



Southern Pochard

Bruineend

Netta erythrophthalma

N. e. brunnea is distributed from South Africa to Ethiopia. The nominate subspecies occurs in tropical South America. Southern African populations are concentrated in the southwestern Cape Province, South African highveld, southeastern Botswana, and northern Botswana to the Zimbabwean plateau.

This common duck is a resident and spring/summer visitor in flocks of up to 5000 birds in the southwestern Cape Province (Middlemiss 1958). It is thinly distributed and nomadic in the Free State and Transvaal, and scarce in the western sandveld, northern Transvaal and Swaziland (Earlé & Grobler 1987; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Parker 1994). Up to 200 birds may occur on the Nyl floodplain (2428CB) after good rains. On the Witwatersrand, numbers in the 1950s fluctuated from around 50 birds in midwinter to nearly 300 birds in summer (Winterbottom 1964c). In KwaZulu-Natal it is most common inland (Cyrus & Robson 1980). In Zimbabwe it is concentrated on the central plateau and is rare in the Zambezi Valley and western Matabeleland (Irwin 1981). It was uncommon and seasonal in Botswana (Smithers 1964), but the atlas data for Botswana show reasonable abundance in suitable habitats. In southern Mozambique it is often sparse, but may be abundant at times (Clancey 1971a; Milstein 1984).

The Southern Pochard may be confused with the Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*.

Habitat: It chooses deep seasonal or permanent freshwater pans, vleis, sewage ponds and dams, usually with clear water, with or without emergent vegetation, and seasonal floodplains.

Movements: Many migrate into the southwestern Cape Province in August–September for moulting (Hockey *et al.* 1989). Birds ringed at Barberspan (2625DA) have been recovered in Zimbabwe November–April, seemingly indicating true migration (Irwin 1981). Over 5% of recoveries indicate movements of more than 100 km (Oatley & Prÿs-Jones 1986). Regular counts from 1969–74 at the Darvill Sewage Works (2930CB) showed clear spring or summer peaks of 100–200 birds in some years, usually in the period October–January, but sometimes earlier August–September, and rarely later January–March, alternating with periods with populations of fewer than 10 birds in winter (G.L.M. pers. obs). This indicates regular seasonal movements, confirming previous information (Middlemiss 1958). Birds ringed at Modder East Dam (2628AB) were recovered in Botswana, Namibia and Lake Naivasha, Kenya (Middlemiss 1958).

Clear seasonal fluctuations in reporting rates are evident for Zones 1, 4 and 7. The seasonal distribution maps show a dramatic fluctuation in abundance in the southwestern Cape Province (Zone 4), with a July–December peak. This corresponds with the period in which water-levels are high in the winter-rainfall area. In the South African highveld (Zone 7)

there is a more subtle but nevertheless discernible November–February peak in reporting rates, which corresponds with the wet season in that region. There is, therefore, an indication of partial movement between the summer- and winter-rainfall regions, and possibly also some movement northwards out of southern Africa during late autumn and early winter.

Breeding: Egg-laying occurs during the late winter to early summer (July–December) in the winter-rainfall southwestern Cape Province, and largely during late summer to early winter in the central highveld: December–May in the Transvaal, February–June in the Free State, and mainly January–July in Zimbabwe (Winterbottom 1968a; Clark 1980a; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The models confirm this pattern. Atlas data from Zimbabwe are few but suggest a late winter/spring breeding season and Irwin (1981) recorded breeding virtually throughout the year, but mainly January–July. The atlas data from Zone 1 (probably from the Okavango) are also few but suggest an autumn/early winter (March–June) breeding season.

Interspecific relationships: It is often found in the company of the Maccoa Duck and the Blacknecked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* on the same clear, deep waters (Hockey *et al.* 1989) but tends to segregate when larger numbers are present (Middlemiss 1958). Smaller numbers mix readily with Yellowbilled Ducks *Anas undulata* and Cape Shovellers *A. smithii* (Middlemiss 1958).

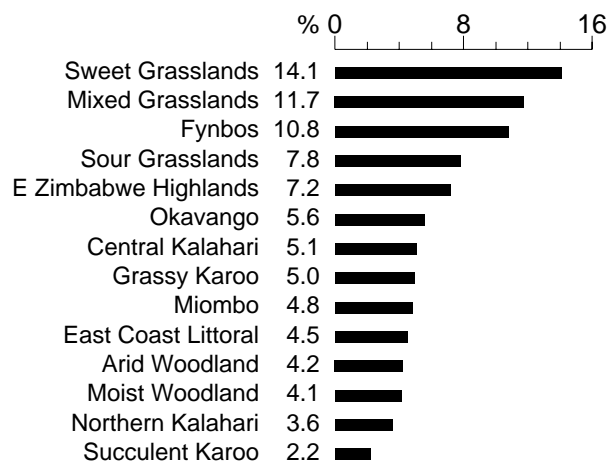
Historical distribution and conservation: The patterns of seasonal movement are likely to have been better defined and less partial in the past. The construction of thousands of impoundments across southern Africa must have had a profound effect on the ecological factors providing the impetus to undertake seasonal movements. In the southwestern Cape Province, for example, most natural wetlands are seasonal and ephemeral, whereas many impoundments offer permanent waters. The unseasonal availability of suitable habitat must have a marked impact on the movements of the Southern Pochard and many other waterbirds.

