

### Lesser Spotted Eagle

Gevlekte Arend

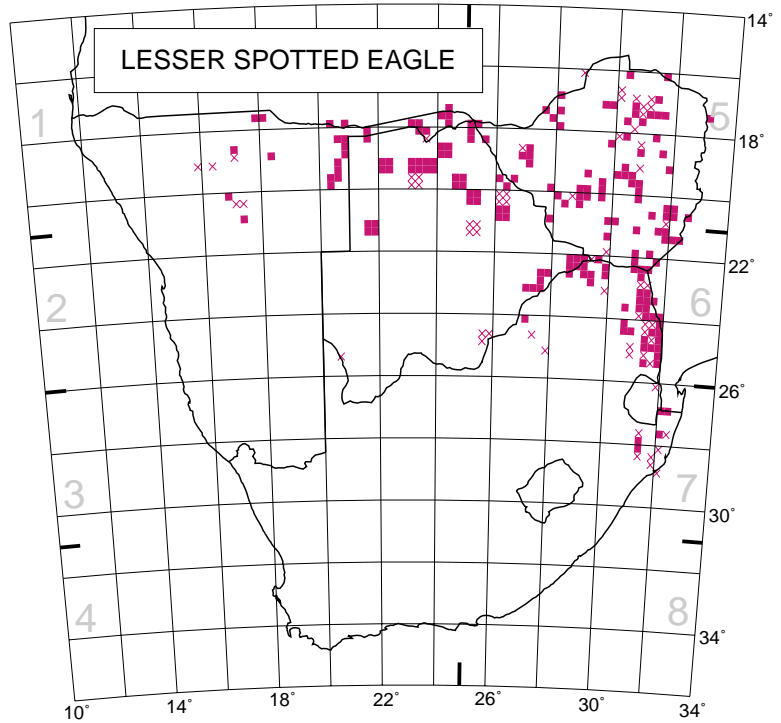
*Aquila pomarina*

This Palearctic migrant from eastern Europe and Russia occurs in southern Africa from late October (mostly late November) to March. When perched it is essentially a bulky version of Wahlberg's Eagle *A. wahlbergi* in appearance, with a pale eye and, in juveniles, white in the tail and wings. The thin leggings and the downward-bent primaries in flight distinguish this from other *Aquila* species (Brooke *et al.* 1972), but from a distance its silhouette in soaring flight can be confused with that of the Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*. It is perhaps most frequently recorded in the Kruger National Park and the Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park of northern Botswana, where it consorts with migrant Steppe Eagles *A. nivalensis*.

It is usually recorded in woodland regions where rainfall exceeds 600 mm. It occurs in lower numbers than the Steppe Eagle, in the ratio of 1:5 in the Transvaal (Tarboton & Allan 1984). It is often seen singly or in small flocks (Steyn 1982b); a flock of at least 250 birds was reported from along the Khwai River (1923B) (Van den Brink *et al.* 1994). In January 1993, average linear densities from road counts in the Moremi region reached 1 bird/950 m (M. Herremans unpubl. data). Like the Steppe Eagle, it is attracted to the emergence of termite alates following good rains, and also to Redbilled *Quelea quelea* breeding colonies.

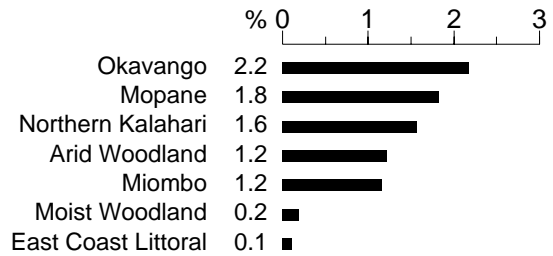
Two long-distance recoveries are known: an adult ringed in the Kruger Park was recovered 11 months later 7350 km away near the Caspian Sea and another ringed in Czechoslovakia was recovered 7509 km away near Harare (1731CC), three years later (SAFRING). Satellite tracking studies indicate enormous wanderings in southern Africa, covering 25 000 km<sup>2</sup> (Meyburg *et al.* 1995).

Conservation efforts to assist this declining species (Meyburg 1973) in eastern Europe include establishing a special working group, determining natural breeding rates and siblicide levels (<3% of 410 nests naturally reared a second chick; Belka *et al.* 1990), assisting the survival of second-hatched chicks and requesting southern African ornithologists to report sightings of colour-marked birds (Danko 1990).



Recorded in 250 grid cells, 5.5%  
 Total number of records: 522  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 3.4%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types



R.E. Simmons

