

Subalpine Warbler. Great Salt Lake Island, Co. Wexford, Ireland. 18th April 2009.  
Photo: Tom Shevlin.



# List of *Sylvia* Warblers with References

Compiled by Joe Hobbs



## Introduction

This is the final version of the *Sylvia* warbler's list, no further updates will be made. Grateful thanks to Tom Shevlin ([www.irishbirds.ie](http://www.irishbirds.ie)) for the cover images and all those who responded with constructive feedback. All images © the photographer.

Please note that this and other Reference Lists I have compiled are **not exhaustive** and are best employed in conjunction with other sources.

Joe Hobbs

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The general order of species follows the International Ornithologists' Union World Bird List (**Gill, F. & Donsker, D.** (eds.) 2019. IOC World Bird List. Available from: <https://www.worldbirdnames.org/> [version 9.1 accessed January 2019]).

## Final Version

Version 2.10 (January 2019).

## Cover

Main image: Subalpine Warbler. Great Saltee Island, Co. Wexford, Ireland. 18th April 2009. Tom Shevlin.

Vignette: Whitethroat. Ring Marsh, Our Lady's Island Lake, Co. Wexford, Ireland. 29th May 2010. Tom Shevlin.

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## Blackcap

***Sylvia atricapilla*** [Linnaeus].

[*S.a. atricapilla*] W Europe S to the Pyrenees & N Italy E to SW Siberia & N Kazakhstan and S to C Turkey & SW Russia. Winters W & S Europe and NW, W & E Africa.

[*S.a. dammholzi*] Caucasus & Transcaucasia S to N Iran. Winters Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire & NE Zambia.

[*S.a. paulucci*] WC Mediterranean.

[*S.a. heineken*] S Iberia, NW Africa and Madeira & Canary Islands.

[*S.a. gularis*] Cape Verde Islands & the Azores.

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## Garden Warbler

***Sylvia borin*** [Boddaert].

[*S.b. borin*] W Europe E to Finland, C Poland, W Hungary & N Balkans. Winters sub-Saharan Africa.

[*S.b. woodwardi*] C Poland, Balkans & Bulgaria E to the region of the upper R Yenisey (C Siberia). Winters E & S Africa.

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## Barred Warbler

*Sylvia nisoria* [Bechstein].

[*S.n. nisoria*] C Europe N to S Scandinavia & S Finland E to S Ural Mts & R Ural and S to E Italy, Balkans, N Turkey & N Iran. Winters E Africa.

[*S.n. merzbacheri*] SW Siberia & N Kazakhstan E to SE Mongolia and locally in C Asian mountains S to N Afghanistan & W Xinjiang (China). Winters E Africa.

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## Lesser Whitethroat

***Sylvia curruca*** [Linnaeus].

[*S.c. curruca*] Europe to W Siberia and S to Asia Minor & N Iran. Winters NE & E Africa and S Arabian Peninsula.

[*S.c. blythi*] NC Siberia & N Kazakhstan to N Mongolia & NE China. Winters S Asia.

[*S.c. halimodendri*] SE Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan to NW Mongolia. Winters SW Asia.

The proposed form *caucasica* is included with *S.c. curruca*.

The proposed form *telengitica* is included with *S.c. halimodendri*.

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## Lesser Whitethroat Allospecies

### Desert Lesser Whitethroat

*Sylvia minula* [Hume].

[*S.m. minula*] SE Kazakhstan & Turkmenistan E to Xinjiang (W China) and possibly E Iran & W Afghanistan. Winters Arabia E to NW India.

[*S.m. margelanica*] Mountain ranges from Qaidam Pendi (Qinghai, China) N to SW Gobi and W to Lop-Nor Salt Marshes (China). Winters Pakistan, NW India & Iran.

The proposed form *jaxartica* is included with *S.m. minula*.

Other name: Small Whitethroat, Margelanic Lesser Whitethroat (*margelanica*).

### Mountain Lesser Whitethroat

*Sylvia althaea* [Hume].

Karatau Mts (S Kazakhstan) E to SW & C Tien Shan and S thru mountains to NW Himalayas, Afghanistan, SE Iran & W Pakistan. Winters S Iran E to S India & Sri Lanka and probably S Afghanistan, S Iraq & SE Arabian peninsula.

The proposed form *monticola* is included with *S. althaea*.

Other name: Hume's Whitethroat.

**Allan Octavian Hume** (1829-1912), English theosophist, poet and writer on Indian birds who became known as the 'Father of Indian Ornithology'. He was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress.

