

## Avian Demography Unit

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The Avian Demography Unit is conducting the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts in partnership with BirdLife South Africa.



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# COORDINATED AVIFAUNAL ROADCOUNTS (CAR)

INFORMATION SHEET No. 3

December 2002

## DISTINGUISHING BUSTARDS

This information sheet is intended to give some information on the three large bustards of southern Africa and some useful tips in distinguishing between them. All three bustards, Kori Bustard or Gompou, Stanley's Bustard or Veldpou and Ludwig's Bustard or Ludwigse Pou, are threatened species and are classified as vulnerable in the *South African Red Data Book*. The threats facing these birds include habitat alteration, hunting and collision with overhead transmission lines.

### Kori Bustard

**Distribution:** The distribution of the Kori Bustard (see line drawing and map overleaf) lies mainly within the 100–600-mm-rainfall isohyets in southern Africa. It is widespread in the semi-arid regions in the western half of southern Africa and penetrates to the east along the central plateau of Zimbabwe and the Limpopo Valley into Mozambique.

**Habitat:** It is a bird of dry savannas. In the open Karoo and dry grassland biomes, it is associated with tree-lined watercourses where it takes cover during the heat of the day.

**Distinguishing features:** The most distinguishing feature of this bustard is its size, as it is **much bigger than both the Stanley's and Ludwig's Bustard**. The **black collar and crest are also distinctive**.

### Stanley's Bustard

**Distribution:** The distribution of Stanley's Bustard (see line drawing and map overleaf) does not overlap much with that of the other two bustards as it is largely restricted to the low-lying fynbos of the extreme southern Cape and the high rainfall, sour grasslands of the eastern half of South Africa. The old distribution maps for Stanley's Bustard (e.g. in *Roberts*) are highly inaccurate as they show this species extending too far into the western interior.

**Habitat:** During the breeding season, its habitat is high-rainfall sour grassland in the grassland biome, usually at fairly high altitudes, but including the coastal grasslands of northern KwaZulu-Natal. Breeding birds also occur in the mosaic of coastal fynbos, cultivated pastures and cereal cropfields in the fynbos biome of the southwestern Cape. During the nonbreeding season it can be found in lower-lying regions, moving into parts of the Karoo directly adjacent to grassland areas, i.e. in the eastern Cape Province, and into woodland, i.e. in the central Transvaal.

**Distinguishing features:** The black-and-white stripes on the head and, most importantly, **the extensive black-and-white wing panels distinguish this species from the Ludwig's Bustard** which is similar in size and coloration.

### Ludwig's Bustard

**Distribution:** Ludwig's Bustard (see line drawing and map overleaf) occurs mainly in western Namibia and western South Africa. In the Eastern Cape and possibly in the Eastern Free State Stanley's and Ludwig's Bustards may sometimes occur together.

