

It occurs singly or in pairs but is furtive and seldom seen, and is almost invariably recorded on the basis of its distinctive call. The male sometimes calls from an exposed reed. The atlas records present an accurate range, but arguably represent an underestimate of abundance.

Habitat: It inhabits rank growth and reeds along the edges of streams, rivers and marshes, or in weeds and long tangled vegetation on damp ground. In the Mkuzi Game Reserve (2732C) it occurs in tangled undergrowth of tall riverine forest, which is occasionally inundated. In KwaZulu-Natal it is sometimes found on the edges of sugarcane fields adjacent to wetlands. Clancey (1971c) noted that it may occur in weeds and rank vegetation far from water in Mozambique. Its primary habitat association is with wetlands, hence its occurrence in a range of vegetation types reflects the distribution of suitable wetlands.

Movements: It is resident (Irwin 1981; Maclean 1993b). The models show a slight winter decrease, presumably reflecting a decline in vocalizations. The winter decline is less marked than in other cisticolas, evidence that this species calls at a relatively high rate throughout the year.

Breeding: It breeds in mid- to late summer, October–April (mainly December–February) (Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Interspecific relationships: It is most closely related to the Singing Cisticola *C. cantans* (Lynes 1930), but generally occupies a wetter habitat at lower altitudes than that species in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981). In an area near Harare (1731CC) where both species occurred, the Singing Cisticola occupied relatively short grass with shrubs, whereas the Redfaced Cisticola occurred in longer grass (Irwin 1981). The Blackbacked Cisticola *C. galactotes* also occupies subtropical wetland habitat, but generally prefers emergent vegetation over water. Irwin (1981) suggested that in Zimbabwe the Redfaced Cisticola may compete with both Wailing *C. lais* and Lazy *C. aberrans* Cisticolas in certain areas. *Acrocephalus* reed warblers are also prominently present in its habitat.

Historical distribution and conservation: The past distribution is not known to have differed from the present. Destruction of riverine vegetation and loss of wetlands have probably had a negative impact. The Redfaced Cisticola is not regarded as threatened.