Although it is common and widespread, its preference for clear, deep waters requires that such waters be given special conservation attention, especially as refuges during drought years.

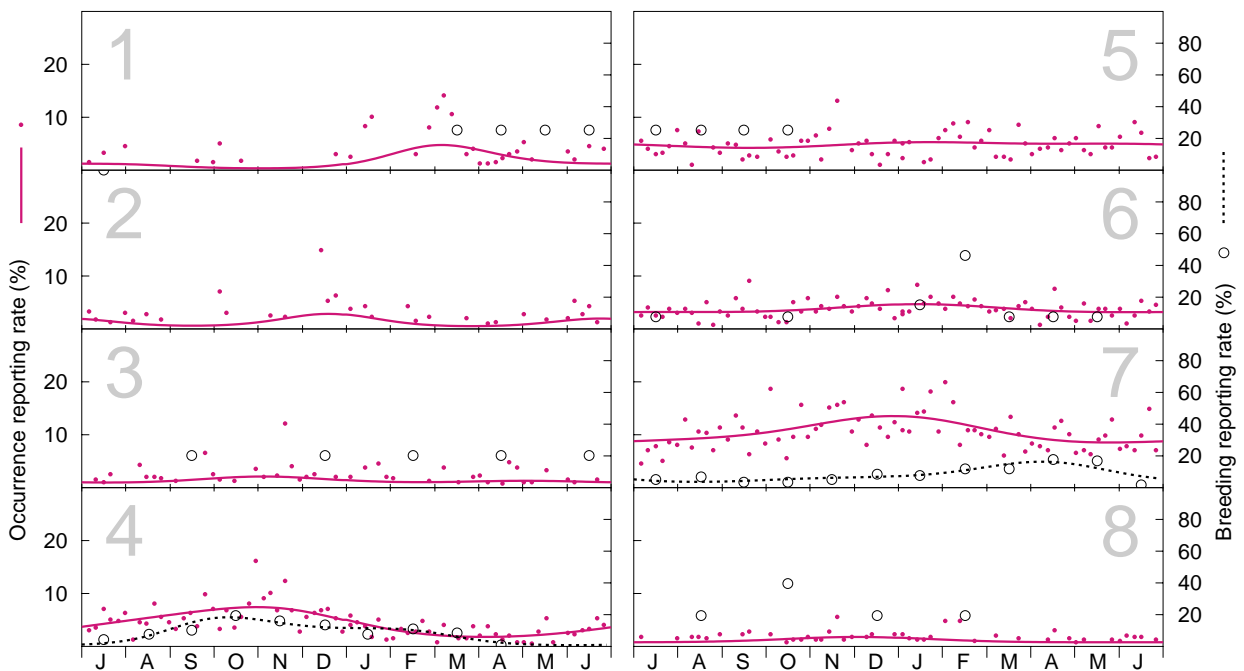