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## Western Orphean Warbler

***Sylvia hortensis*** [J.F. Gmelin].

[*S.h. hortensis*] SW & S Europe E to Switzerland & Italy and SW Morocco E to Libya. Winters Senegal E to Niger & Chad.

[*S.h. cyrenaicae*] NE Libya.

In Greek mythology, Orpheus was the son of Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope, who was renowned as a musician, poet and prophet. Temminck had previously assigned *Sylvia orphea* to this species and Gould derived the vernacular name from this.

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### Eastern Orphean Warbler

***Sylvia crassirostris*** [Cretzschmar].

[*S.c. crassirostris*] Slovenia E to Turkey, the Levant, NW Iran & W Azerbaijan. Winters mainly Sudan E to W Yemen.

[*S.c. balchanica*] Iran & Transcaspia. Winters Oman, S Iran & Pakistan.

[*S.c. jerdoni*] SC Asia. Winters India.

Svensson (2012) treats *balchanica* as a synonym of *jerdoni*.

Other name: Jerdon's Orphean Warbler (*jerdoni*).

**Thomas Claverhill Jerdon** (1811-1872), British physician, amateur botanist and wildlife author who published the *Birds of India* between 1862 and 1864.

In Greek mythology, Orpheus was the son of Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope, who was renowned as a musician, poet and prophet. Temminck had previously assigned *Sylvia orphea* to this species and Gould derived the vernacular name from this.

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## Arabian Warbler

***Sylvia leucomelaena*** [Hemprich & Ehrenberg].

[*S.l. leucomelaena*] Tabuk & Khaybar (NW Saudi Arabia) S to S Yemen and E to Dhofar (Oman).

[*S.l. negevensis*] Arava Valley (on the Israel - Jordan border).

[*S.l. blanfordi*] Gebel Elba (SE Egypt) S along the coast to SE Eritrea.

[*S.l. somaliensis*] Djibouti & N Somalia.

Other names: Red Sea Warbler, Blanford's Warbler (*somaliensis* & *blanfordi*).

**William Thomas Blanford** (1832-1905), British geologist and ornithologist who was president of the Royal Geographical Society from 1888 and 1890.

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## Asian Desert Warbler

***Sylvia nana*** [Hemprich & Ehrenberg].

N & E Caspian Sea coasts, C & NE Iran E thru C Asian steppe to Mongolia. Winters Red Sea coast thru Sinai, S Israel, Arabia, Iran & Pakistan E to Rajasthan & Kutch (NW India).

The proposed form *theresae* is included with *S. nana*.

Treated by del Hoyo *et al.* 2006 to be polytypic with races *nana* & *deserti*.

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## **African Desert Warbler**

*Sylvia deserti* [Loche].

Western Sahara E to W Libya.

Treated by del Hoyo *et al.* 2006 as a race of *Sylvia nana*.

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## Whitethroat

***Sylvia communis*** [Latham].

[*S.c. communis*] W Europe E to N European Russia & Ukraine, N Turkey and NW Africa. Winters mainly W & C Africa.

[*S.c. volgensis*] SE European Russia E to SW Siberia & N Kazakhstan. Winter range not fully established.

[*S.c. icterops*] Turkey, the Levant, Caucasus, Transcaucasia & N Iran E to Turkmenistan. Winters E & S Africa.

[*S.c. rubicola*] Russian Altai S to SE Uzbekistan and E to N Mongolia & S Transbaikalia (all C Asian mountain regions). Winters E & S Africa.

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## Dartford Warbler

*Sylvia undata* [Boddaert].

[*S.u. undata*] S France, Iberian peninsula, Menorca and locally in N Mallorca (Balearic Islands), Corsica, Sardinia, Scilly & Italy.

[*S.u. toni*] NE Morocco E to N Tunisia and possibly S Iberia. Winters S to the northern edge of the Sahara.

[*S.u. dartfordiensis*] S England, W France, NW Spain & N Portugal.

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## **Marmora's Warbler**

***Sylvia sarda*** [Temminck].

Corsica & Sardinia and some islands in the Tuscan archipelago including Capraia, Elba, Pianosa (off W coast Italy) and probably islands off SW Sicily. Winters NE Algeria E to NW Libya.

**Alberto Ferrero Della Marmora** (1789-1863), Italian naturalist who was also a general in the Napoleonic Wars and was personally decorated by Napoleon I.