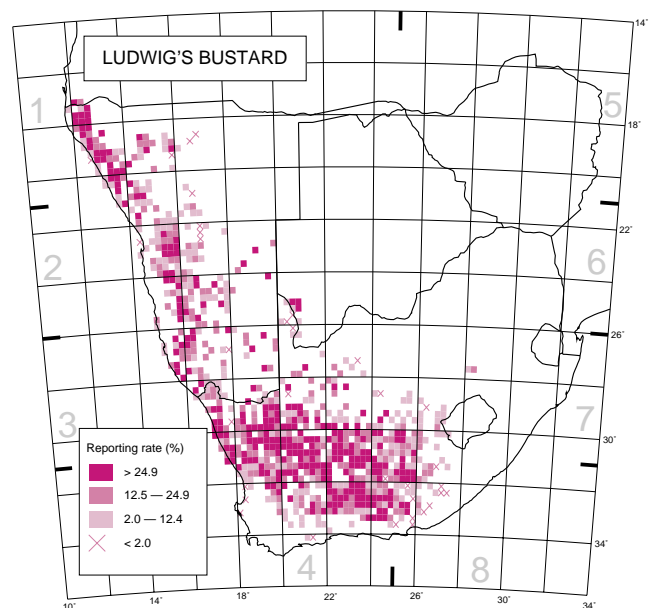
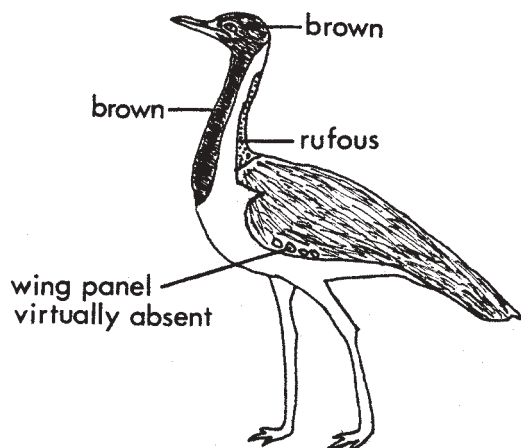
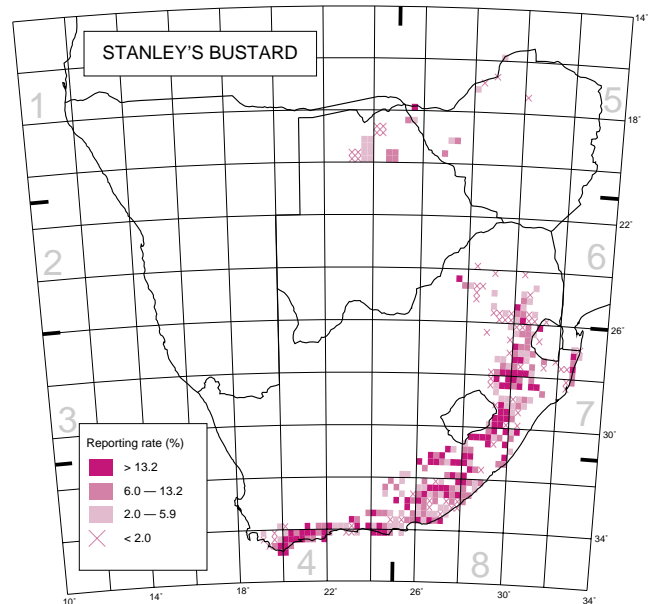
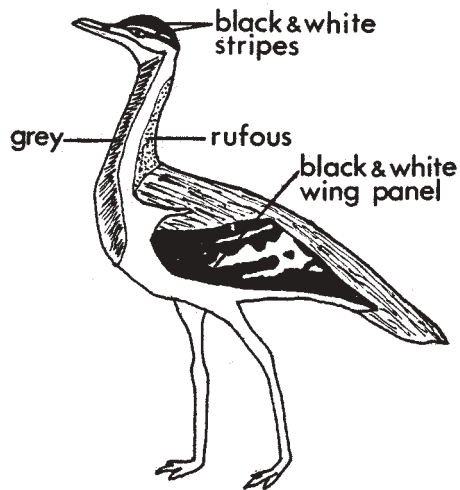
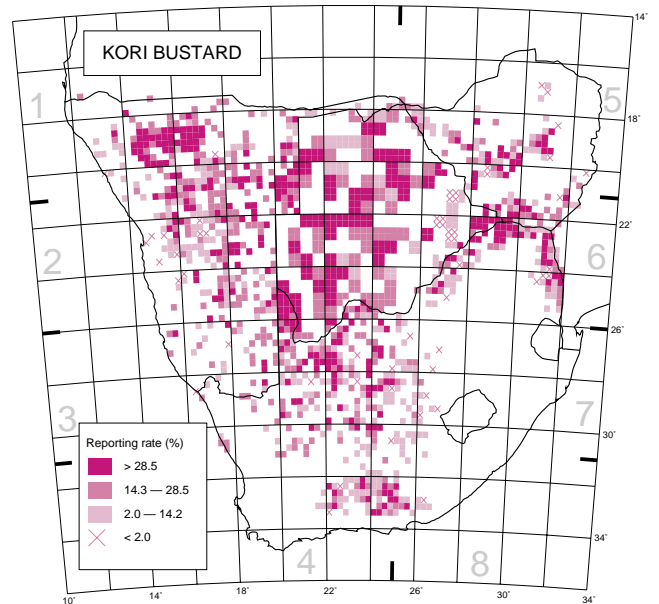
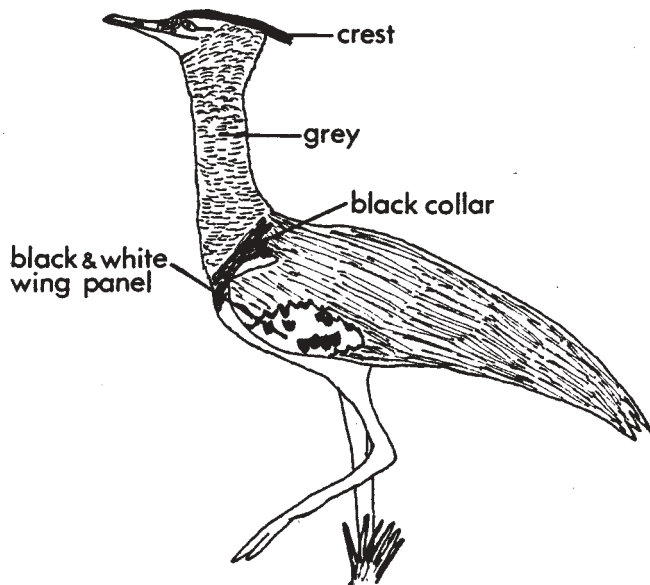
**Habitat:** It inhabits the semi-arid Karoo, the drier western grasslands in South Africa, the southern Kalahari and agricultural regions of the southwestern Cape in the fynbos biome.

**Distinguishing features:** Ludwig's Bustard is slightly smaller than Stanley's Bustard, is **browner on the head and throat and the wing panel is virtually absent**.

*N.B. Ludwig's and Stanley's Bustard show extensive white in the wings when seen flying and cannot be distinguished by this feature in flight.*

D.G. Allan and D.J. Young





Distribution maps taken from Harrison, J.A., Allan, D.G., Underhill, L.G., Herremans, M., Tree, A.J., Parker, V. & Brown, C.J. 1997. *The Atlas of southern African birds. Vol. 1: Non-passerines*. Johannesburg: BirdLife South Africa.