

Lizard Buzzard

Akkedisvalk

Kaupifalco monogrammicus

This enigmatic raptor, belonging to a genus of its own, is restricted to Africa. The Lizard Buzzard's range extends over much of the continent south of the Sahara and it is especially common in many parts of West Africa (Del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). Two subspecies are recognized in southern Africa, the nominate *K. m. monogrammicus* in the eastern regions and *meridionalis* in northern Namibia and northern Botswana (Clancey 1980b).

In southern Africa it is most abundant in the northeast, in parts of Zimbabwe. It is the commonest small raptor in miombo woodlands (Irwin 1981). The westwards extension of its distribution across northern Botswana, the Caprivi Strip and into northern Namibia, is the southern extremity of a range extending across Zambia and Angola and resembles the distribution of other primarily tropical, eastern species that have ranges penetrating the arid woodlands of Namibia.

Habitat: Its distribution closely approximates that of broad-leaved woodlands. Seasonal changes in habitat choice are suggested by a greater dependence on moist woodlands in summer, while more arid habitats tend to be occupied in winter (Tarboton & Allan 1984). Sightings on the margins of its range appear to be made more often in winter, when it disperses into relatively arid habitats (see Cyrus & Robson 1980). Conversely, in Swaziland, it occupies the moister and denser woodlands of the highveld and middleveld in winter (Parker 1994).

Movements: Atlas reporting rates show large seasonal changes, with higher reporting rates in winter than in summer. The pattern of change in reporting rates is unlike that found for regular, obligate migrants where frequencies of sightings typically change rather steeply in spring and autumn. Rather than being a migration of whole populations from one area to another, the pattern is probably the result of local movements from moist woodland, occupied largely in summer, to more open and arid woodland in winter where the species is probably more conspicuous and thus reported more frequently. Alternatively, winter influxes could represent birds moving into southern Africa from further north or perhaps Mozambique, but no supporting evidence exists. In Zimbabwe and the Transvaal, inter-annual variation in the extent of the observed winter increase in records has been noted (Tarboton & Allan 1984; A.J. Tree *in litt.*).

Observations of one colour-marked bird suggested that seasonal, local movements may be made regularly by the same individuals. This bird appeared during two winters (1977 and 1978) at Settlers (2428DC), where it occupied a small home range before disappearing from the area each summer (pers. obs).

Ringling data have shed little light on these movements (SAFRING). Two birds were recovered, respectively, 110 and 63 km away from the ringling site. Four other shorter movements of 6–19 km have been reported. One bird was recovered at the ringling site 8.5 years later. All these ringling records are from the Transvaal. Clearly, many questions concerning this species' movements remain to be answered.

Breeding: It breeds during summer, the great majority of records being from Zimbabwe where it probably nests most frequently in miombo and other moist woodland habitats.

Historical distribution and conservation: Given its association with indigenous woodlands, it is unlikely that distribution patterns have changed during historical times. While local clearing of woodland restricts their habitat, the continued presence of various kinds of woodland over large areas suggests that the species faces few conservation problems, although it may now breed less frequently in the Transvaal than in the past (Tarboton & Allan 1984).