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- Gantlett, S.** 2001. A Checklist of the Bird Forms of Britain and Ireland. *Birding World* 14(1): 19-20.
- Hutton, T.** 2010. Reports: The Marmora's Warbler in Gwent. *Birding World* 23(6): 235-237.
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- Lunn, J.** 1985. Marmora's Warbler: new to Britain and Ireland. *British Birds* 78(10): 475-481.
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- Hutton, T.** 2010. A Marmora's on the moor. Marmora's Warbler: Bloreng, Gwent, 3-15 June 2010. *Birdwatch* 218: 58-59.

### Balearic Warbler

*Sylvia balearica* [von Jordans].

Balearic Islands except Menorca.

Previously considered conspecific with Marmora's Warbler.

**Eds.** 2009. Frontispiece: Male Balearic Warbler, Cape Formentor, Mallorca, March 2009 - picture by Eric Didner. *Birding World* 22(5): 177.

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### Tristram's Warbler

*Sylvia deserticola* [Tristram].

[*S.d. deserticola*] Atlas Saharien & Aurès Mts from Ain Sefra (NW Algeria) E to Gafsa (Tunisia).

Winters S to Tademaït Plateau, Tassili n-Ajjer & Ahaggar Mts (C & S Algeria), NE Mali & C Libya.

[*S.d. maroccana*] Haut & Moyen Atlas from Jebel Igdet (Morocco) E to Tlemcen (NW Algeria). Winters S as far as Nouakchott (W Mauritania) in W Saharan oases.

The proposed form *ticehursti* is more than likely an invalid taxon. It is known from the type specimen only, which was collected at Ouarzazate (S Morocco). It is possibly an extinct race of Tristram's Warbler or an aberrant instance of *S.d. maroccana* or a hybrid x with African Desert Warbler.

Other name: Meinertzhagen's Warbler (*ticehursti*).

**Reverend Henry Baker Tristram FRS** (1822-1906), canon of Durham cathedral, traveller, naturalist, archaeologist and antiquarian.

**Richard Meinertzhagen** (1878-1967), British Empire builder, naturalist and chancer.

**Eds.** 1990. Country varia: Morocco. *Dutch Birding* 12(1): 27-30 (plate 16, p. 27).

**Fisher, D.** 1991. Morocco. *British Birds* 84(9): 371-378 (375).

**Gailly, D.** 2017. Tristram's Warbler at Montpellier, France, in May 2016. *Dutch Birding* 39(3): 196-198.

**van Bemmelen, R.S.A. & Groenendijk, D.** 2002. Masters of Mystery Solution: Tristram's Warbler. *Dutch Birding* 24(5): 300-301.

## Spectacled Warbler

*Sylvia conspicillata* [Temminck].

[*S.c. conspicillata*] Iberia E to Italy including Sicily and NW Africa S to WC Mauritania and Cyprus & S Turkey and scattered populations in The Levant. Winters mainly NW Africa, N Egypt & E Mediterranean.

[*S.c. orbitalis*] Madeira, Canary Islands & Cape Verde Islands. Mainly resident but some dispersal from Canary Islands to NW Africa.

- Amies, P.A.** 1990. Notes: Spectacled Warblers feeding in association with Finsch's Wheatear. *British Birds* 83(2): 73.
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- Davidson, A.** 2017. One day spectacle. Spectacled Warbler: Portland, Dorset, 8 May 2017. *Birdwatch* 301: 10-11.
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- Guerrieri, G. & Santucci, B.R.** 1996. Habitat et reproduction de la Fauvette à lunettes *Sylvia conspicillata*, en Italie centrale [Habitat and reproduction of the Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*, in central Italy]. *Alauda* 64(1): 17-30.
- Gül, O. & Atahan, M.** 2011. A new breeding location of Spectacled Warblers *Sylvia conspicillata* in Turkey. *Sandgrouse* 33(1): 4-7.
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## Subalpine Warbler

### *Sylvia cantillans* [Pallas].

[*S.c. cantillans*] Sicily, C & S Italy. Winters W Sahel.

[*S.c. albistriata*] Extreme NE Italy S along N Adriatic coast to Albania and E to S Bulgaria, Greece, W Turkey & SW Romania. Winters E Mali E to NW Sudan.

[*S.c. inornata*] W Haut Atlas (Morocco) E to N Tunisia and locally in NW Libya.

[*S.c. iberiae*] Iberia, S France & NW Italy. Winters S Morocco, C & S Algeria and Mauritania & Senegal E to Niger.

