



Pale Chanting Goshawk

Bleeksingvalk

Melierax canorus

The Pale Chanting Goshawk is distributed throughout Namibia and Botswana, except in tall woodlands in the north, and in most of the Cape Province and the western regions of the Free State and the Transvaal. It also occurs sparsely in southwestern Zimbabwe and Lesotho. It is near-endemic to southern Africa with less than 5% of its range extending into southern Angola (Brown *et al.* 1982). Geographically its range is separate from that of the Eastern Chanting Goshawk *M. poliopterus* of East Africa.

It is common throughout most of its range. Territory sizes range from 2.1–10.8 km² (Biggs *et al.* 1984; Malan 1995). The reporting rates above 50% in numerous squares are testimony to its abundance and conspicuousness. In fact, in the northern Cape Province atlas region, this goshawk was ranked nineteenth on a list of most commonly recorded species (Anon. 1989). Birds are normally found singly or in pairs, but family groups of five or more have been recorded in the Little Karoo. These comprise a breeding unit, a breeding pair or polyandrous trio, with or without nonbreeders (up to two) and juveniles (up to four) (Biggs *et al.* 1984; Malan 1995).

The species is conspicuous, partly owing to its preference for tall, exposed perch sites, especially roadside telephone poles. The adult Pale Chanting Goshawk can be confused only with the Dark Chanting Goshawk *M. metabates*, but the ranges of these two species overlap only slightly. Juveniles, however, are frequently misidentified.

Habitat: This species can be found in all arid areas, especially the Kalahari and Karoo vegetation types. The range extends into the Namib Desert and the drier woodland and grassland types. It is typically a bird of open scrub and wooded drainage lines (Steyn 1982b).

Movements: Some birds remain in their territories throughout the year but others are known to show extensive movements (Biggs *et al.* 1984). SAFRING ring recovery data show that females disperse an average distance of 282 km (range 16–731 km), and males 39 km (range 0–132 km). The seasonal patterns should not be interpreted as movements to and from Zones, but are probably the result of an increase in the number of observable birds once juveniles reach independence (February–June) and a decrease in observations when birds, especially females, are confined to their nesting sites during the breeding season (August–December).

Breeding: The breeding season starts in July–August, peaks October–November and tails off in May. This ‘tail’ may be the result of a post-fledging dependence period of longer than seven weeks (Maclean 1993b). Egg-laying in southern Africa spans March–December, with a July–September peak (Malan 1995). Breeding during the atlas period was reported throughout its range, most frequently from the northern Cape Province and southern Namibia (Zone 3). This could reflect the greater ease of locating nests in these more open regions.

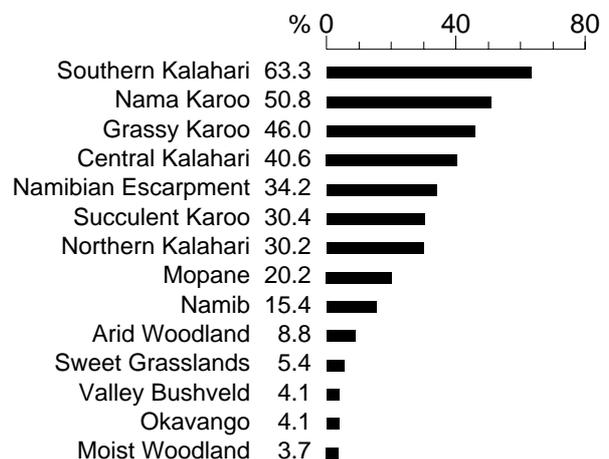
Interspecific relationships: The range of the Pale Chanting Goshawk overlaps marginally with that of the Dark Chanting Goshawk in the far northern Transvaal, northern and eastern Botswana and in southwestern Zimbabwe, but even there it is more common than the Dark Chanting Goshawk (M. Herremans pers. comm.). In areas of overlap, the Pale Chanting Goshawk inhabits more arid and open scrub (Steyn 1982b).

