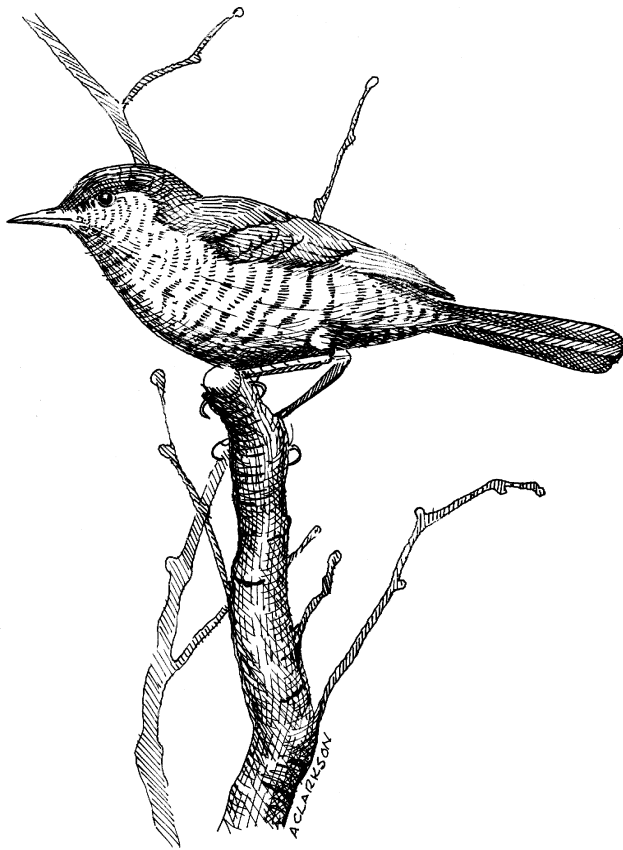




Stierling's Barred Warbler

Stierlingse Sanger

Calamonastes stierlingi

Stierling's Barred Warbler occurs in the woodlands of south-eastern Africa, from southern Tanzania to northern KwaZulu-Natal, and as far west as Zambia and the Caprivi Strip. In South Africa it is found from KwaZulu-Natal, to the lowveld of the eastern and northern Transvaal. It occurs widely in Zimbabwe and enters northeastern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip, and is sparsely present in Mozambique (Clancey 1971c) and eastern Swaziland (Parker 1994). It is generally sparse in the south of its range, but in transect counts in northern Botswana during February, it was found to be the most common Afrotropical warbler, occurring at densities of up to 1 pair/2.5–6 ha (Herremans & Herremans 1992b).

It is inconspicuous, usually seen singly or in pairs, and easily overlooked when not calling, or if its distinctive call is not known. It forages mainly at ground-level, but moves into the canopy when disturbed. It is easily confused with the Barred Warbler *C. fasciolatus*, but their ranges are largely exclusive. Its atlas distribution is thought to be relatively accurate, although it was under-recorded when not calling.

The definition of species' limits within the *Calamonastes* warblers (*C. stierlingi*, *C. fasciolatus* and *C. simplex*) has been controversial, and even the generic attribution of the group has been debated (Hall & Moreau 1970). The first two taxa occur in southern Africa where they are largely mutually exclusive but overlap in some areas, e.g. in the Soutpansberg (2229C,D), where they may hybridize (W.R. Tarboton pers. comm.). Stierling's Barred Warbler is known to hybridize with the Plain Bush Warbler *C. simplex* in Zambia (Benson *et al.* 1971). Their

recognition as separate species is warranted, although complete reproductive isolation between the forms has apparently not yet been achieved.

Habitat: It occupies woodland, where it is usually found in the understorey in, or close to, thickets, often associated with termite mounds. In southern Africa it is most common in miombo (*Brachystegia*) woodland, but also occurs in other broadleaved habitat, e.g. *Baikiaea* woodland (Irwin 1981; Herremans & Herremans 1992b; Penry 1994) and Mopane (Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b), and the latter authors also place it in Knobthorn *Acacia nigrescens* woodland. It was reported from *Acacia* woodlands in Swaziland (Parker 1994). In KwaZulu-Natal it occurs sparsely in mixed woodland (Cyrus & Robson 1980). During the atlas period, it was most frequently reported from Miombo.

Movements: It is resident. Modelled reporting rates show a spring and summer increase, presumably a function of increased vocalizations during this period. The seasonality of vocalizations presumably accounts for the lack of winter records in the southern regions (Zone 7), though the possibility of some movement, in and out of seasonal habitat at the fringe of the range, has been suggested (Herremans & Herremans 1992b; Herremans 1992f).

Breeding: Atlas records were September–March. Egg-laying has been reported November–February in the Transvaal (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) and September–March (mainly October–December) in Zimbabwe (Irwin 1981).

Interspecific relationships: In southern Africa, this species and the Barred Warbler are ecological equivalents in different woodland habitats: the Barred Warbler is confined to *Acacia* woodland in the west, while Stierling's Barred Warbler occurs mainly in miombo and broadleaved woodland, including Mopane and *Baikiaea*, although the latter also occurs in Knobthorn woodland in the extreme south of its range in the lowveld. They are segregated by habitat in Zimbabwe and northern Botswana where their ranges overlap (Irwin 1981; Herremans & Herremans 1992b). The degree of competition with other woodland warblers, such as the Grey-backed Warbler *Camaroptera brevicaudata*, is unknown.

Historical distribution and conservation: Its historical distribution is not known to have differed from that of the present day. Although not reported from KwaZulu-Natal by Clancey (1964b), its presence was presumably overlooked.

Although Stierling's Barred Warbler is not particularly common or widespread, it does not appear to be under threat. Any land use which results in the large-scale removal of trees will eliminate this species. In South Africa, much of its range is contained within protected areas.

A. Berruti

Recorded in 347 grid cells, 7.6%

Total number of records: 1813

Mean reporting rate for range: 10.4%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

