

Whitecrowned Shrike

Kremetartlaksman

Eurocephalus anguitimens

The Whitecrowned Shrike is virtually endemic to southern Africa. Outside of the atlas region its range extends only into Angola and southern Mozambique (Harris & Arnott 1988). It has been recorded in the northern Cape Province, the northern Transvaal, southern and central Zimbabwe, Botswana and northern Namibia. The distribution map indicates that it is most common in and around the Limpopo Valley along the western border of the Transvaal, and in eastern Botswana. The two subspecies in the region (Clancey 1980b) appear to have continuous ranges in Zimbabwe, but may be separated by a break along the escarpment in the Transvaal.

It is usually encountered in family groups of 4–8 birds during summer, and larger groups of up to 20 birds during winter, but also occasionally singly or in pairs. The winter home range of one group was estimated to be about 200 ha (Harris & Arnott 1988). Because of its striking appearance and use of exposed perches, it is a conspicuous bird and unlikely to have been overlooked or misidentified.

Habitat: It is almost entirely confined to areas below 1500 m with rainfall 250–650 mm p.a. It occurs in arid woodland. It requires trees for perching and nesting, and it forages in open areas with short ground cover. Its Afrikaans name suggests an association with the baobab *Adansonia digitata*; while it does often utilize baobabs where these occur, its distribution is more widespread than that of the tree. It has not adapted to man-made environments and is encountered only in association with indigenous vegetation. The vegetation analysis shows that it is associated both with broadleaved and *Acacia* woodlands, and confirms that it prefers the more arid woodland types.

Movements: It is regarded as a breeding resident which is nomadic during winter (Harris & Arnott 1988). The models show higher reporting rates during the winter months compared with the summer. It uses exposed perches, including fences and overhead lines along roadsides, possibly more often in winter than in summer. During the summer, breeding activities tend to keep the birds within the cover of foliage.

Breeding: The basic pattern of summer breeding appears to vary with latitude and longitude, with Zimbabwe (Zone 5) and northern Namibia and Botswana (Zone 1) having an earlier breeding peak than the Transvaal (Zone 6). The breeding season appears more protracted (or more variable between years) in the west, compared with the east. Irwin (1981) reported egg-laying September–January, with an October–November peak. In the Transvaal, egg-laying occurs October–December (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Breeding was not reported later than January by Maclean (1993b), and although several of the late records in the atlas may refer to dependent fledglings, egg-laying has been recorded as late as April (Skinner 1995a; Brown & Clinning in press).

Interspecific relationships: It has broadly similar habitat requirements to the Fiscal *Lanius collaris* and Longtailed *Corvinella melanoleuca*

Shrikes, but prefers denser woodlands in more arid environments than the Fiscal Shrike, and shows greater tolerance for mixed, as opposed to pure, *Acacia* woodlands than does the Longtailed Shrike.

Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence that its distribution has changed in historical times. The Whitecrowned Shrike does not face any immediate threats, as most of its range coincides with relatively sparse human populations and is too arid for intensive agriculture.