A. Berruti

Redfaced Cisticola

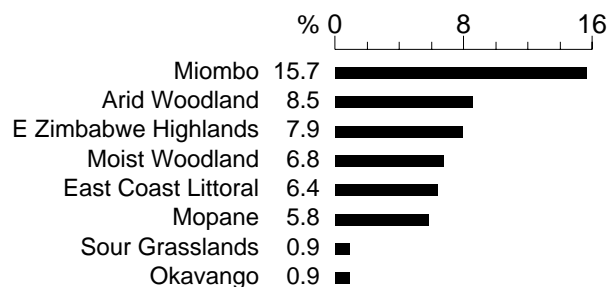
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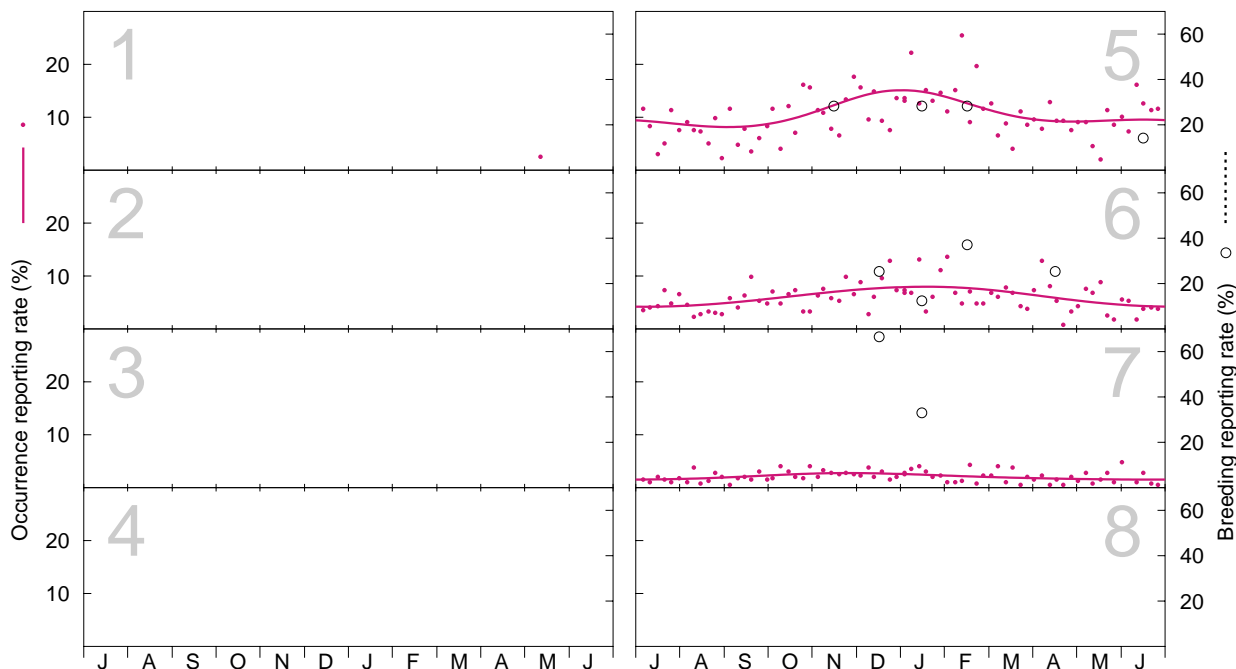
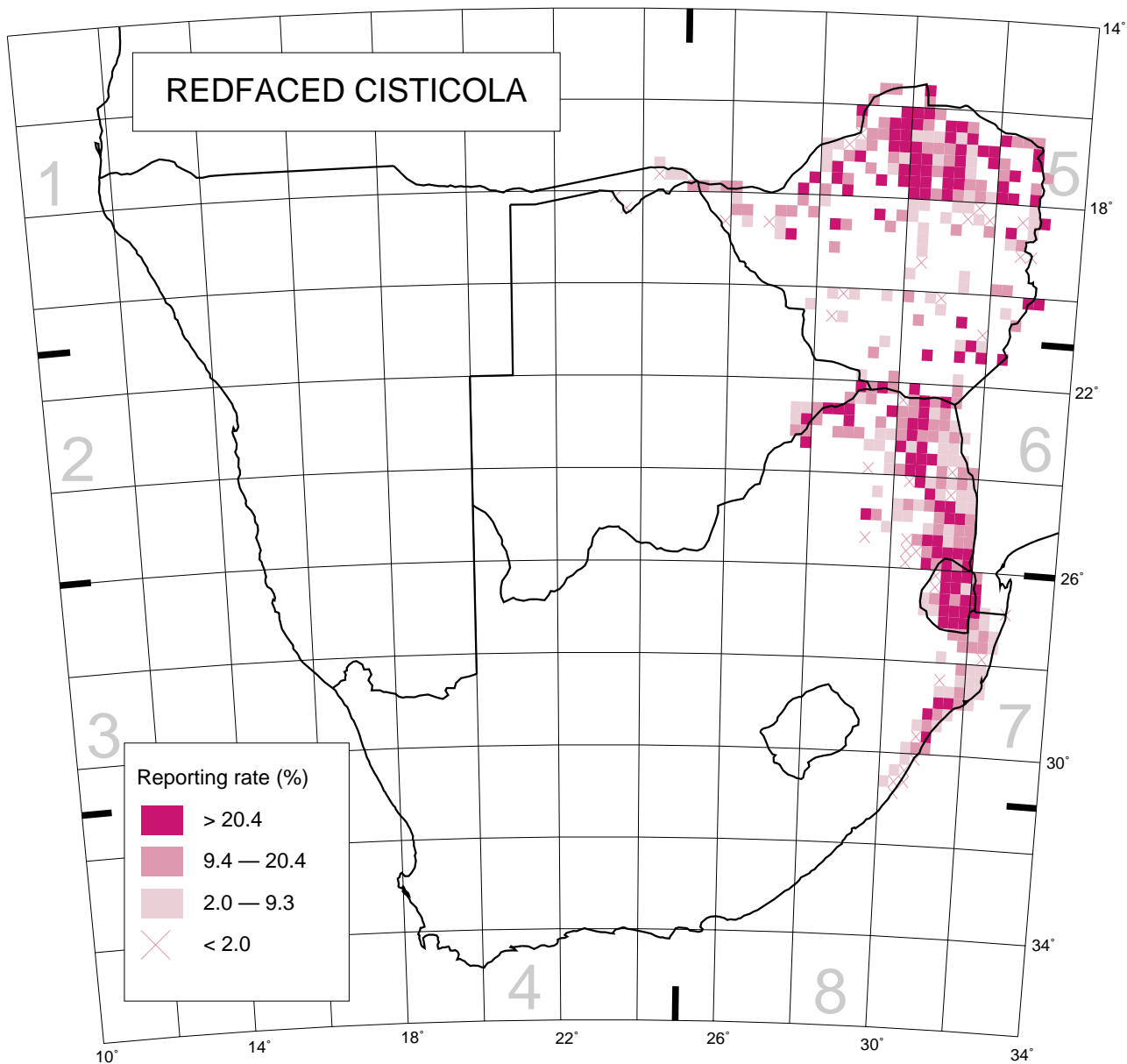
Cisticola erythrops

The Redfaced Cisticola is widespread but localized, occurring in wetter, tropical and subtropical areas throughout Africa. In South Africa, the Redfaced Cisticola is confined to low-lying and mesic eastern and northern areas, from KwaZulu-Natal to the eastern and northern Transvaal, where it occurs mainly in the lowveld (<700 m), extending westwards along the major rivers (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It is widespread in Swaziland and Zimbabwe (<1100 m). It reaches Namibia in the Caprivi, west to the Kwando River and extends marginally into Botswana in the north along the Chobe River to Kasane (1725C) (Randall 1993a) and in the east along the Limpopo River to Sunnyside (2327BB) (Brewster 1993). Remarkably, it does not seem to occur in the Okavango Delta (contra Penry 1994). It is common in southern Mozambique (Clancey 1971c).

Recorded in 405 grid cells, 8.9%
Total number of records: 4502
Mean reporting rate for range: 14.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 1, 0, 0, 0, 919, 691, 404, 0; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 7, 8, 3, 0.