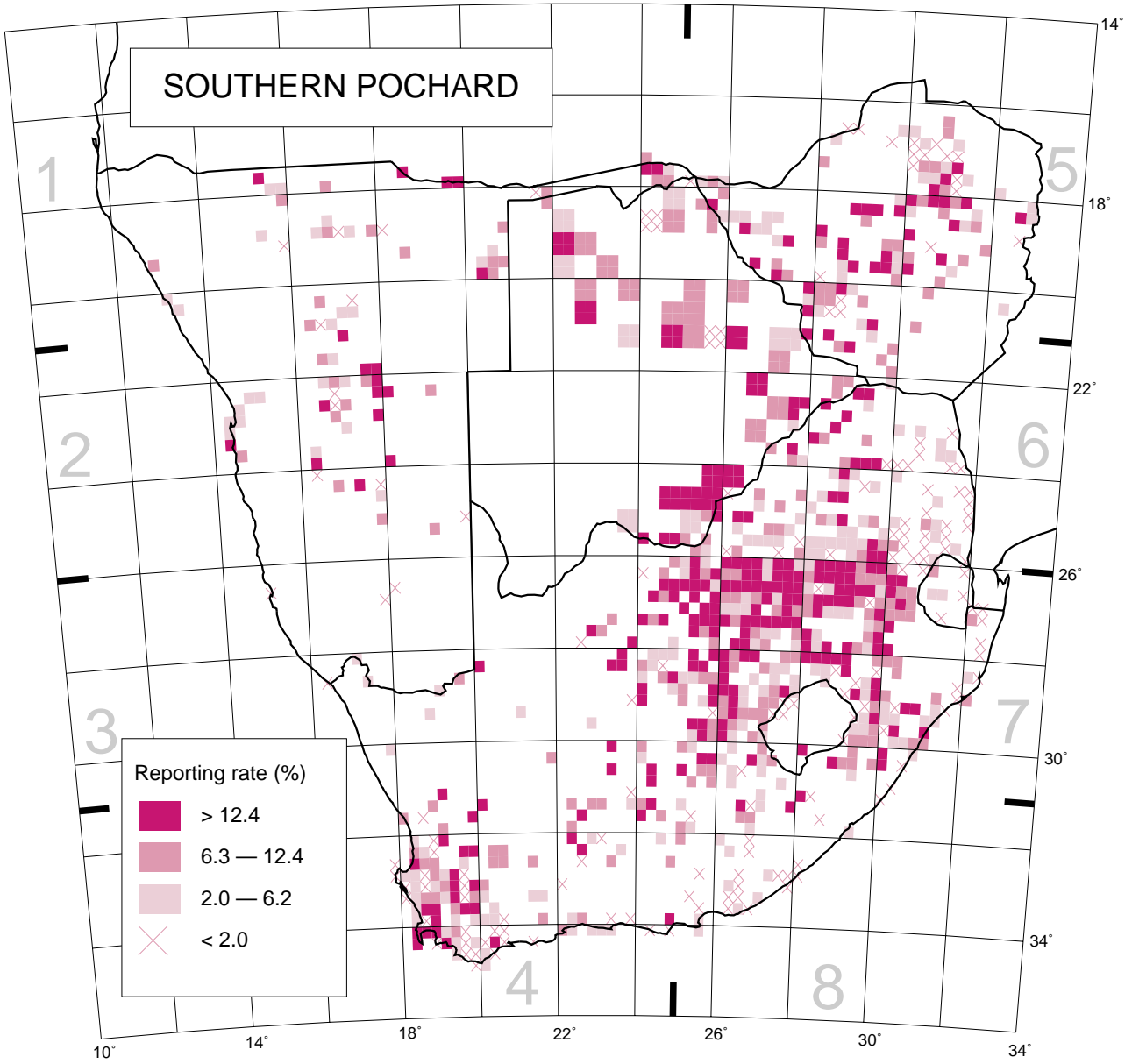
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Recorded in 1002 grid cells, 22.1%
Total number of records: 9140
Mean reporting rate for range: 9.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

