

Little Stint

Kleinstrandloper

Calidris minuta

The Little Stint occurs at wetlands throughout southern Africa, with concentrations in the Transvaal–Free State panveld (Allan *et al.* 1995c), the Manyame Lakes (1730DC,DD) in Zimbabwe, and northern and southeastern Botswana. There is a conspicuous gap in the coastal distribution in southern Namibia. The distribution pattern is closely similar to that of the Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*. However, its reporting rates at inland grid cells are conspicuously higher than for Curlew Sandpiper, reflecting the more coastal distribution of the latter species.

It nests in a narrow longitudinal zone in the typical tundra and arctic tundra subzones. The main breeding concentration is on the Taimyr Peninsula, but it breeds from Finnmark, Norway, in the west to the Chukotsky Peninsula on the Bering Sea in the east (Underhill *et al.* in press a). On the Taimyr Peninsula there are large variations in breeding productivity related to lemming cycles (see text for Curlew Sandpiper). The population size is about 1 400 000 birds, with 200 000 migrating to southern Asia, mainly India, and the remainder to Africa (Rose & Scott 1994).

The 23 000 Little Stints in coastal southern Africa (Summers *et al.* 1987a) are a small fraction of the total number in the region in summer. It is not yet possible to estimate the proportion of the population that spends the nonbreeding season here.

Apart from being confused with rare vagrant stints, it is unlikely to be misidentified.

Habitat: It occurs, usually in flocks, along muddy edges of wetlands throughout southern Africa. On the coast, it occurs in sheltered, intertidal mudflats, usually at the upper reaches of estuaries and inlets to the sea.

Movements: 16 704 have been ringed in southern Africa. Only one has been recovered within the breeding range: a bird ringed at Rondevlei (3418AB) was recovered on 1 June 1966 near Amderma, Yugorsky Peninsula, on the Russian coast north of the Ural Mountains. Recoveries north of Zimbabwe indicate migration along the great circle route through the Great Rift Valley, the Middle East and the West Siberian Plain. These recoveries were on the Kafue Flats, Zambia; at Lakes Magadi and Nakuru, Kenya; at Lake Edward, eastern Zaire; on the southern Caspian Sea, Iran; and at three localities east of the Urals (at 50°N 60°E on 23 September, at 54°N 65°E on 23 August, and at 55°N 73°E on 17 August). These

three were on southward migration after breeding, probably at localities further east than the single breeding-range recovery (SAFRING).

Unlike most of the Palearctic migrant waders reaching southern Africa, it breeds at age one year, and thus birds staying during the austral winter are uncommon. However, Tree (1972b) reported *c.* 600 at Lake Ngami (2022B) in June–July 1970.

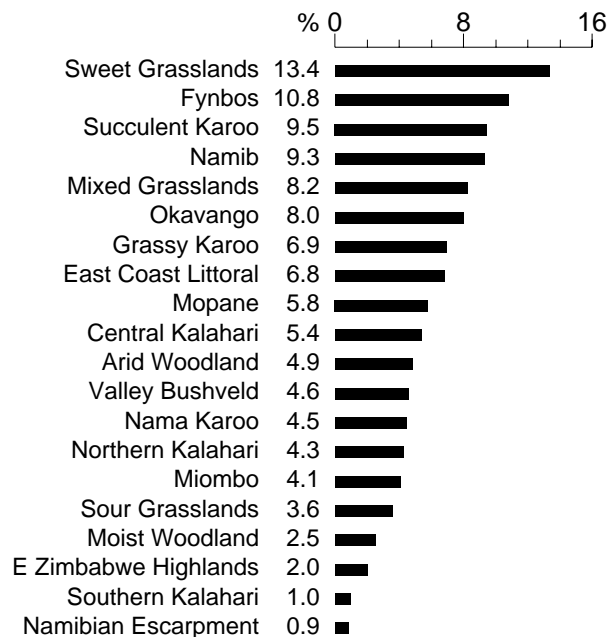
Interspecific relationships: It frequently co-occurs with the Curlew Sandpiper, especially at muddy freshwater wetlands.

