

Knysna Warbler

Knysnaruigtesanger

Bradypterus sylvaticus

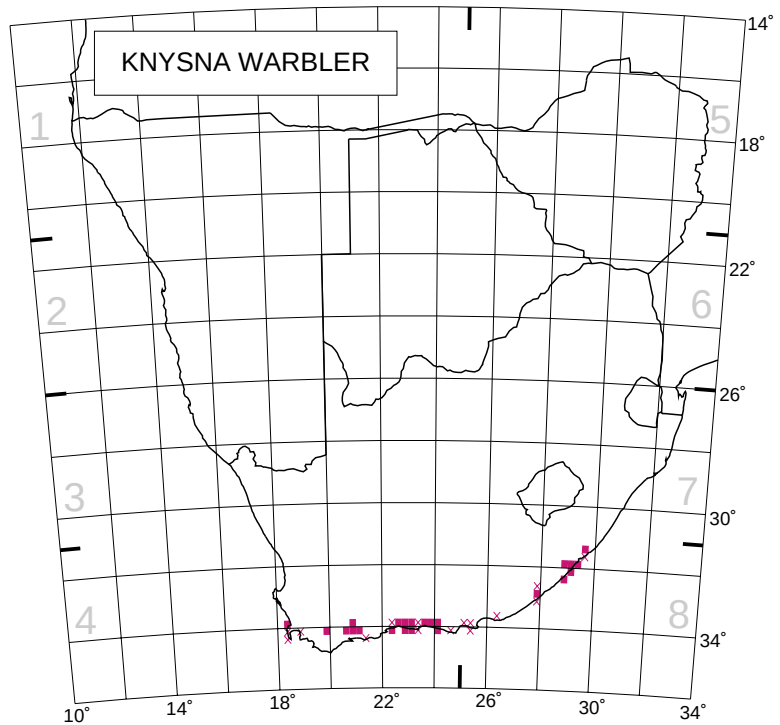
The Knysna Warbler is a South African endemic with a highly restricted and discontinuous range. It occurs locally in dense low growth, usually along watercourses, on the edges of temperate evergreen forests or in thickets of alien *Rubus* brambles, along the southern and eastern coasts. Its association with other vegetation types results from its presence in small forest patches occurring in these biomes. Two subspecies are recognized (Clancey 1980b) and there appears to be a wide gap between the eastern and southern Cape Province races.

Estimates of population sizes vary widely, but indicate that numbers are small: less than 100 pairs on the Cape Peninsula (Pringle 1977); less than 200 pairs for the southwestern Cape Province (Hockey *et al.* 1989) and 10 000s of individuals in total (Berruti *et al.* 1993), this last being a correction to the 100 000s proposed by Siegfried (1992).

It is secretive, usually being detected by its distinctive song, and is recorded mainly during the summer breeding season when it is vocal. It can also be detected by its less distinctive contact call at other times. In the eastern Cape Province and Transkei, it may be confused with the similar Barratt's Warbler *B. barratti*, but the songs are distinctive (Maclean 1993b) and contact calls differ slightly (Berruti *et al.* 1993).

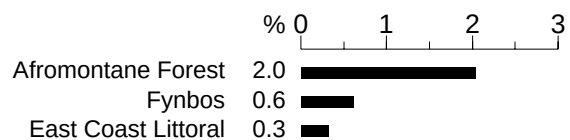
There is no evidence of seasonal migration (e.g. Hockey *et al.* 1989) and the suggestion that it is a winter visitor to KwaZulu-Natal (Clancey 1964b) is now doubted (Berruti *et al.* 1993, 1994a). Because of its secretive habits, breeding is rarely documented (Hofmeyr *et al.* 1961; Pringle 1977). It has been recorded nesting in the bases of sedges on stream banks (Hockey *et al.* 1989; C. Hilton-Taylor pers. comm.).

It was not recorded in KwaZulu-Natal by Cyrus & Robson (1980), nor during the atlas period. It probably had a relict distribution in KwaZulu-Natal and may now be locally extinct or nearly so (Berruti *et al.* 1993). Perhaps surprisingly, the Knysna Warbler was not listed as threatened in South Africa, but regarded as a species worth monitoring (Brooke 1984b). The burning of firebreaks adjacent to forest (Martin *et al.* 1982) and the clearing of brambles reduce its habitat.



Recorded in 36 grid cells, 0.8%
Total number of records: 199
Mean reporting rate for range: 2.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



A. Berruti

