

# Green Sandpiper

Witgatruiter

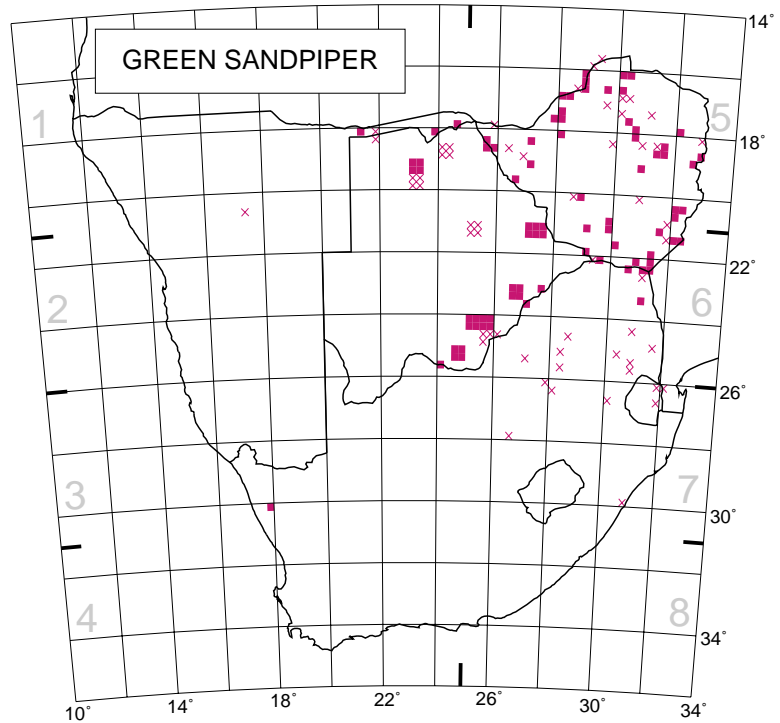
*Tringa ochropus*

The Green Sandpiper is a nonbreeding visitor mainly from the boreal zones of the Palearctic. In its African nonbreeding quarters it occurs mostly in a belt between 20°N and 15°S (Cramp *et al.* 1983), but small numbers regularly penetrate further south into Zimbabwe, eastern and northern Botswana and the northern Transvaal. It is easily overlooked owing to its superficial similarity to the common Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*; also it is usually solitary and prefers different habitat to many other waders. It is found in ditches and along the narrow borders of small streams, often in woodlands, and frequents old-fashioned sewage works with areas of watery, grassy sludge beds. It is not a bird of coastal areas nor is it normally found on open mudflats in freshwater environments. It tends not to roost with other wader species.

Generally first arrivals are in September, but the earliest birds may appear in August. Most records are October–December (Irwin 1981; Herremans 1994d). They may be found up to late April or occasionally into early May. There are no reliable records of birds spending the austral winter in the region.

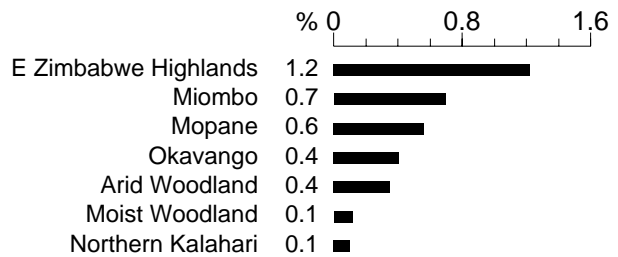
It is becoming a more frequent visitor to southern Africa; 25 years ago it was a vagrant this far south, with only 32 acceptable records until 1970 (Hockey *et al.* 1986). At certain sites in Zimbabwe it has become a regular visitor with ringed birds being recaptured up to three years later. However, numbers in Zimbabwe tend to fluctuate from year to year, as could be expected of a species on the periphery of its range. It appears to favour very damp conditions and is more likely to occur in wet years. Up to four birds have been observed roosting together at sewage works in the Harare area (1731CC) in wet years (pers. obs).

The small numbers of Green Sandpipers that visit southern Africa have limited conservation significance, apart from possibly representing those that migrate the farthest.



Recorded in 139 grid cells, 3.1%  
 Total number of records: 187  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 1.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



A.J. Tree

