



**Collared Palm Thrush** Palmmôrelyster *Cichladusa arquata* 

The Collared Palm Thrush has a restricted and discontinuous range from southern Mozambique, north to southeastern Zaire and Kenya. Within the atlas region, it occurs in the Save Valley in southeastern Zimbabwe and it ranges west along the Zambezi River and some of its tributaries to Kasane (1725C) in northern Botswana. It was apparently driven out of the Lake Kariba area of the Zambezi River when the dam was built (Irwin 1981), but it is found regularly in Matusadona National Park (1628DC) and has been found breeding near the town of Kariba (1628DB) (Hustler 1985d; Tree 1993c). There is one claimed sight record from the Kruger National Park (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It was first recorded from Botswana in April 1994 and has since bred at the Mowana Lodge near Kasane (1725C) (Randall 1996).

Although widespread, it is highly localized, being generally dependent upon thickets in palm savanna of *Hyphaene* and *Borassus* palms in some of the main river valleys, but even so it is sometimes inexplicably absent where these occur, such as in the Caprivi Strip, the Okavango Delta, parts of the Makgadikgadi and in groves of Ilala Palms *Hyphaene natalensis* in the

Limpopo Valley. It is found less often in Combretum and Mopane woodland (Irwin 1981), and then usually where such woodland is in close proximity to palms or is riparian woodland with thickets. In parts of its range it is associated with gardens near human habitation (Benson et al. 1973; Benson & Benson 1977; Curtis 1991; Stuart et al. 1992; Hanmer 1993), and locally breeds and roosts in buildings (Benson et al. 1973; Saunders 1981; Randall 1996); such occurrences in Zimbabwe have been ascribed to drought conditions (Hanmer & Chadder 1993).

Recorded in 29 grid cells, 0.6% Total number of records: 187 Mean reporting rate for range: 15.9%

Breeding has been recorded October–February in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981).

The reporting rates were marginally lower during the earlier months of the year, probably reflecting greater difficulty in sighting in denser vegetation after the summer rains, combined with greater secretiveness during moult. It is not known to move seasonally.

The Collared Palm Thrush is localized and generally uncommon; it merits monitoring, as its riparian habitat is generally under pressure.

C.J.W. Pollard and M. Herremans

