

## Orangethroated Longclaw

### Oranjekeelkalkoentjie

*Macronyx capensis*

The Orangethroated Longclaw is endemic to southern Africa. It occurs largely in the eastern half of the region from the southwestern Cape Province eastwards narrowly along the coast (nominate race), and fanning out broadly inland into the eastern Cape Province, and northwards through KwaZulu-Natal, Lesotho and the Free State to the Transvaal and Swaziland (races *M. c. colletti* and *latimerae*). It is less abundant in the highlands of Lesotho than in adjacent low-lying regions. An isolated race, *stabiliior* (Clancey 1980b), occurs on the central plateau of Zimbabwe above 1200 m, and east to the eastern highlands.

It usually occurs singly or in pairs, and is conspicuous and easily identified, although it is sometimes confused with the Yellowthroated Longclaw *M. croceus*.

**Habitat:** It occurs in a variety of grassveld types, mostly at fairly high elevations. It does not occur in bushveld though it may occur in grassveld adjacent to woodland. It is also found, usually in association with wetlands, in the fynbos of the winter-rainfall region in the southwestern

Cape Province, and has been recorded on rocky shores and sandy beaches in the intertidal zone in this region (Skead, D. M. 1966a). It prefers moist grassveld, becoming uncommon in drier areas and neighbouring bushveld; it regularly occurs near vleis and dams. It seems to prefer flat, open countryside with thick grass which provides cover (Ashton 1945; Maclean 1957; Winterbottom 1966b; Skead 1967b). It avoids ploughed fields (Winterbottom 1968c) but occurs in pastures (Bowland 1984), burnt grassveld and in short fynbos.

**Movements:** It appears to be resident throughout its range. There is no reference in the literature to suggest local movements. It may form small groups in winter, often in association with pipits on burnt ground (Clancey 1964b; Keith *et al.* 1992).

**Breeding:** Atlas records are mainly October–March in the east, peaking November–December, confirming published egg-laying data (Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). In the southwestern Cape Province breeding is earlier, starting in July, with an egg-laying peak August–September (Winterbottom 1968c).

**Interspecific relationships:** Three species of long-claw occur in close proximity in parts of Zimbabwe and coastal KwaZulu-Natal. In Zimbabwe, Irwin (1981) noted that an intricate ecological relationship exists between the species with much interspecific competition. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Orangethroated Longclaw is an uncommon species in the lowlands and midlands where the Yellowthroated Longclaw is common.

**Historical distribution and conservation:** Its range has probably changed little over the years. McLachlan & Liversidge (1957), however, showed it to occur in eastern Botswana, probably in error. During the atlas period it was recorded only in the extreme southeast of that country (cf. Penry 1994). Over much of its range the Orangethroated Longclaw is a fairly common breeding resident and not threatened (Earlé & Grobler 1987; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Hockey *et al.* 1989).