Forms *inornata* and *iberiae* are a proposed split as Western Subalpine Warbler *S. inornata*.

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### **Moltoni's Warbler**

***Sylvia subalpina*** [Temminck].

Balearic Islands, Corsica, Sardinia, some islands in the Tuscan archipelago, N & C Italy and possibly SE France. Winters W Sahel.

Species initially designated as *Sylvia moltonii* Orlando 1937, only later emerging that *Sylvia subalpina* took precedence (Baccetti *et al.* 2007).

**Professor Dr. Edgardo Moltoni** (1896-1980), eminent Italian ornithologist who was director of the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Milano (Natural History Museum, Milan).

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## Sardinian Warbler

***Sylvia melanocephala*** [J.F. Gmelin].

[*S.m. melanocephala*] NW Africa, Iberia & Mediterranean basin E to W Turkey. Winters S to N Senegal, S Algeria & N Niger.

[*S.m. leucogastra*] Canary Islands.

[*S.m. valverdei*] Tiznit (S Morocco) S to C Western Sahara (Tropic of Cancer) and E to the edge of the Sahara.

[*S.m. momus*] The Levant. Winters S to N Sudan with some altitudinal movement also.

[*S.m. norrisae*] Formerly Faiyum (Egypt). Extinct since about 1940.

The proposed form *pasiphae* is included with *S.m. melanocephala*.

The extinct form *norrisae* was possibly a localised morph of *S.m. momus*.

Other name: Fayyum Warbler (*norrisae*).

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## Menetries's Warbler

*Sylvia mystacea* [Ménétries].

[*S.m. mystacea*] Transcaucasia & W Caspian Sea and NE Turkey, N Iran E to SW Turkmenistan. Winters Sudan, Somalia, Arabia & S Iran.

[*S.m. turcmenica*] Turkmenistan & E Iran E to Baluchistan & Tadjikistan and N to Aral Sea. Winters Sudan, Somalia, Arabia & S Iran.

[*S.m. rubescens*] SE Turkey E thru Iraq to SW Iran. Winters Sudan, Somalia, Arabia & S Iran.

**Edouard P. Ménétries** (1802-1861), French zoologist who was an authority on Lepidoptera and Coleoptera. He collected in Brazil and Russia and later became Conservator of Collections at the Russia Academy of Sciences.

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**Wassink, A.** 2015. Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data, part 6. *Dutch Birding* 37(1): 28-32 (30).

## Rüppell's Warbler

*Sylvia ruppeli* [Temminck].

S Greece, Crete, islands in the Aegean Sea, W & S Turkey & NW Syria. Winters Sahel region of Chad & Sudan.

**Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Rüppell** (1794-1884), German collector who travelled extensively in northern and eastern Africa.

**Anon.** 1991. Country varia: Israel. *Dutch Birding* 13(1): 20-28 (plate 29, p. 25).

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## Cyprus Warbler

*Sylvia melanothorax* [Tristram].

Cyprus. Winters Dead Sea & NE Egypt S & E thru Arava depression & NW Saudi Arabia and S to NE Sudan.

- Anon.** 1991. Country varia: Israel. *Dutch Birding* 13(1): 20-28 (plate 25, p. 23).
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## Yemen Warbler

***Sylvia buryi*** [Ogilvie-Grant].

Asir Mts (SW Saudi Arabia) & W Yemen.

Treated as *Parisoma buryi* by some.

Other names: Arabian Warbler, Arabian Tit-babbler, Arabian Tit-warbler, Yemen Parisoma, Yemen Tit-warbler.

**George Wyman Bury** (1874-1920), English explorer and naturalist who travelled in Arabia from 1896 to 1909.

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- Braüning, C.** 1988. A nest of the Yemen Warbler. *Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of the Middle East* 21: 11.
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- Jennings, M.C.** 1981. Some notes on birds of western Saudi Arabia. *Journal of the Saudi Arabian Natural History Society* 2: 8-14.
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- Lobley, G.** 2010. Birding Arabia: an introduction. *Birding World* 23(4): 160-174 (plate 16, p. 169).
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## Brown Warbler

***Sylvia lugens*** [Rüppell].

[*S.l. lugens*] Ethiopian plateaux (except the Bale Mts).

[*S.l. griseiventris*] Bale Mts (Ethiopia).

[*S.l. jacksoni*] S Sudan & Uganda to Kenya, N Tanzania, Malawi & SE DR Congo.

[*S.l. clara*] Matengo Highlands (Malawi).

