

Spotted Creeper

Boomkruiper

Salpornis spilonotus

The Spotted Creeper is widespread in Africa south of the Sahara and also occurs in India (Maclean 1993b). The distribution in the atlas region is centred on the Mashonaland plateau in Zimbabwe, but it is known to occur also further west, and to the south around Masvingo (2031BB), and further east to around Rusape and Inyazura (Irwin 1981). Vagrants have been recorded from the Kruger National Park in the Transvaal lowveld (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b), and from Kasane (1725C) in northern Botswana (Randall 1994e).

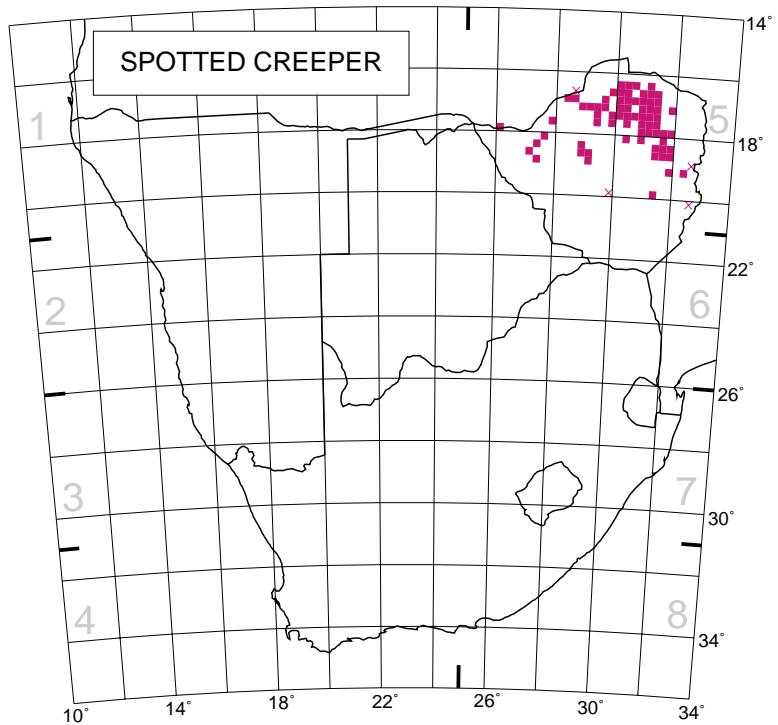
It is generally confined to miombo woodlands and is one of the most difficult of the woodland birds to find because of its habit of keeping a tree trunk between itself and an observer. Nevertheless, once found it is rather confiding and will often allow a close approach if the observer moves slowly and quietly. During the breeding season, territorial pairs are spaced through the woodland, but at other times they join bird parties which may contain many individuals – up to at least 10 on one occasion (P.J.G. pers. obs.).

It is normally found in tall and largely undisturbed miombo woodland, although it may occasionally be found in more open woodlands. It gleans on tree trunks which have rough bark and as a result the Msasa *Brachystegia spiciformis* is favoured, while other species such as the Mountain Acacia *Brachystegia glaucescens* are not. Consequently, it is more common in woodlands dominated by the former.

It is generally considered resident and sedentary, though wanderings have occasionally been noted (Tree 1987i, 1992d).

Breeding was recorded in spring and early summer, September–January. Irwin (1981) reported most egg-laying in September.

The Spotted Creeper is a miombo specialist sensitive to further destruction of its woodland habitat.



Recorded in 74 grid cells, 1.6%
 Total number of records: 481
 Mean reporting rate for range: 11.8%

P.J. Ginn and M. Herremans

