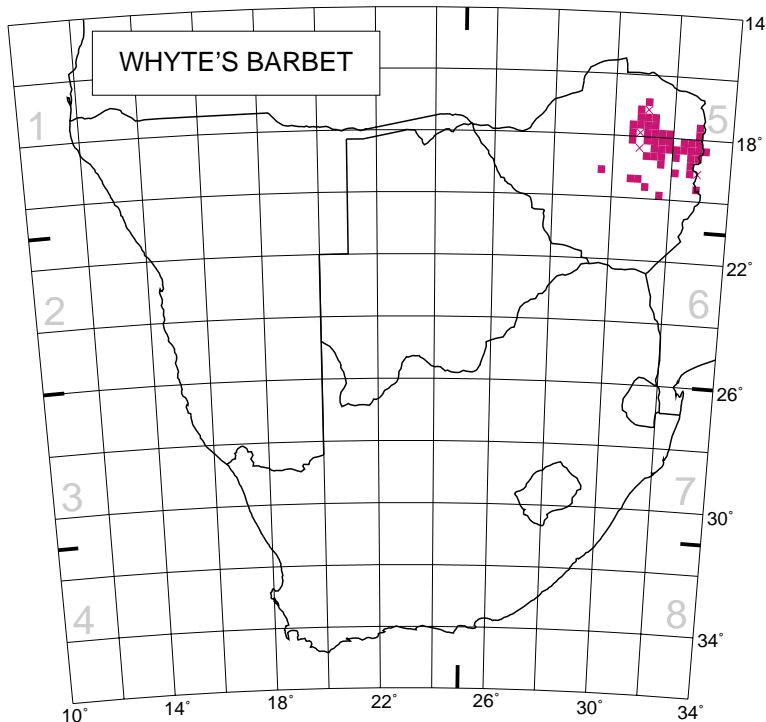


**Whyte's Barbet**  
*Geelbleshoutkapper*  
*Stactolaema whytii*

Whyte's Barbet is locally common in the climax and well-developed Miombo woodlands of the basal granite areas on the Zimbabwe highveld, particularly where figs *Ficus* spp. are present (Irwin 1981). It occurs up to 1900 m on Rukoto Mountain (1832BB) (Irwin 1981), but is not found inside the eastern highland forests where its place is taken by the White-eared Barbet *S. leucotis*. Its distribution extends northwards through similar woodlands into Malawi and Tanzania. Its presence at isolated localities in central Zimbabwe corresponds with the presence of *Brachystegia* associated with ranges of granite domes. It lacks the loud calls characteristic of many barbets, but its habit of sitting on the top of a dead branch above the canopy, and its characteristic shape and dark colour, make it conspicuous.

It is resident in larger areas of woodland, usually occurring in flocks of 3–8 birds. In August the flocks split up into pairs to breed, each pair claiming a suitable nest hole. The nests may be very close together, possibly because of lack of suitable dead branches which can be used for nests. It will use nest boxes and holes excavated by Blackcollared Barbets *Lybius torquatus*. It is easily ousted from nest holes by Crested Barbets *Trachyphonus vaillanti* (A.J. Tree pers. comm.). It will nest as low as 1 m above the ground and as high as the tallest tree in the woodland. Although breeding normally peaks October–November, following dry years breeding may not start until late November when the first rains have fallen.

It is noticeable that its range in many areas has been restricted by removal of larger trees and so movement between the remnant patches of tall woodland occurs, each of these patches not being big enough to support a flock throughout the year. Flight is fast and direct between woodlands. Although not currently endangered, the continued clearing of woodland for agriculture must have an adverse effect. However, Whyte's Barbets have become well established in Harare (1731CC) where there are *Brachystegia* trees.



Recorded in 52 grid cells, 1.1%  
 Total number of records: 621  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 19.3%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



P.J. Ginn

