



Redeyed Bulbul

Rooioogtiptol

Pycnonotus nigricans

A southern African near-endemic, the Redeyed Bulbul is common to locally abundant in Namibia (except for the extreme north and the Namib Desert in the southwest), Botswana, western Zimbabwe, the western and southern (but not southeastern) Transvaal, Free State, Lesotho (other than the extreme east), and most of the Cape Province other than the southwest and the coastal belt. Extraliminally, the range extends into southwestern Angola and the extreme south of Zambia (Keith *et al.* 1992). Clancey (1980b) recognized three races; these have entirely continuous ranges.

It is usually found in pairs or loose groups. The prominent orange-red eyewattle and noisy and conspicuous nature make misidentification unlikely, so atlas data are reliable and comprehensive. However, juveniles have narrower eyewattles which lack the prominent orange-red colour, and thus resemble the Blackeyed Bulbul *P. barbatus*, which may occasionally have resulted in misidentification.

Habitat: It occurs in dry woodland, arid savanna, thickets, scrub, riverine bush, orchards, gardens and farmyards (Keith *et al.* 1992). It is generally found in drier country than the Blackeyed Bulbul, but concentrates regularly near water in the dry season.

It is associated with a wide variety of vegetation types in the arid west of southern Africa, and there were high reporting rates from a band of types running from northwestern Namibia to the eastern Cape Province (Namibian Escarpment, Central Kalahari and Grassy Karoo), with lower reporting rates from the adjacent vegetation types (Sweet Grasslands, Nama Karoo, Northern Kalahari, Southern Kalahari, Mopane, Okavango and Arid Woodland). The low reporting rate for Arid Woodland probably does not accurately reflect the situation in the Arid Woodlands of Namibia and Botswana, because the statistic includes large areas of Arid Woodland from KwaZulu-Natal and the eastern Transvaal where the species does not occur. Although this is not a grassland species, it occurs in Alpine, Mixed and Sour Grassland regions where it inhabits patches of woody vegetation.

Movements: The only atlas evidence for seasonality comes from Zone 1 (northern Namibia and the Okavango) where there is an increase in reporting rates in the dry season, May–

October. This ties in with observations in northern Botswana where, in the nonbreeding season, migrants were found in large numbers up to 200 km northeast of the limits of their breeding distribution (Maclean 1987; Brewster 1991; Herremans & Herremans-Tonnoeyr 1995). It is also predominantly a winter visitor to other peripheral parts of the range, such as southern Zambia, Zimbabwe and KwaZulu-Natal (Irwin 1981; Keith *et al.* 1992). It is considered 'invasive' into the central Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) and dry-season influxes are obvious in part of the Limpopo catchment in the eastern Botswana hardveld, particularly during drought years (Brewster 1992b; M. Herremans pers. comm.).

Breeding: There are atlas records for all months, but most breeding is in summer, with peak egg-laying reported October–January for Botswana (Skinner 1995a) and December–February for Namibia (Brown & Clinning in press). Later breeding in Zone 2, which comprises most of the drier parts of the Kalahari, is also apparent from the models.

Interspecific relationships: Hybrid birds or mixed pairs have been reported from the zone of contact with Blackeyed Bulbul (White 1956; Irwin 1958; Markus 1963a, 1965, 1966, 1967; Winterbottom, J.M. 1966a; Liversidge 1985b; Lloyd 1994) and Cape Bulbul *P. capensis* (Keith 1992; Lloyd 1994). Lloyd (1994) found extensive hybridization within a belt along most of the length of the zone of contact between the Redeyed and the Blackeyed Bulbul in the eastern Cape Province. The zones of transition between this species and both the Cape Bulbul and Blackeyed Bulbul correspond closely to the -7°C minimum winter isotherm (Lloyd 1994). Flocks of migrant Redeyed Bulebuls were dominated by territorial pairs of resident Blackeyed Bulebuls at an artificial food source in northern Botswana (Herremans & Herremans-Tonnoeyr 1995).

