

Thickbilled Cuckoo

Dikbekkoekoek

Pachyoccyx audeberti

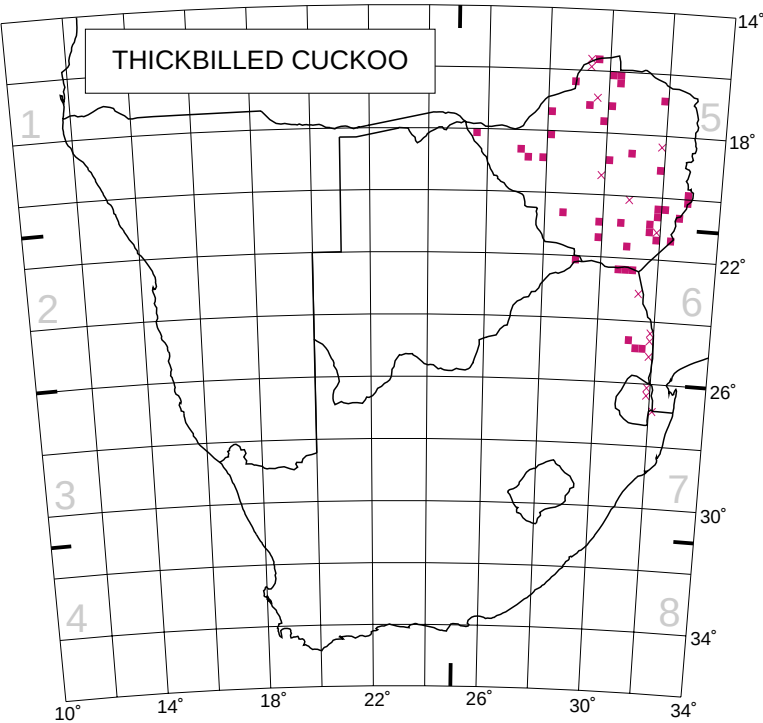
The Thickbilled Cuckoo is rare or, alternatively, elusive throughout its range, which extends from South Africa to southernmost Sudan and west to Guinea (Benson & Irwin 1972; Fry *et al.* 1988). In southern Africa it extends from Ndumu (2632C) in the south, through Mozambique, the eastern Transvaal, and across Zimbabwe, just reaching eastern and northern Botswana (Benson & Irwin 1972; Herremans *et al.* 1993a; Penry 1994).

It prefers moister woodlands, particularly miombo, Mopane and riparian forest, but avoids true evergreen rainforest (Benson & Irwin 1972; Irwin 1981; Rowan 1983; Fry *et al.* 1988).

It is a summer-breeding visitor to some localities, but is not a long-distance migrant (Benson & Irwin 1972; Fry *et al.* 1988). In Zimbabwe it is an altitudinal migrant, appearing on the plateau in September and remaining there until December before descending to the lowveld (Rowan 1983). It is considered to be resident in Mozambique (Clancey 1971c) and movements may be local, from woodland in the wet season to thicker riverine habitat in the dry season (Benson & Irwin 1972). Seasonal differences in reporting rates in the models may reflect variations in call rate more than differences in relative abundance.

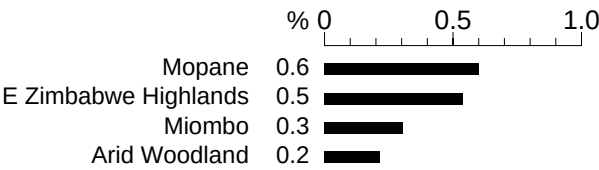
Egg-laying is known September–May, with a peak October–November (Benson & Irwin 1972; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The distribution is encompassed within the range of its only known brood host, the Redbilled Helmet-shrike *Prionops retzii* (Fry *et al.* 1988; Maclean 1993b). The host, however, has a stronghold in the Okavango Delta where the Thickbilled Cuckoo was not recorded during the atlas period; it was probably overlooked here because there are both older and more recent records from this region (Benson & Irwin 1972; Botswana Bird Club Records Subcommittee pers comm.).

The present map shows a smaller range, to the northeast of that in Rowan (1983), but this is likely to reflect improved information rather than a range contraction. The Thickbilled Cuckoo is poorly known and uncommon to rare throughout



Recorded in 54 grid cells, 1.2%
Total number of records: 108
Mean reporting rate for range: 3.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



its range (Benson & Irwin 1972; Fry *et al.* 1988), but the limiting factors are not understood; habitat is widely available and the host is common.

C.J. Vernon

