

FACTSHEET – Maccoa Duck

The Maccoa Duck is a poorly-known and relatively scarce species restricted to two populations, one in eastern and one in southern Africa. The latter, centred on South Africa, is smaller than previously estimated, and is apparently in decline.



Photos: W T arboton

In Botswana, the Maccoa is found only in the eastern hardveld, and it is estimated that the population is about 1,000 birds, some 10% of the global population of 10,000.

The major threats faced by the Southern African Maccoa Duck population are:

- draining of wetlands, especially smaller waterbodies
- pollution – since it feeds on invertebrates on the bottom, it is susceptible to a concentration of pollutants
- alien vegetation
- variable water levels

In Botswana, there is no legal protection for the Maccoa from indiscriminate killing, and clearly this needs to be rectified. Like other globally and nationally threatened birds, it should be specially protected, and it should be listed in Botswana's Red Data Book for Birds. Annual national counts need to be conducted to monitor trends in the numbers and distribution, to monitor its status. Without active intervention, its numbers will undoubtedly continue to decline.