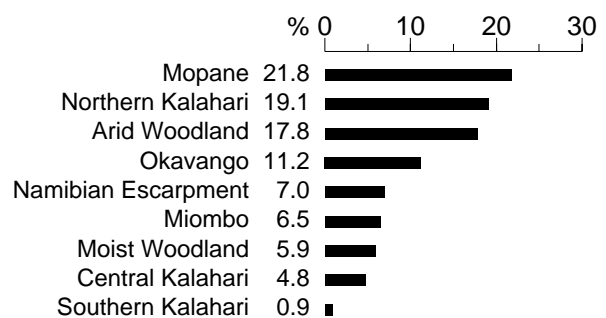
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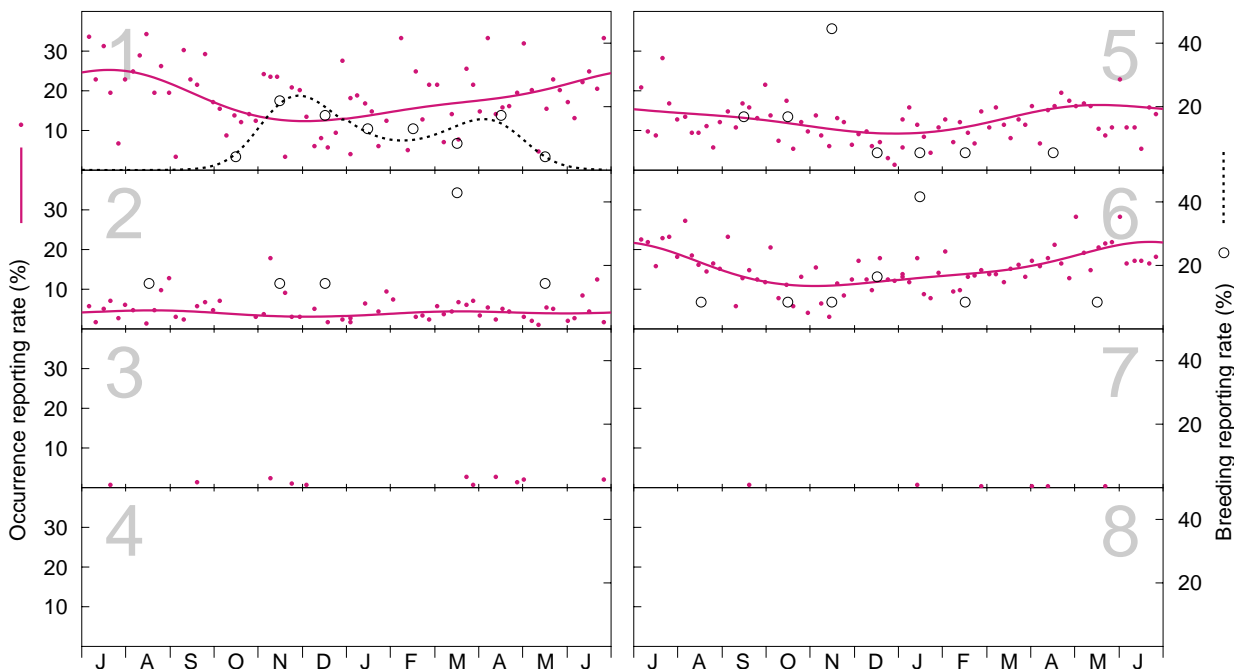
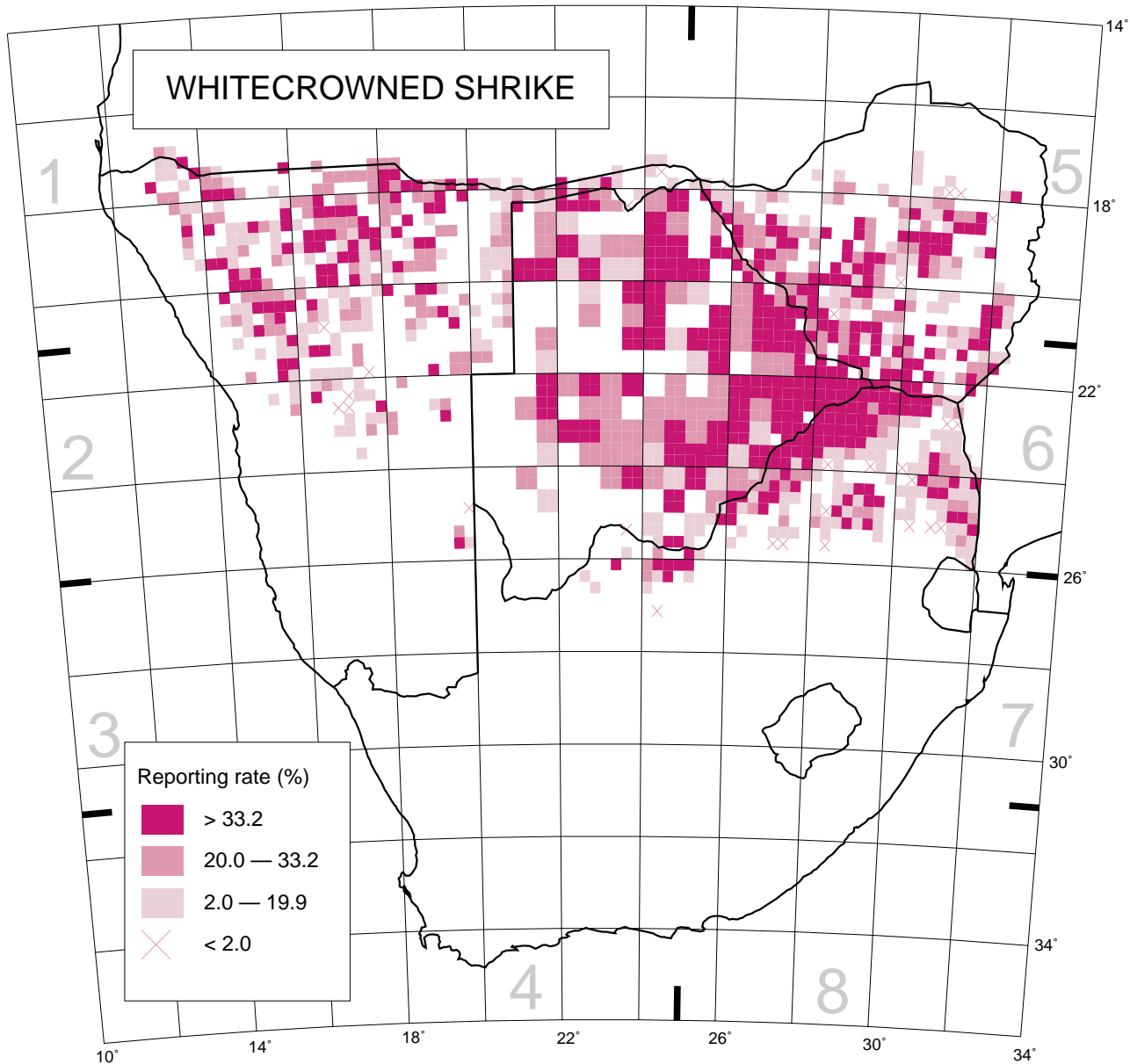
Recorded in 1262 grid cells, 27.8%

Total number of records: 6955

Mean reporting rate for range: 22.4%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 624, 147, 17, 0, 1136, 1760, 8, 0; Breeding: 23, 7, 0, 0, 18, 12, 0, 0.