



Barred Owl

Gebande Uil

Glaucidium capense

The Barred Owl is one of several species of *Glaucidium* owls in Africa with scattered, isolated populations, the taxonomic status of each being unclear and subject to varying treatments (Colston 1978; Prigogine 1985a). The core of the Barred Owl's distribution is in southcentral Africa, with other isolated populations in Liberia and the Ivory Coast, northeastern Zaire and southwestern Uganda (Fry *et al.* 1988). In southern Africa it was recorded during the atlas period in northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip, with scattered records in northcentral Namibia, and in Zimbabwe, the eastern Transvaal and eastern Swaziland, with a tiny isolated population in the eastern Cape Province. It is especially abundant in the Okavango region and southeastern Zimbabwe. It was first described to science on the basis of specimens collected in the eastern Cape Province in 1834, but it was only in 1980 that it was rediscovered in that area (Arnott 1980; Clancey 1980b; Brooke *et al.* 1983). It is possible that the nominate race, which occurs in the eastern Cape Province, KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and southern Mozambique, is a separate species (Prigogine 1985a).

Although as confiding as the Pearlspeckled Owl *G. perlatum*, the Barred Owl is more nocturnal and lives in taller woodland with a well-developed canopy, and is therefore less conspicuous. However, it does regularly call during the day.

Habitat: Dense, moist broadleaved and riparian woodlands are the preferred habitat in southcentral Africa, and *Euphorbia* forest in the eastern Cape Province. Populations in West and Central Africa are found in montane forest, but it is absent

from true evergreen forests in southern Africa. Reporting rates in the Okavango were more than double those recorded in any other vegetation type. It requires natural holes in large trees for nest sites (Maclean 1993b).

Movements: No information is available to suggest any movements, either regular or irregular. Young birds are likely to disperse locally from their parental territories. Slight seasonal changes in reporting rates doubtless reflect changes in calling activity during the year.

Breeding: In Zimbabwe, the only area with a reasonable number of laying dates, eggs are laid in the first half of summer, August–November, peaking September–October (Irwin 1981). Most of the few atlas records were September–January. The small clutches and summer breeding are consistent with the mainly insectivorous diet, unlike the larger, more variable clutch sizes and longer breeding seasons of owls that feed primarily on rodents.

Interspecific relationships: The congeneric Pearlspeckled Owl is often found alongside the Barred Owl, but there is no evidence of competitive relationships between these species and the former occupies more open woodland. Barred Owls are likely to compete with a wide variety of species for nest sites which are often a limiting factor.

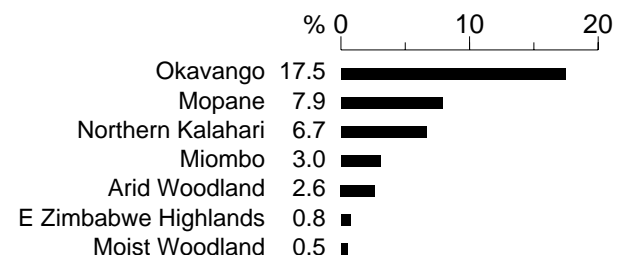
Historical distribution and conservation: The map shows the northern subspecies *G. c. ngamiense* further upstream along the Limpopo River than Tarboton *et al.* (1987b), and there is also a post-atlas record from Botswana as far south as 2327AB (Brewster 1994c). These differences probably reflect improved coverage.

The nominate race has historically been recorded on a few occasions from northern KwaZulu-Natal (Brooke *et al.* 1983) and even once near Durban (2930DD), but was not recorded there 1970–79 (Cyrus & Robson 1980), nor during this atlas period. This race has also been reported once from Hluleka (3129CD) in 1981 (Brooke *et al.* 1983), but again no records from the Transkei were received during the atlas period. Confirmed atlas records were received from only two grid cells (3326DB, 3327CA) in the eastern Cape Province, from the same general area as the historical records. Brooke (1984b) preferred to treat the nominate race as a species separate from forms found further north and included this taxon as 'rare' in the South African Red Data book. An intensive study of the taxonomic and conservation status of the nominate race of the Barred Owl is an urgent priority.