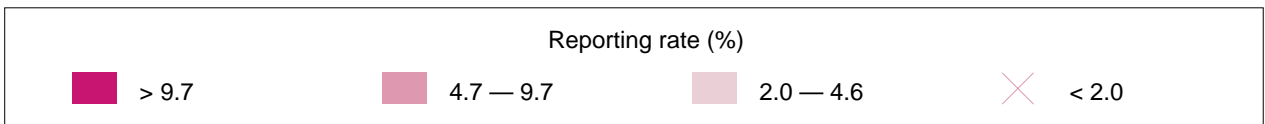
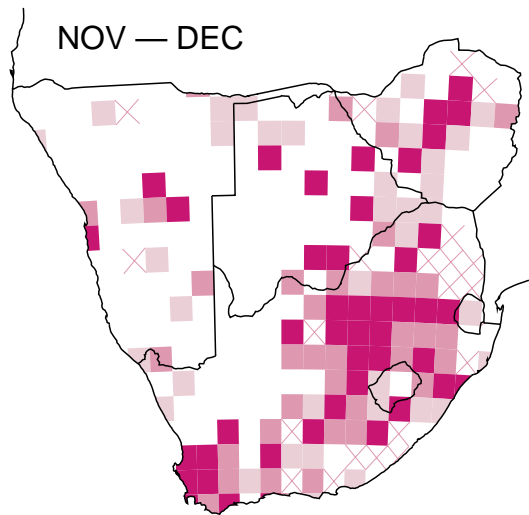
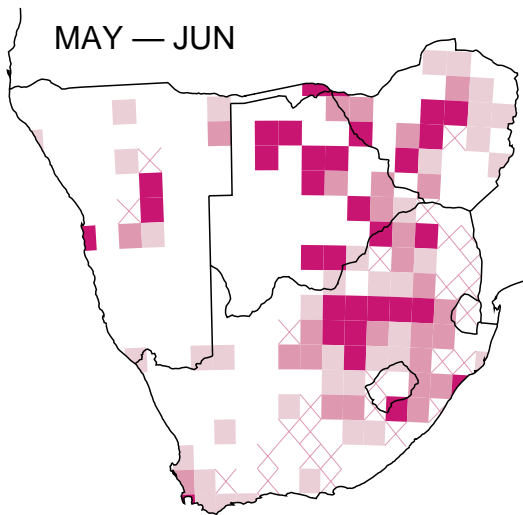
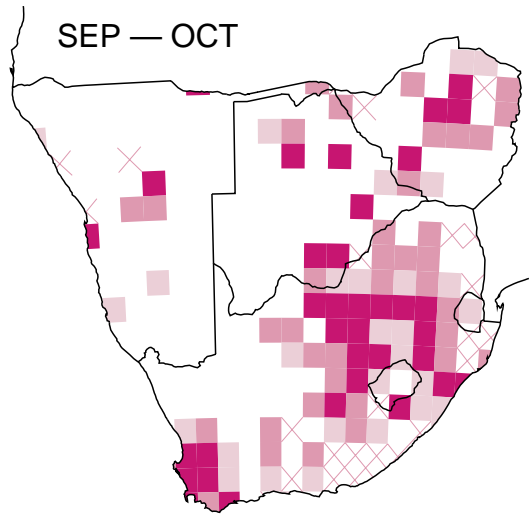
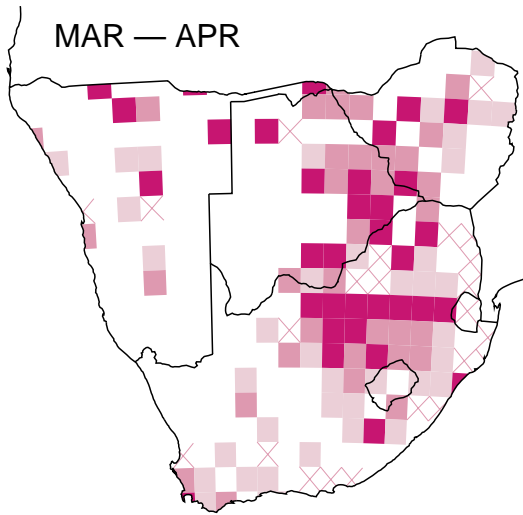
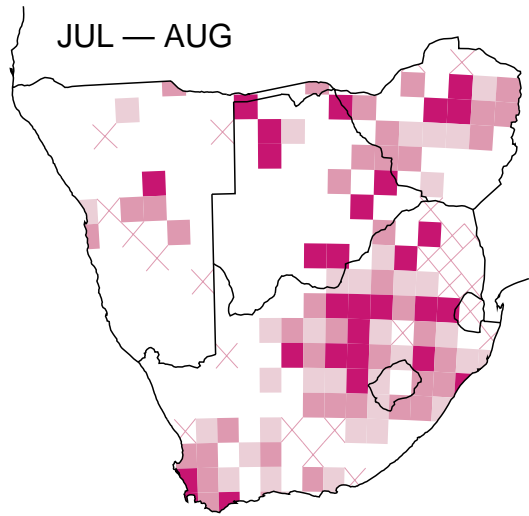
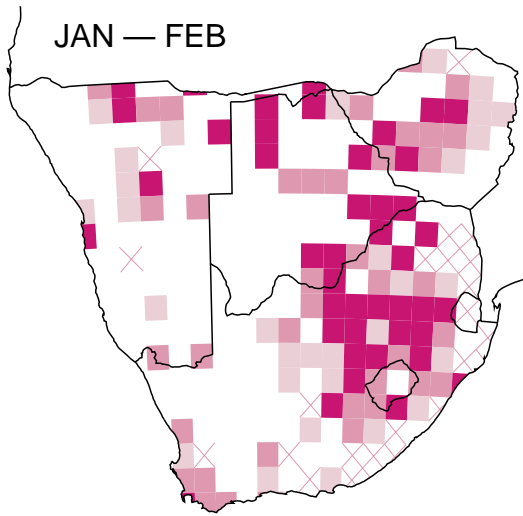


Also marginally in Valley Bushveld, Mopane, Nama Karoo, Alpine Grasslands, Namib and Namibian Escarpment.



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 61, 46, 73, 377, 420, 421, 2071, 62; Breeding: 4, 1, 5, 80, 4, 13, 78, 5.

SOUTHERN POCHARD



Seasonal distribution maps; one-degree grid.