

Broadtailed Warbler

Breëstersanger

Schoenicola brevirostris

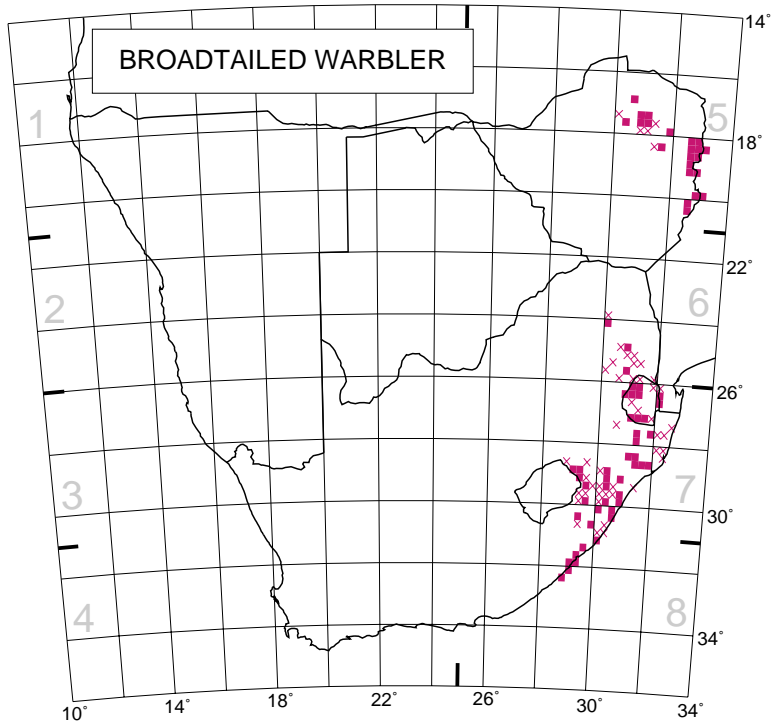
The Broadtailed Warbler is locally distributed in Transkei, KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and the eastern Transvaal; in Zimbabwe it is widely recorded across the central plateau, and in the eastern lowlands and highlands up to 1800 m (Irwin 1981). In the eastern Transvaal it occurs in the highveld and escarpment (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b), and 13 territorial males were noted in 20 ha (Brooke 1984b). The population in Swaziland was estimated to be 300 birds (Parker 1994). In KwaZulu-Natal it was sparsely recorded by Cyrus & Robson (1980), but more widely during the atlas period. Despite its fragmented distribution, it is monotypic in the region (Clancey 1980b).

It frequents tall, coarse, dense grass on the edges of vleis, seasonally moist grasslands, grassy hill-sides and along drainage lines, in grassland and woodland biomes in high-rainfall areas. Important vegetation zones, in declining order of importance, are Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands, East Coast Littoral and Miombo. It does not occur inside forest, but in adjacent suitable habitats. It is inconspicuous and easily overlooked (Took 1959b).

Reporting rates suggest that it is a summer migrant in Zimbabwe, but resident in KwaZulu-Natal, although more frequent in summer. Irwin (1981) suggested that it is a migrant in Zimbabwe, irregular from year to year, but possibly resident at low altitudes. In South Africa, Brooke (1984b) described it as a breeding migrant above 1200 m but probably resident at lower altitudes. It is a breeding summer migrant in the Transvaal and the highveld of Swaziland, recorded mainly December–January when males are conspicuous, but present late September–March (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Parker 1994).

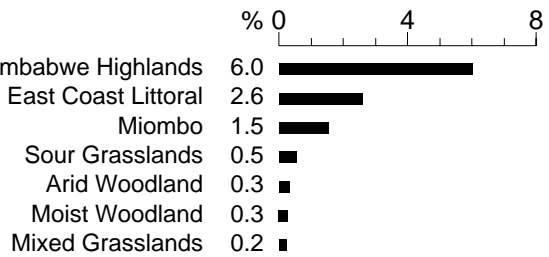
Eight breeding records were in summer. Egg-laying has been recorded November–February in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981), and January and March in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Brooke (1984b) suggested that it had declined in the Transkei and KwaZulu-Natal, but this is not substantiated. Population trends are difficult to assess because it is inconspicuous, localized, irregular and affected by changes in rainfall, burning and overgrazing (Skead 1967b; Macdonald &