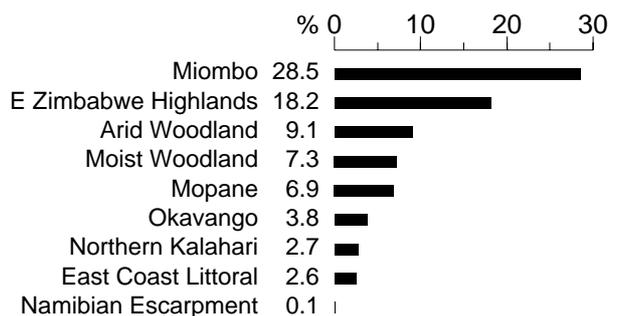
J.M. Mendelsohn

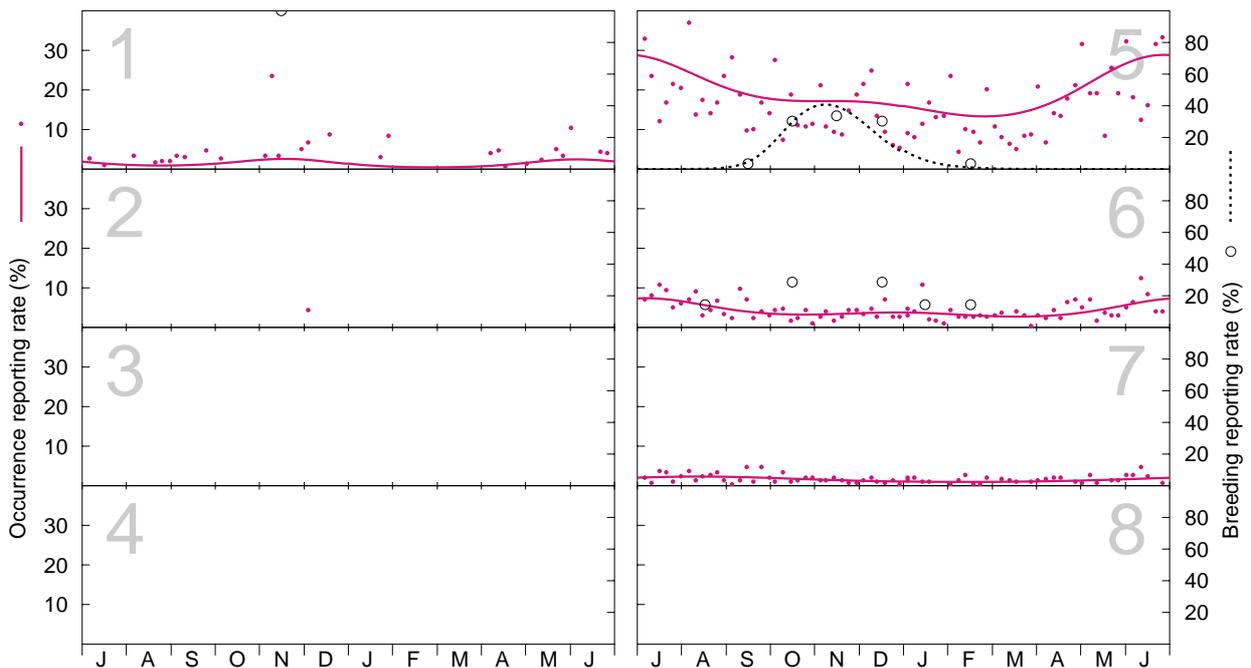
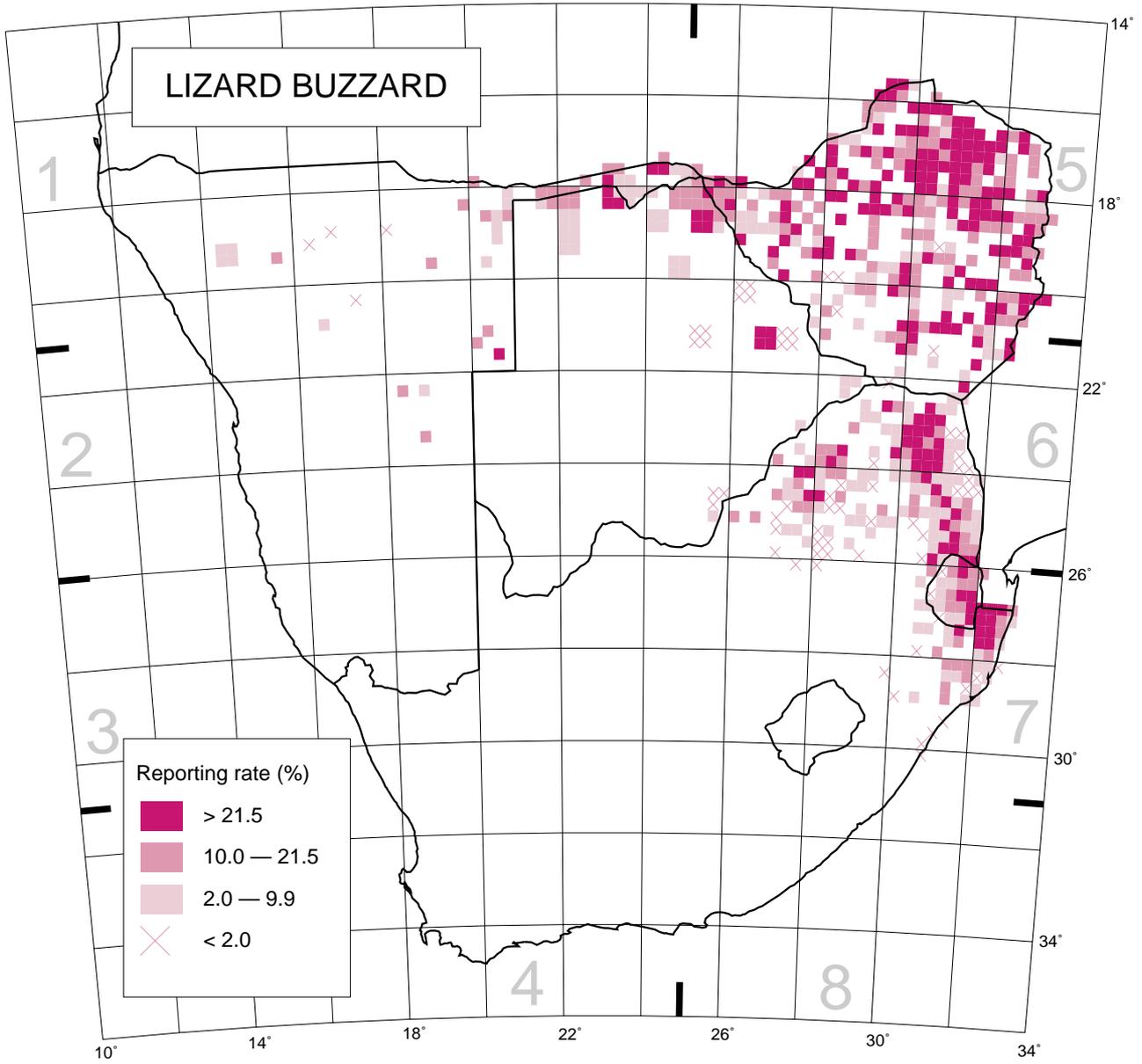
Recorded in 650 grid cells, 14.3%

Total number of records: 5207

Mean reporting rate for range: 12.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 46, 1, 0, 0, 1695, 484, 300, 0; Breeding: 1, 0, 0, 0, 33, 7, 0, 0.