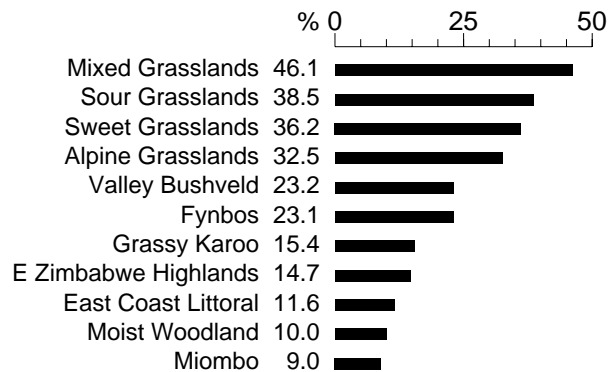
D.H. Day

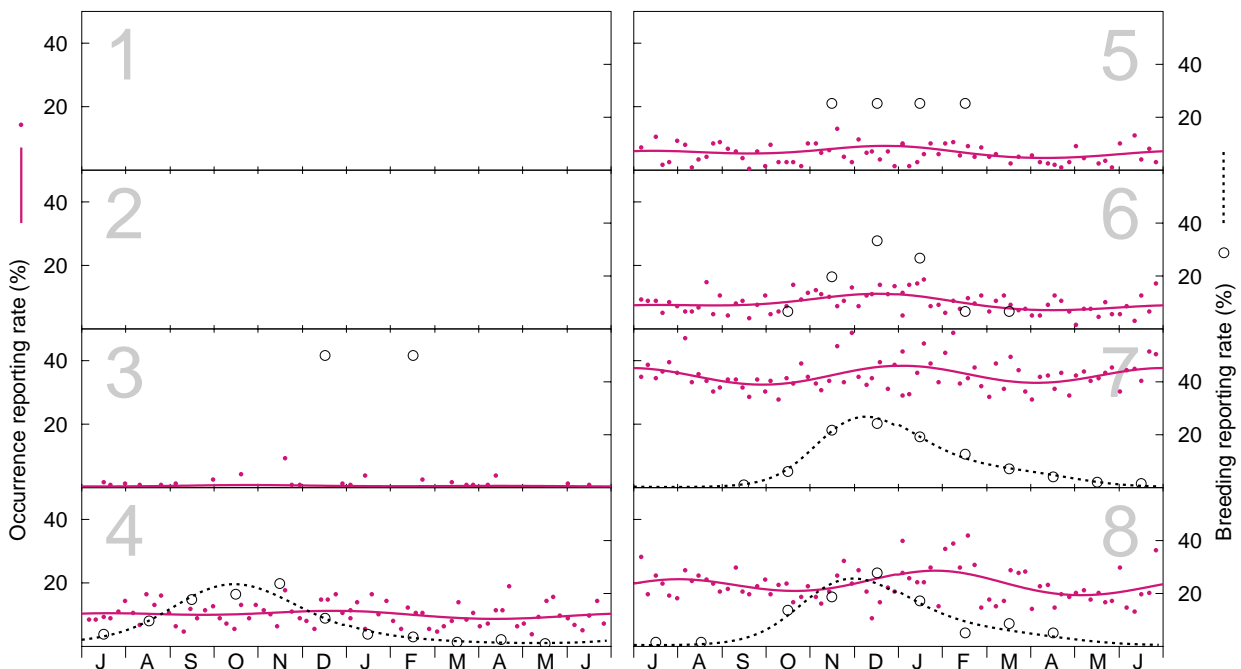
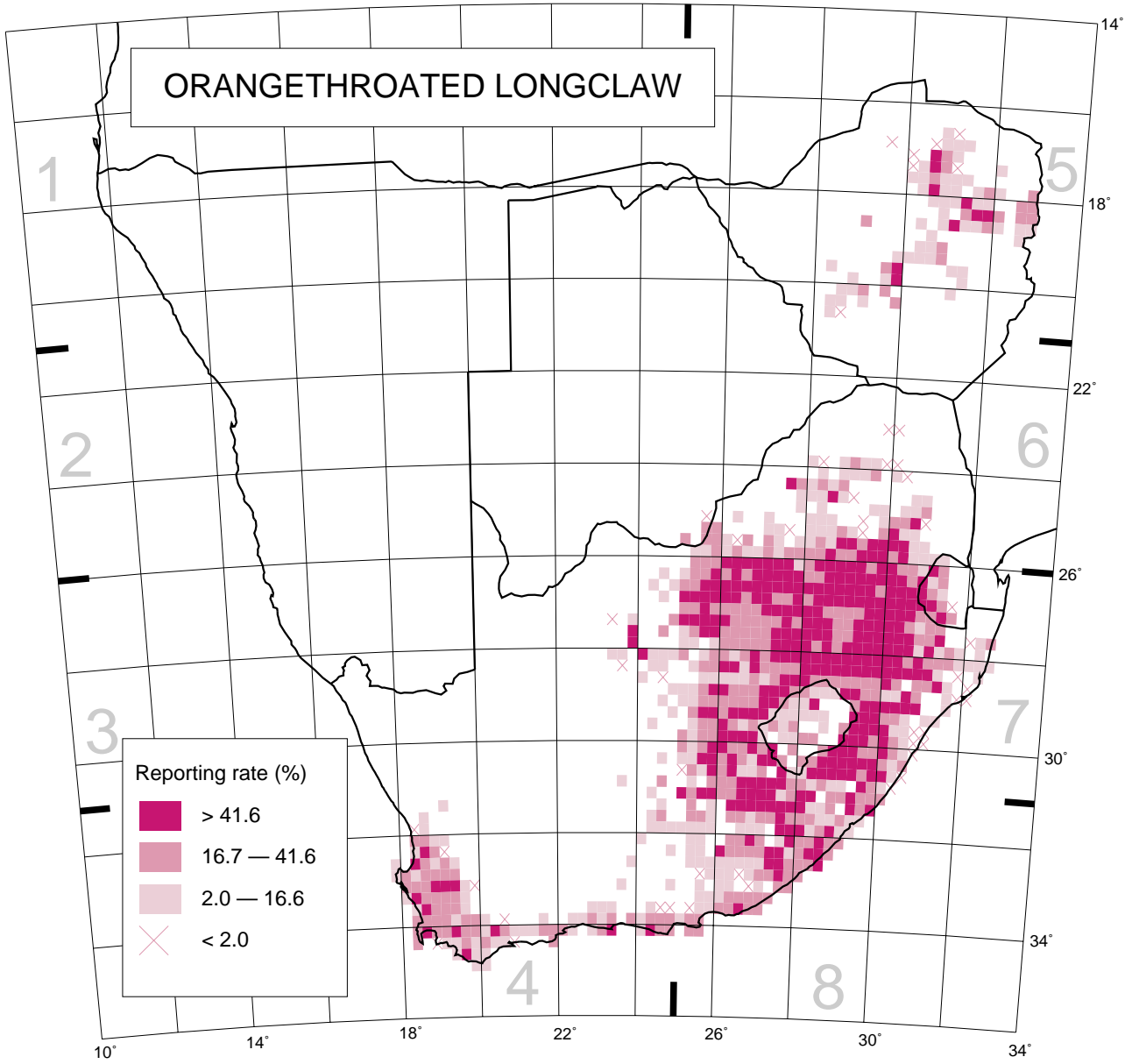
Recorded in 986 grid cells, 21.7%

Total number of records: 26 950

Mean reporting rate for range: 29.2%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):  
 Occurrence: 0, 0, 30, 870, 489, 915, 6918, 1071; Breeding: 0, 0, 2, 111, 4, 15, 128, 58.