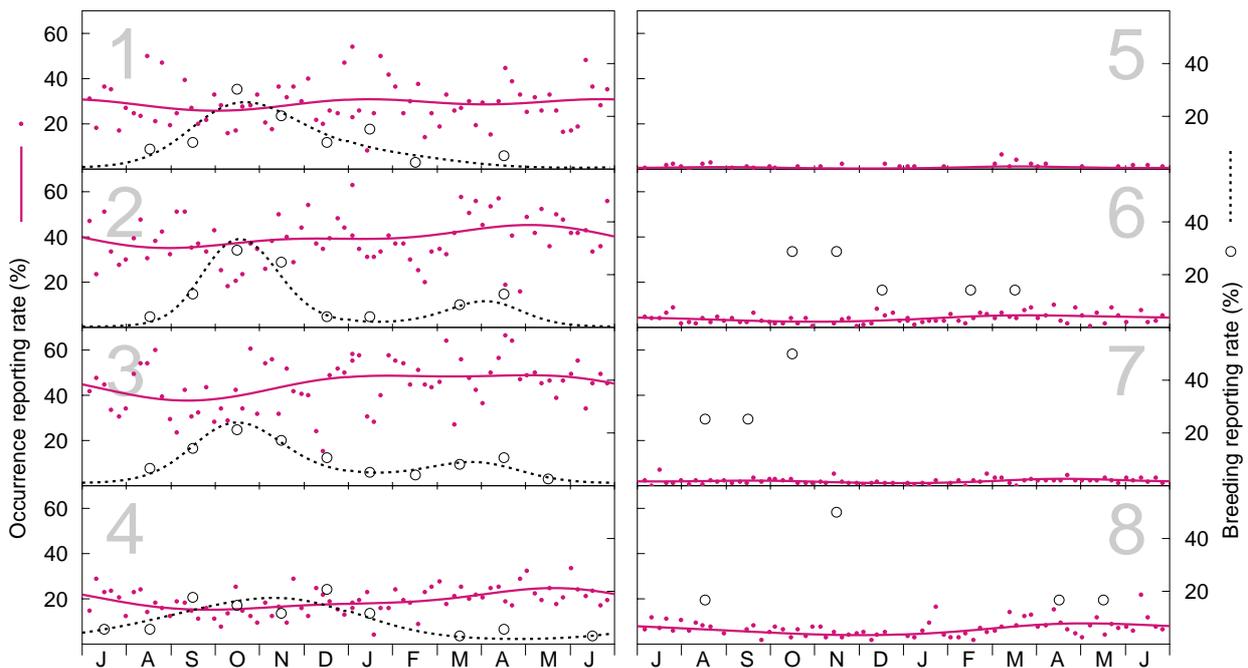
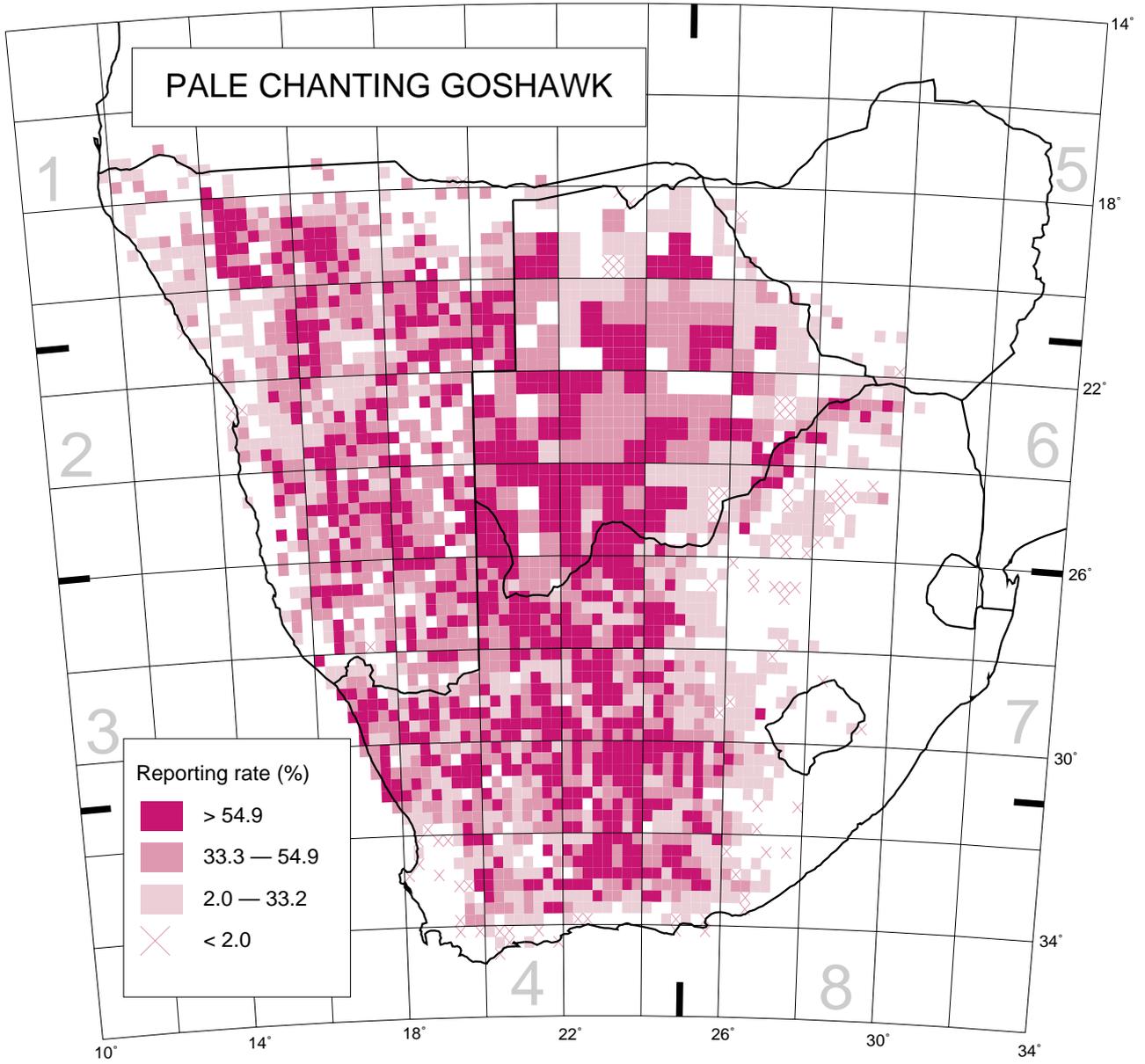
Historical distribution and conservation: The historical range of this species in the Cape Province is the same as the present distribution (Boshoff *et al.* 1983), and the same probably applies to the remainder of the range. Although persecuted on a small scale (pers. obs), the Pale Chanting Goshawk is not threatened at present (e.g. Tarboton & Allan 1984) and occurs in large numbers in extensive farming areas.

G. Malan

Recorded in 2609 grid cells, 57.5%
Total number of records: 16 640
Mean reporting rate for range: 29.0%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 959, 1456, 2486, 1687, 59, 455, 398, 353; Breeding: 40, 24, 76, 34, 0, 7, 4, 6.