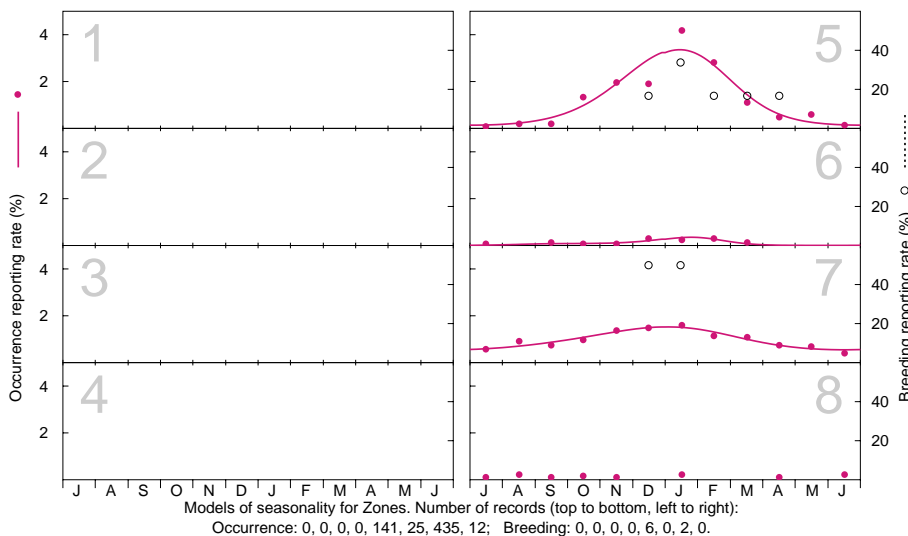
Recorded in 115 grid cells, 2.5%
 Total number of records: 613
 Mean reporting rate for range: 3.9%

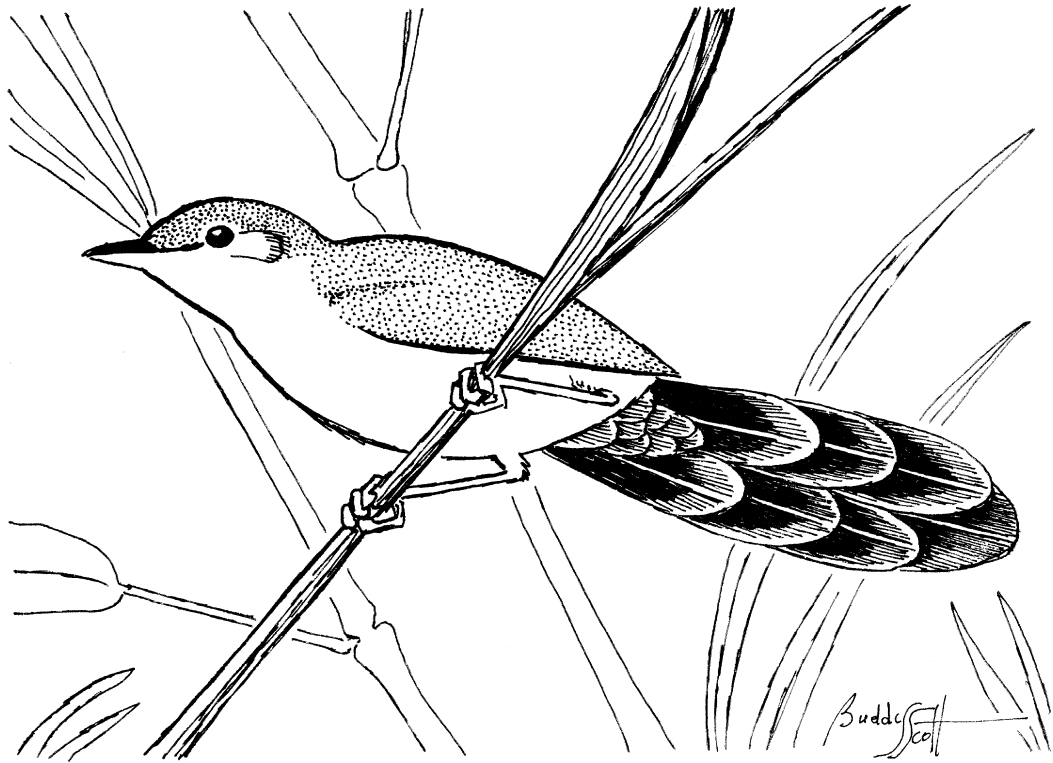
Reporting rates for vegetation types



Birkenstock 1980; Irwin 1981). The Broadtailed Warbler is listed as 'indeterminate' in South Africa (Brooke 1984b) but is widespread elsewhere in Africa.

A. Berruti





Broadtailed Warbler