

Redeyed Dove

Grootringduif

Streptopelia semitorquata

The Redeyed Dove is found commonly, though sometimes locally, in most of the provinces of South Africa, but only marginally entering the northern Cape Province, from the south and east. An association with rivers is evident in the Karoo, particularly the Orange River, while in Lesotho it apparently extends through the lowlands along the Sequnyane River. It occurs throughout Zimbabwe and the eastern hardveld of Botswana, where it is more common in the north. It is found through most of the Caprivi and across northern Namibia. It appears to be particularly abundant in KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland, where there is an estimated population of 20 000 birds (Parker 1994), parts of north-eastern South Africa, parts of Zimbabwe (especially in the north), and the Okavango, where a separate subspecies *S. s. maxima* occurs (Clancey *et al.* 1991). Extralimitally, it occurs widely in the woodlands of sub-Saharan Africa, and on East African islets, and there is a population in south-western Arabia (Rowan 1983).

It occurs singly or in flocks of up to 50, or sometimes even hundreds of birds (Penry 1994). Confusion with the other ring-necked doves is not likely to have been significant, and the atlas data are generally reliable.

Habitat: Tall trees in the vicinity of water appear to be a prerequisite for this species (Rowan 1983). These are to be found in various vegetation types, though many would be unsuitable if unaltered by man. It occurs extensively in suburban parks and gardens. In natural areas it has a liking for riparian woodland, forest verges and other well-wooded country (Urban *et al.* 1986); because of this it has readily adapted to plantations and groves of alien trees. It frequently nests over water, in swamp vegetation or in *Phragmites* reeds, e.g. in the Okavango and in Zimbabwe (M. Herremans, A.J. Tree pers. comms).

Movements: A slight increase in reporting rates in summer in Zones 4 and 8 is probably related to a relatively distinct breeding season with increased vocalizations at that time, but the slight increase in winter in Zone 7 cannot be similarly linked. Rowan (1983, and references therein) cited evidence of migration further north in Africa, and some southern African evidence for localized seasonal

influxes. There is one long-distance ringing recovery (1101 km), of a bird ringed in the western Cape Province and recovered in the western Transvaal, but the circumstances of the recovery were ambiguous (SAFRING). Of the remaining 49 recoveries (39 of them ringed in the western Cape Province), all were less than 80 km from the ringing site (SAFRING).

Breeding: Breeding was recorded in all parts of its range, and in all months. There is a clear spring–summer peak in Zones 3, 4 and 8, but seasonality becomes less distinct to the north. This agrees with published data (Irwin 1981; Rowan 1983); there is a midsummer low in egg-laying in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

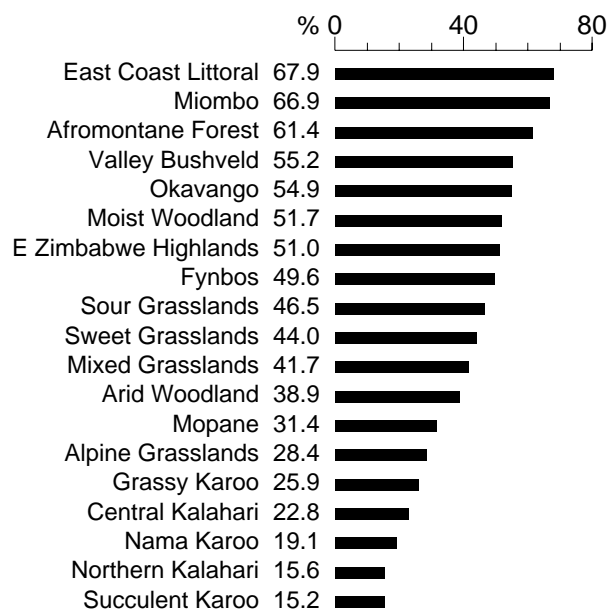
Interspecific relationships: *Streptopelia* doves are remarkably interspecifically tolerant of each other (e.g. Herremans & Herremans-Tonnoeyr 1995) and the maps give no clear evidence for competitive exclusion, with the highest reporting rates of all four species overlapping in several areas. Rowan (1983) stated for the Redeyed Dove and the Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis*, in undisturbed environments in the highveld, KwaZulu-Natal and southwestern Cape Province, 'each tends to be dominant, though not exclusively present, in its own preferred habitat.'

