







Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 0, 0, 2, 1684, 1908, 1047, 1582, 1938; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 88, 55, 44, 21, 22.