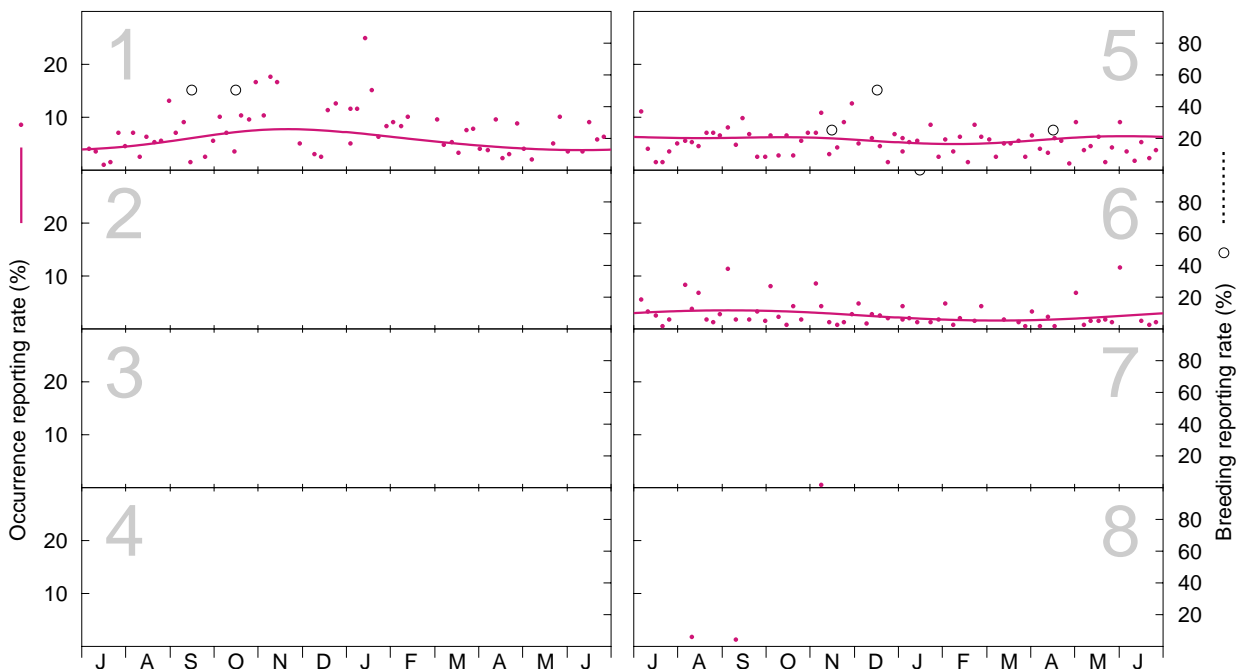
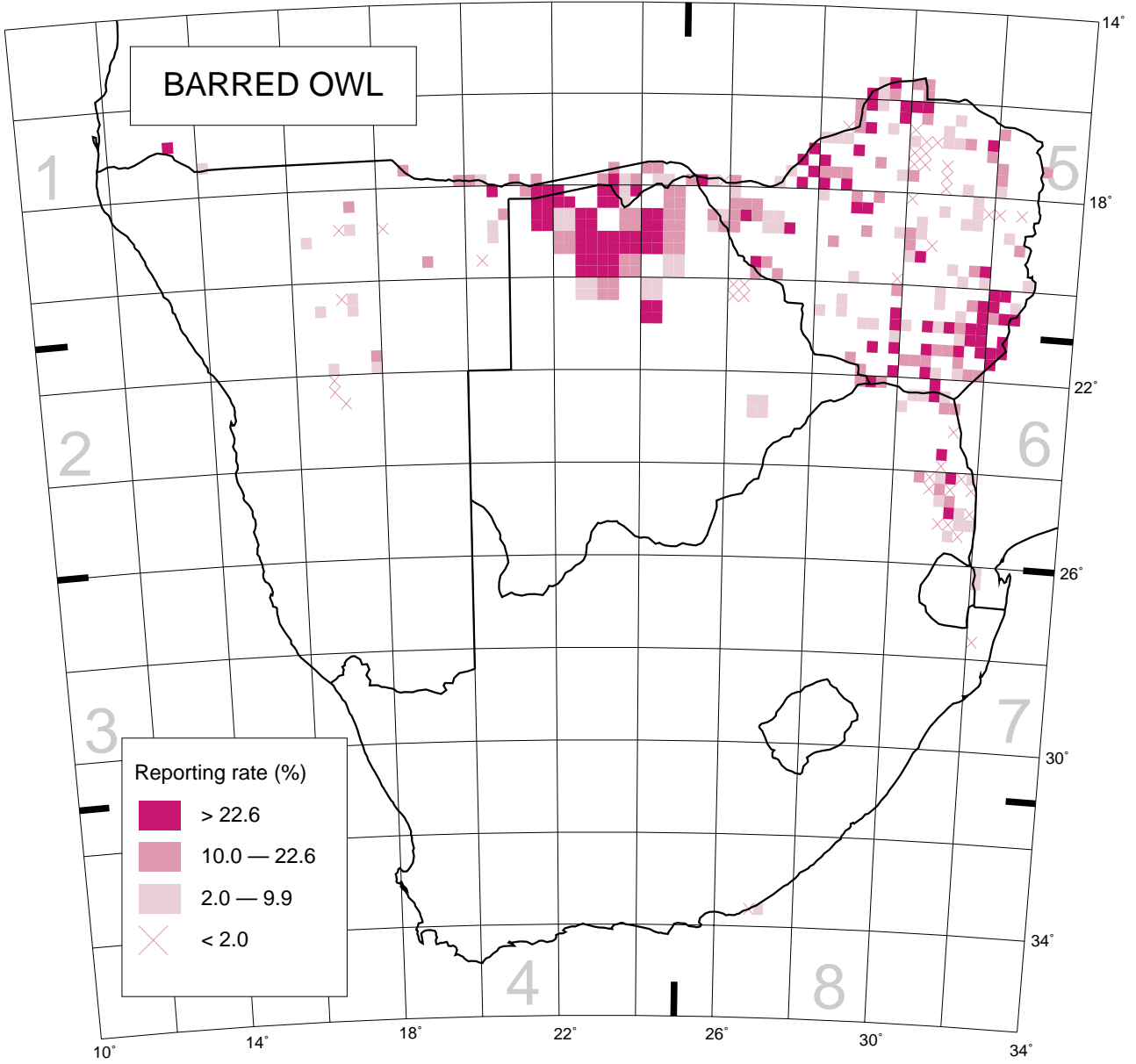
J.M. Mendelsohn

Recorded in 365 grid cells, 8.0%
Total number of records: 1583
Mean reporting rate for range: 10.4%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Also marginally in East Coast Littoral.



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
 Occurrence: 176, 0, 0, 0, 512, 289, 1, 2; Breeding: 2, 0, 0, 0, 4, 1, 0, 0.