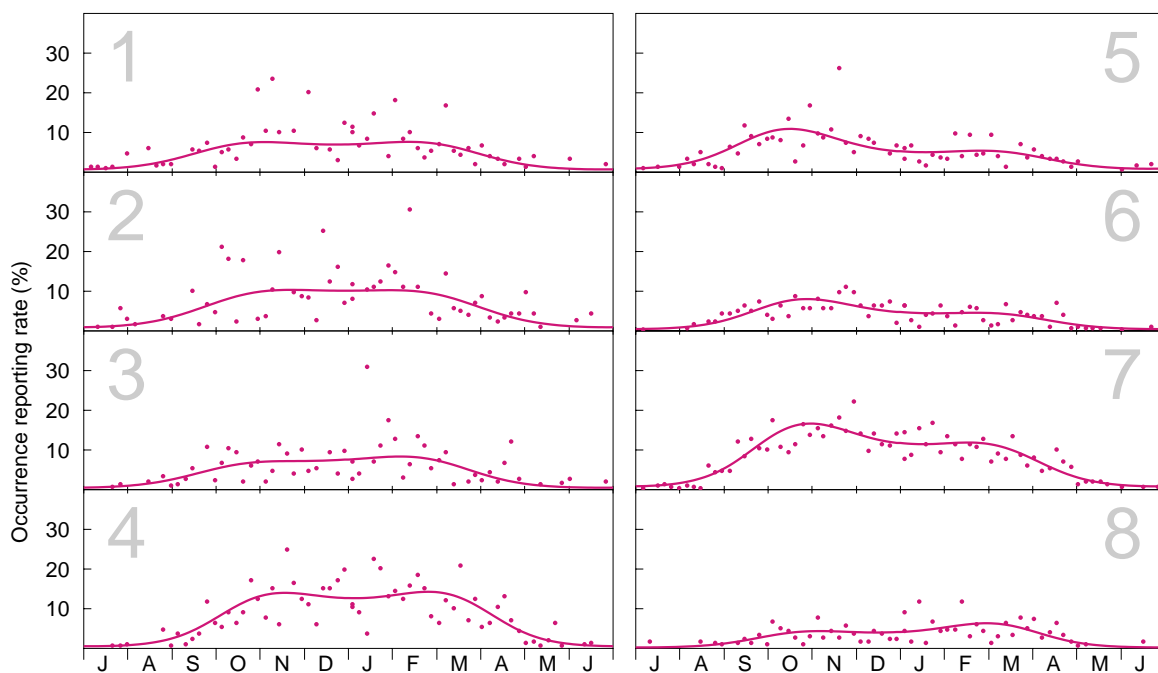
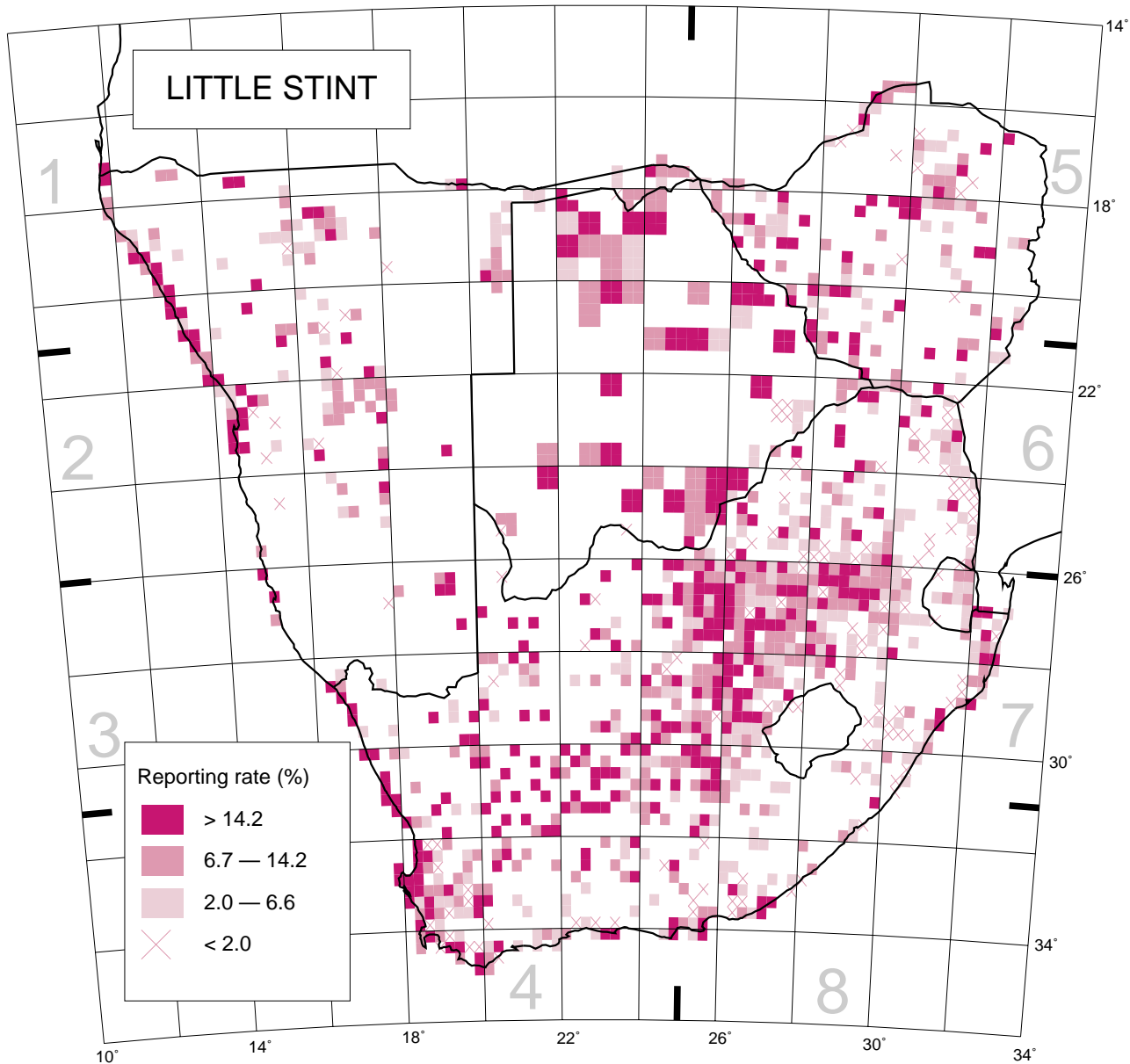
Historical distribution and conservation: There is no evidence that the status in southern Africa has changed during the 20th century. Loss of wetlands represents the major threat, but the Little Stint readily makes use of artificial wetlands, such as sewage works, dams and saltworks.

L.G. Underhill

Recorded in 1250 grid cells, 27.6%
Total number of records: 9422
Mean reporting rate for range: 9.8%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 135, 196, 217, 660, 435, 416, 1612, 165.