

# Osprey

Visvalk

*Pandion haliaetus*

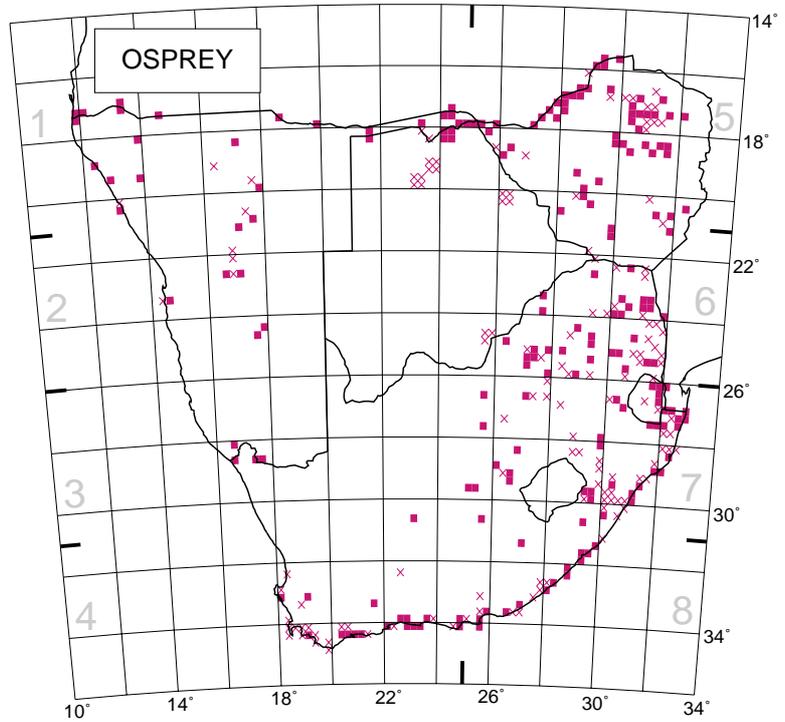
This fish-eating raptor occurs anywhere in southern Africa where there are natural wetlands, including the lakes and estuaries of the southern and eastern coasts, or where impoundments have created large perennial waterbodies. It has a patchy distribution with low reporting rates; it is rare in the arid western regions, and more frequent in the interior in the east, where high rainfall creates suitable habitat such as rivers, dams and pans. It usually occurs singly, but up to five may occur together, both at the coast and inland (Boshoff & Palmer 1983; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). It is relatively conspicuous and easily identified.

It is a nonbreeding Palearctic migrant to southern Africa; and one Swedish and five Finnish-ringed birds have been recovered in southern Africa, but most recoveries of birds from Fennoscandia are in West Africa (Saurola & Koivu 1994) and the provenance of most Ospreys migrating to southern Africa is likely to be further east, in Russia. It is present mainly during the austral summer (Boshoff & Palmer 1983; Tarboton & Allan 1984). It arrives at the southern coast late October–early November and departs March–early April (Boshoff & Palmer 1983). Overwintering occurs, with an apparent decrease in numbers from north to south; overwintering individuals are mostly first-year birds (Cramp *et al.* 1980; Poole 1989; Saurola & Koivu 1994). Some records from the interior are probably of birds on passage, migrating to or from coastal areas. Whereas some may remain at particular waterbodies throughout their stay in southern Africa, others are considered to be locally nomadic (Boshoff & Palmer 1983).

Breeding reports from southern Africa are mostly unsubstantiated. Records from the Limpopo River in the 1930s and from Ndumu Game Reserve (2632C) in 1963, however, are considered to be authentic (Dean & Tarboton 1983).

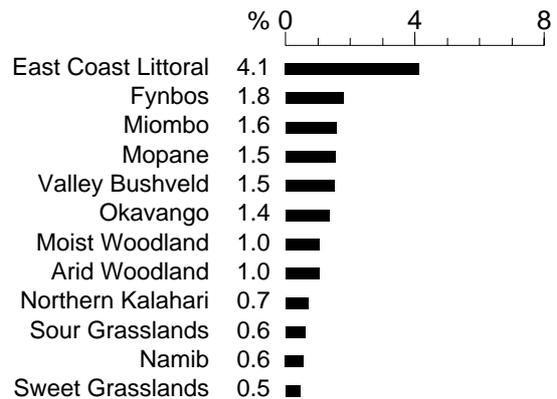
Its distribution in southern Africa is not considered to have changed in historical times. Some habitat has been lost to disturbance and development, but artificial impoundments have provided additional habitat. The population is at risk from disturbance, pollution and food shortages in its breeding grounds in Eurasia, but is increasing in numbers in many parts of its range, recolonizing areas from which it had been extirpated (Poole 1989; Del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). Human persecution of Ospreys in Europe decreased in Europe between 1970 and 1990, but increased in Africa (Saurola & Koivu 1994).

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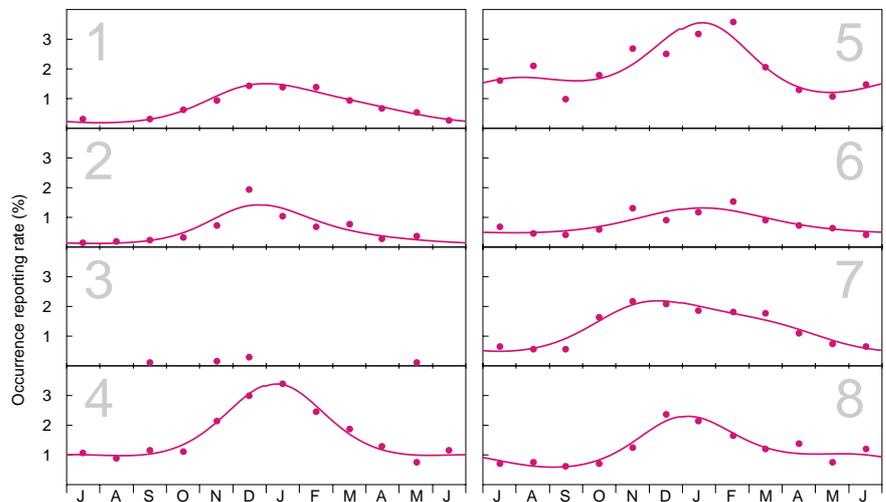


Recorded in 329 grid cells, 7.3%  
 Total number of records: 1716  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 3.4%

### Reporting rates for vegetation types



Also Mixed Grasslands, Nama Karoo, Grassy Karoo, Succulent Karoo and Namibian Escarpment.



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):

Occurrence: 62, 56, 5, 418, 232, 197, 582, 142.