[*S.l. prigoginei*] Itombwe Highlands (DR Congo).

Treated as *Parisoma lugens* by some.

Other names: Brown Parisoma, Brown Sylvia, Brown Tit-babbler, Brown Tit-flycatcher, Brown Tit-warbler.

- Erard, C.** 1978. A new race of *Parisoma lugens* from the highlands of Bale, Ethiopia. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologist' Club* 98: 43-49.
- Rabøl, J.** 1987. Coexistence and competition between overwintering Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* and local warblers at Lake Naivasha, Kenya. *Ornis Scandinavica* 18(2): 101-121.
- Schaefer, H-C. et al.** 2004. Life-history of two African *Sylvia* warblers: low annual fecundity and long post-fledging care. *Ibis* 146(3): 427-437.
- Schaefer, H-C. et al.** 2005. Nest predation is little affected by parental behaviour and nest site in two African *Sylvia* warblers. *Journal of Ornithology* 146(2): 167-175.
- Schaefer, H-C. et al.** 2006. Monthly survival of African *Sylvia* warblers in a seasonally arid tropical environment. *Ibis* 148(3): 411-424.

### Banded Warbler

***Sylvia boehmi*** [Reichenow].

[*S.b. boehmi*] S Kenya & Tanzania.

[*S.b. marsabit*] NC Kenya.

[*S.b. somalicum*] NW Somalia & N Ethiopia.

Treated as *Parisoma boehmi* by some.

Other names: Banded *Parisoma*, Banded *Sylvia*, Banded Tit-babbler, Banded Tit-flycatcher, Banded Tit-warbler.

**Richard Boehm** (1854-1884), German ornithologist and collector in tropical Africa.

**Schaefer, H-C. et al.** 2004. Life-history of two African *Sylvia* warblers: low annual fecundity and long post-fledging care. *Ibis* 146(3): 427-437.

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**Schaefer, H-C. et al.** 2006. Monthly survival of African *Sylvia* warblers in a seasonally arid tropical environment. *Ibis* 148(3): 411-424.

### Chestnut-vented Warbler

***Sylvia subcaeruleum*** [Vieillot].

[*S.s. subcaeruleum*] W South Africa E to SW Free State & Eastern Cape.

[*S.s. cinerascens*] Namibia & Botswana.

[*S.s. ansorgei*] Angola.

[*S.s. orpheana*] Transvaal, Natal, W Zululand & Orange Free State (South Africa), Zimbabwe & Lesotho.

Treated by del Hoyo *et al.* 2006 as *Sylvia subcaerulea*.

Treated as *Parisoma subcaeruleum* by some.

Other names: Cape Warbler, Cape Tit-babbler, Cape Tit-warbler, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Rufous-vented Warbler, Southern Warbler, Southern Tit-warbler, Tit Babbler.

**Auer, S.K. et al.** 2007. Biparental incubation in the chestnut-vented tit-babbler *Parisoma subcaeruleum*: mates devote equal time, but males keep eggs warmer. *Journal of Avian Biology* 38(3): 278-283.

**Kopij, G.** 2005. Diet of some insectivorous passerines in semi-arid regions of South Africa. *Ostrich* 76(1-2): 85-90.

**Péron, G. & Altwegg, R.** 2015. The abundant centre syndrome and species distributions: insights from closely related species pairs in southern Africa. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 24(2): 215-225.

### Layard's Warbler

***Sylvia layardi*** [Hartlaub].

[*S.l. layardi*] SW Cape Province N to Port Nolloth (South Africa).

[*S.l. aridicola*] NW Cape N to Namibia and E to Orange Free State & W Transvaal (South Africa).

[*S.l. barnesi*] Lesotho.

[*S.l. subsolanum*] E Cape Province (South Africa).

Treated as *Parisoma layardi* by some.

Other names: Layard's Tit-babbler, Layard's Tit-flycatcher, Layard's Tit-warbler.

**Edgar Leopold Layard** (1824-1900), Italian born British civil servant and ornithologist who served in South Africa. He was the author of the first complete book on South African birds.

- Clancey, P.A.** 1997. Subspeciation in Layard's Tit-babblers of the southwestern Afrotropics. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 117: 244-247.
- Kopij, G.** 2005. Diet of some insectivorous passerines in semi-arid regions of South Africa. *Ostrich* 76(1-2): 85-90.
- Péron, G. & Altwegg, R.** 2015. The abundant centre syndrome and species distributions: insights from closely related species pairs in southern Africa. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 24(2): 215-225.