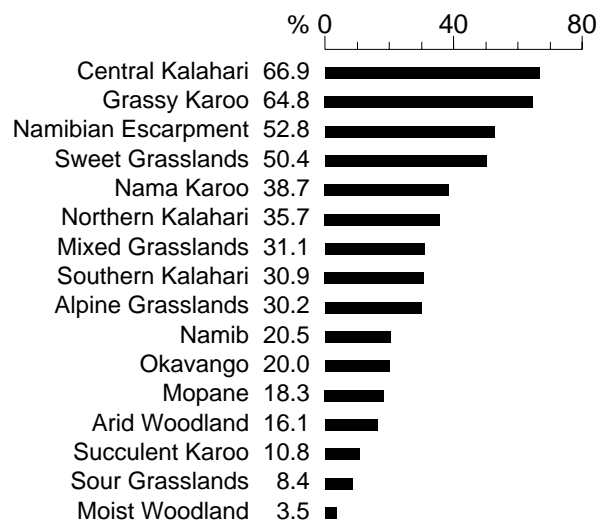
It is a frequent host of the Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* (Rowan 1983).

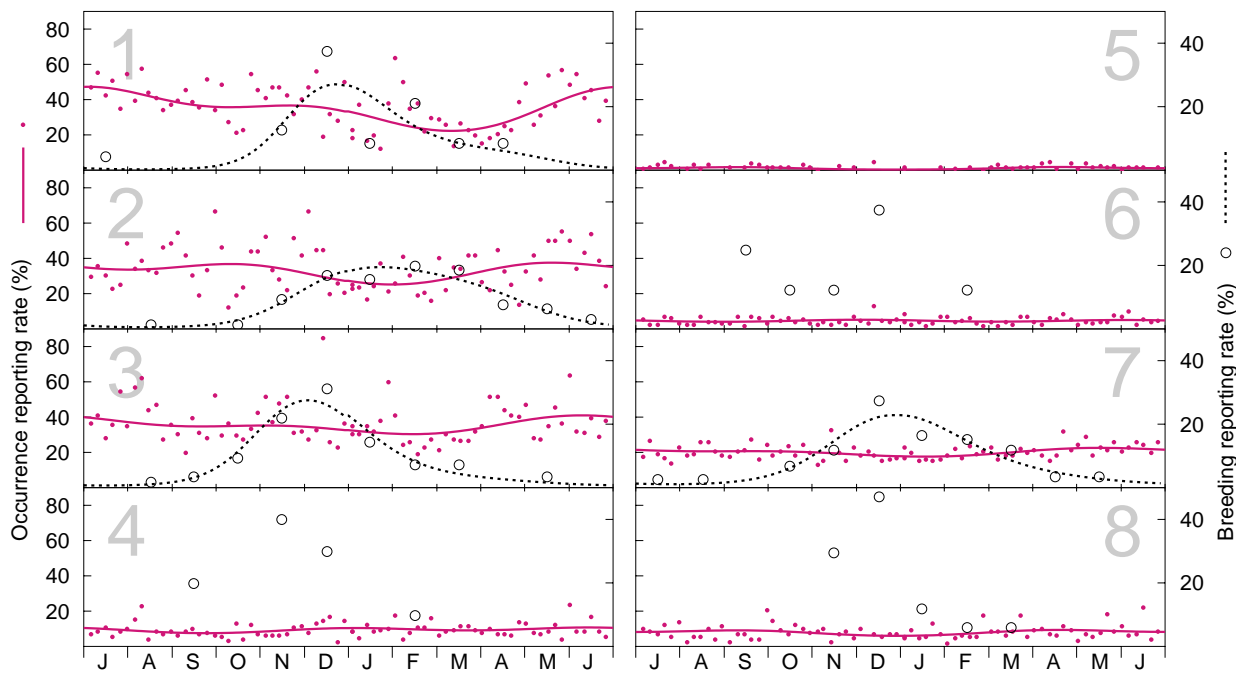
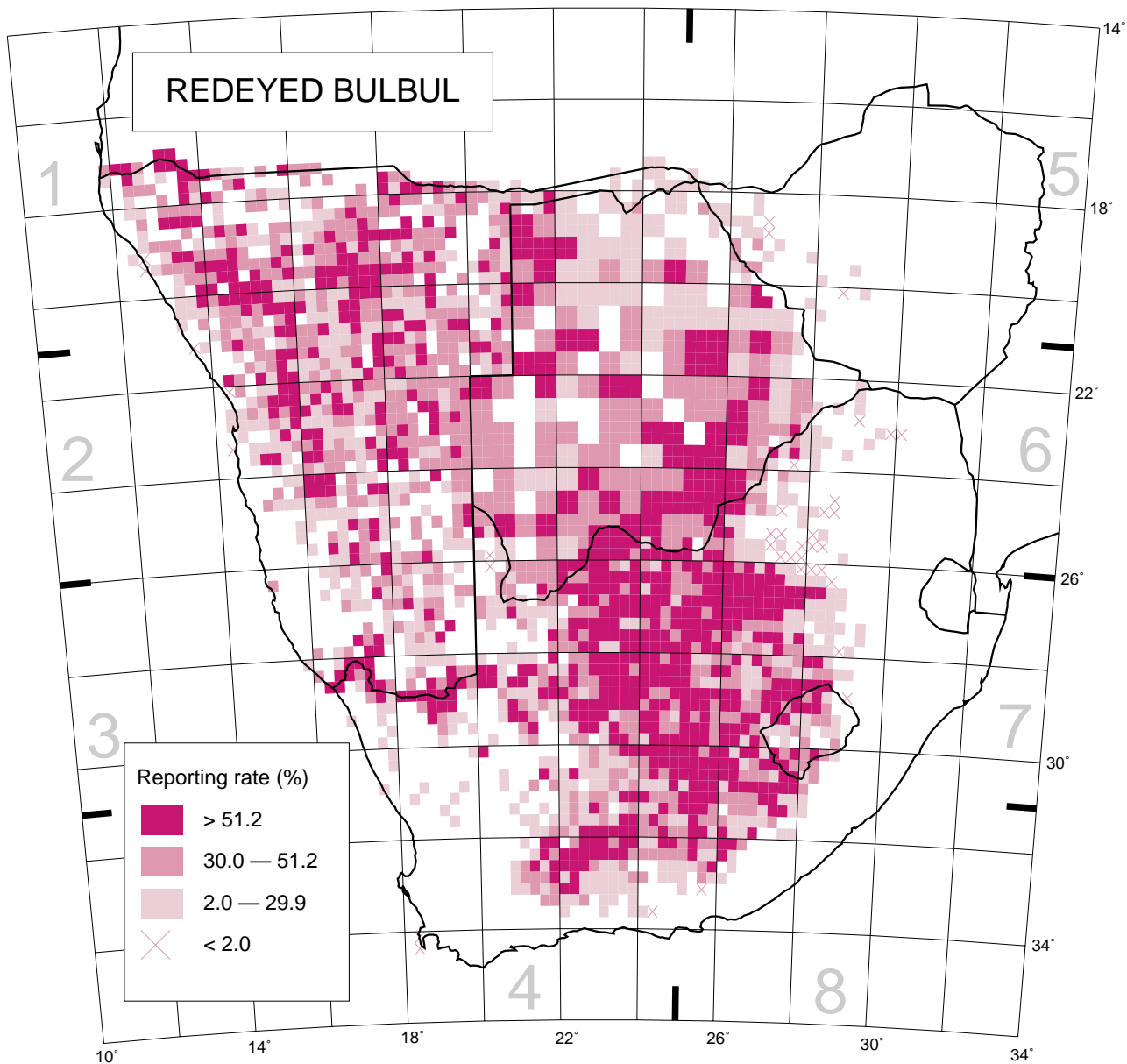
Historical distribution and conservation: The provision of permanent water in arid areas has presumably led to an increase in distribution beyond its historical range. The Redeyed Bulbul is common in its extensive range and has adapted well to man-made habitats.

A.P.L. Hart

Recorded in 2480 grid cells, 54.7%
Total number of records: 25 195
Mean reporting rate for range: 38.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 1158, 1191, 1975, 813, 102, 525, 3952, 442; Breeding: 24, 65, 55, 10, 0, 8, 121, 17.