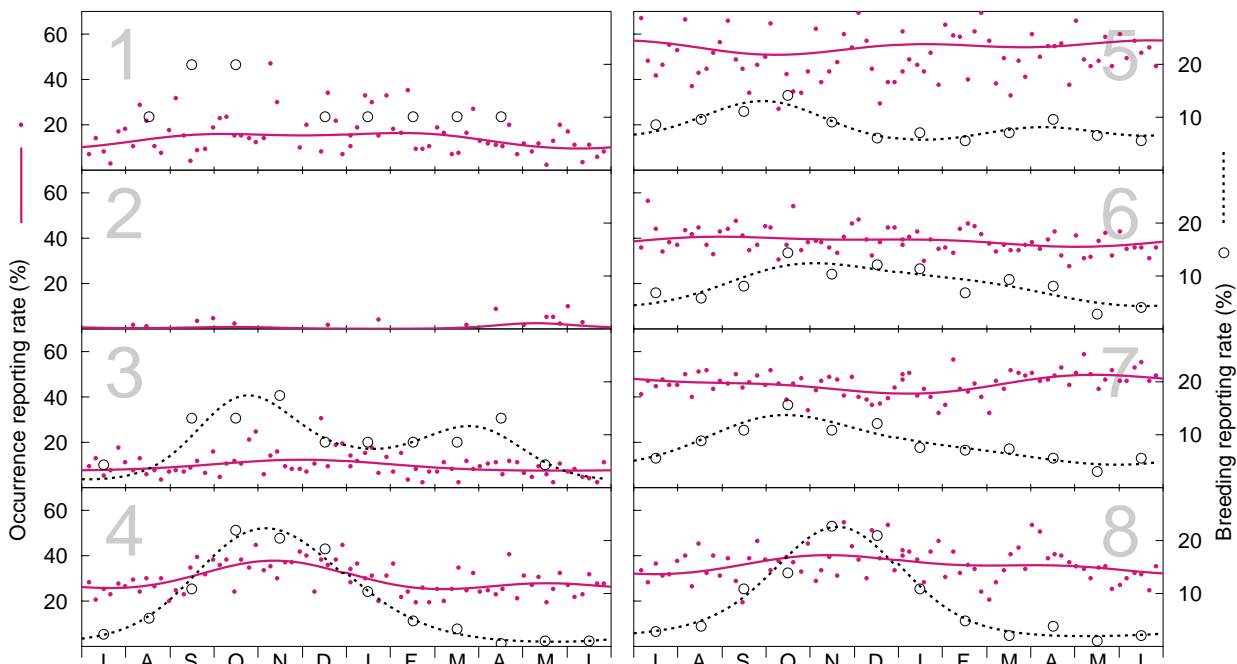
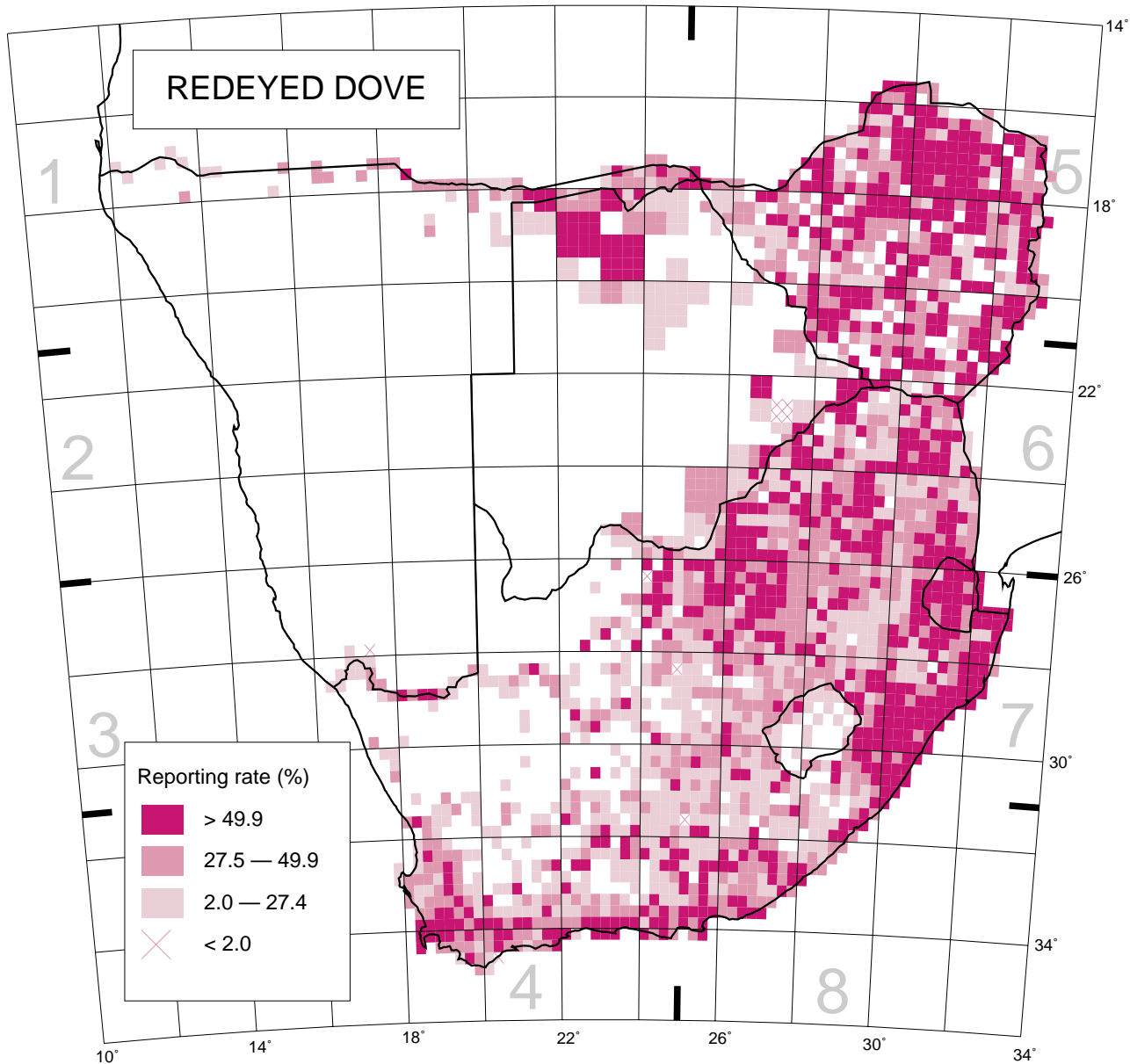
Historical distribution and conservation: There is good evidence that the Redeyed Dove has considerably expanded its range in southern Africa since about 1920 (Rowan 1983), owing mainly to the planting of trees and provision of artificial watering points, and this expansion is probably continuing in the west. A decline in the south-western Cape Province population, from the mid-17th century until about 1900, and its subsequent recovery, have been documented (Brooke 1984a).

B.D. Colahan

Recorded in 2178 grid cells, 48.0%
Total number of records: 60 890
Mean reporting rate for range: 49.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 446, 29, 506, 2575, 4745, 4418, 8936, 1981; Breeding: 10, 0, 23, 186, 198, 174, 406, 101.