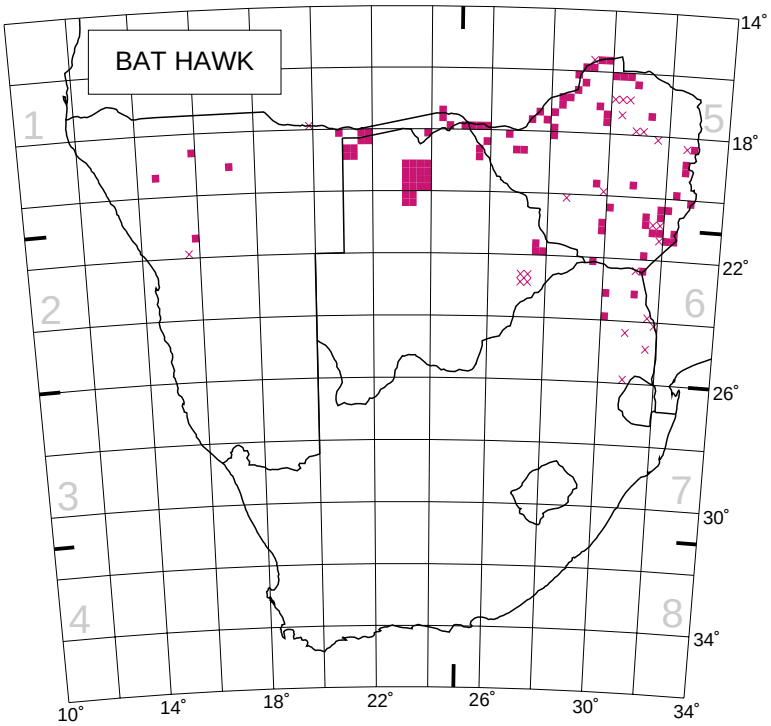
Bat Hawk

Vlermuisvalk

Macheiramphus alcinus



Recorded in 127 grid cells, 2.8%
Total number of records: 389
Mean reporting rate for range: 5.4%

The Bat Hawk has two widely separated populations; the subspecies *M. a. anderssoni* occurs patchily throughout tropical sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar, and the nominate race (and further races) occur in Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea (Steyn 1982b; Brooke 1984b). In southern Africa it is generally rare, but may be overlooked because of its crepuscular/nocturnal habits. The map indicates possible concentrations in the Zambezi Valley and southeastern Zimbabwe, and in the Okavango in Botswana (Irwin 1981; Hartley 1993). In the Transvaal, where suitable habitat has been intensively searched, only two breeding pairs are known, although others probably exist (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; A.C. Kemp pers. comm.). It may be confused in the field with other raptors, especially large falcons, in the poor light conditions under which it is normally active. When seen clearly, e.g. at a roost during the day, it is unmistakable.

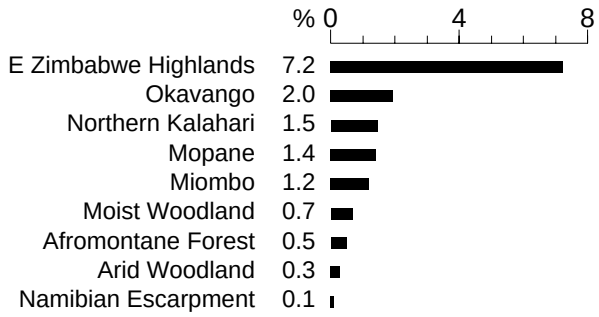
It is a specialist bat-hunter. This, coupled with its need for large, preferably pale-barked trees for roosting and nesting (Harris *et al.* 1990), accounts for its well-defined habitat requirements and patchy distribution. It is generally restricted to moist woodlands and major river valleys in the northeastern section of the atlas region, and records from elsewhere are probably of vagrants.

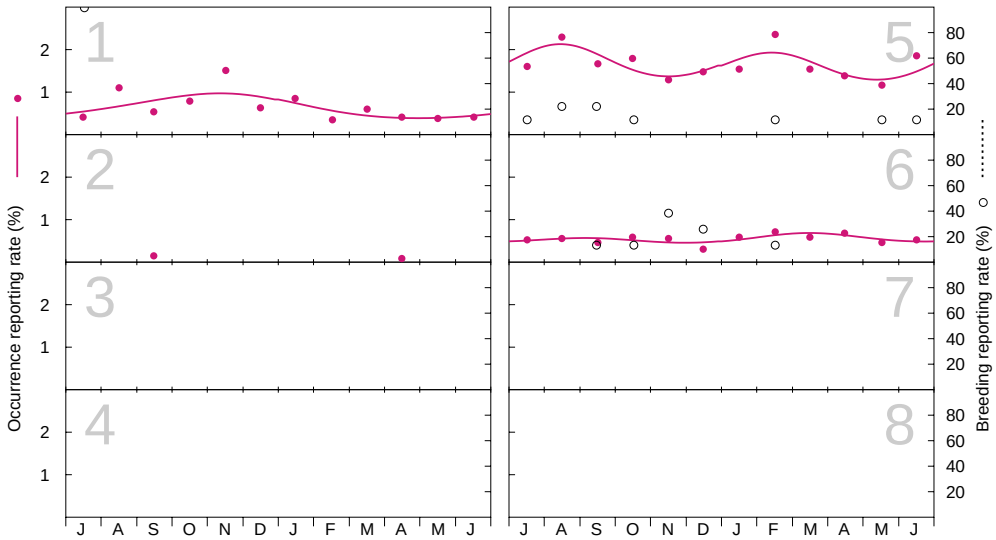
The atlas breeding data for the Transvaal (Zone 6) span September–February. Breeding was reported from Zimbabwe (Zone 5) May–October, although a sample of 26 egglaying months in Zimbabwe spanned August–January (Irwin 1981). Pairs may attempt to breed more than once a year (Hartley & Hustler 1993).

The Bat Hawk is classed as 'rare' in South Africa (Brooke 1984b). It probably benefits from forestry practices and the spread of large alien trees (especially eucalypts) and has shown a tendency to frequent, and even breed in, urban areas where bats are abundant and are more easily caught with the help of artificial light (Hartley & Hustler 1993).

A.R. Jenkins

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 57, 2, 0, 0, 193, 134, 0, 0; Breeding: 1, 0, 0, 0, 9, 8, 0, 0.