

Garden Warbler

Tuinsanger

Sylvia borin

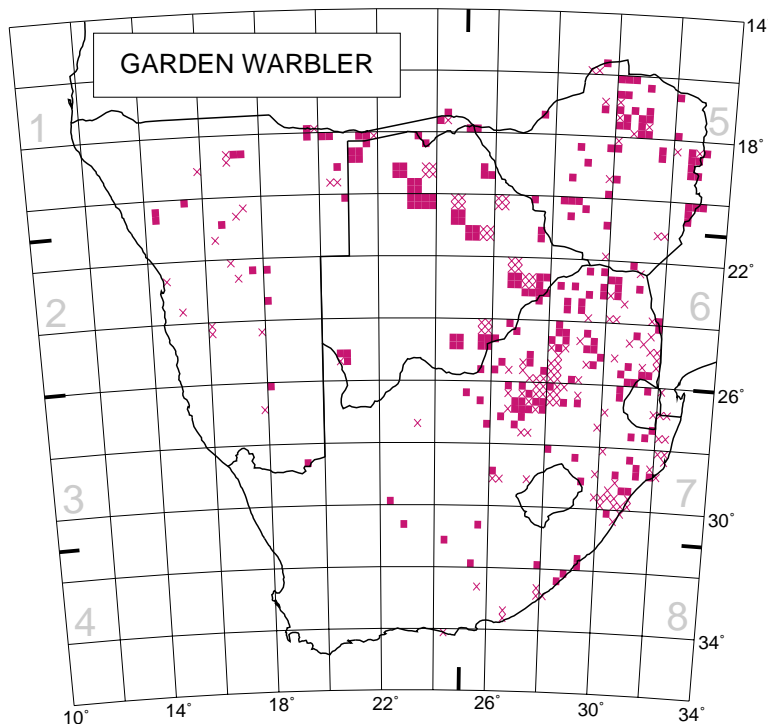
This Palearctic migrant is a summer visitor to the humid savannas throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Curry-Lindahl 1981; Pearson & Lack 1992). Two subspecies occur in southern Africa of which *S. b. woodwardi* prefers the drier zone and *borin* the higher-rainfall zone (Clancey 1980b; Maclean 1993b). The Garden Warbler is rare in the drier southwestern half of the subcontinent, where it is restricted to lush riverine vegetation or watered gardens and parks; it has repeatedly occurred at Swakopmund (2214DA) in the Namib Desert (atlas data; pers. obs.). It forages from the lower shrubs to the canopy, and is particularly attracted to soft berries, including those of the alien *Lantana camara*. It has been mist-netted near Cape Town (3318CD) at fruit-bearing trees (Martin *et al.* 1994).

It is drab, solitary, unobtrusive and poorly known in southern Africa, and must have been widely overlooked or misidentified. In surveys it was only sporadically found in northern Botswana (Herremans 1993c), but the maximum density of 1 bird/3 ha in *Baikiaea* woodland in March 1992 indicates that it can be fairly common in this habitat (Herremans 1994e), and in similarly lush woodlands (Ginn *et al.* 1989).

It is amongst the earliest Palearctic passerines to arrive (Ginn *et al.* 1989); in Zimbabwe (Zone 5) the first birds are noted in mid- to late September (Tree 1992d), but most arrive in October, and particularly in November (Taylor 1979; Herremans 1994d). Departure is in March–April. Arrival and departure are rather slow in terms of numbers of birds, but are almost synchronous over the region, indicating that individuals probably move fast, but that the timing between individuals is different. Ringed birds have regularly returned to the same sites in successive years (Taylor 1979; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b; Ginn *et al.* 1989; Hanmer 1989a; Medland 1993b; Rajmakers & Rajmakers 1994). A bird ringed in Finland was recovered in southern Zambia (Dowsett *et al.* 1988); there are no recoveries of birds ringed in southern Africa (SAFRING). Birds in southern Africa are likely to come from the eastern half of the breeding range which stretches as far as central Siberia (Moreau 1972; Rogacheva 1992).

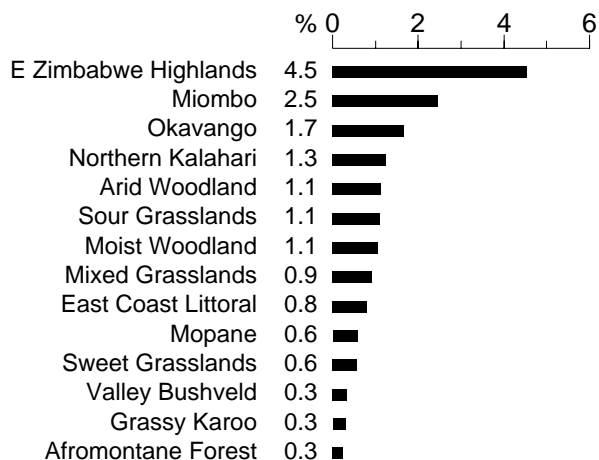
There are no resident *Sylvia* warblers in the region and it may not have a real ecological equivalent among the resident birds in southern Africa. The Garden Warbler does not appear to be subject to any threats while in the region.

M. Herremans



Recorded in 381 grid cells, 8.4%
Total number of records: 1120
Mean reporting rate for range: 2.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



Also marginally in Alpine Grasslands, Namibian Escarpment, Southern Kalahari, Nama Karoo, Namib, Central Kalahari and Fynbos.

