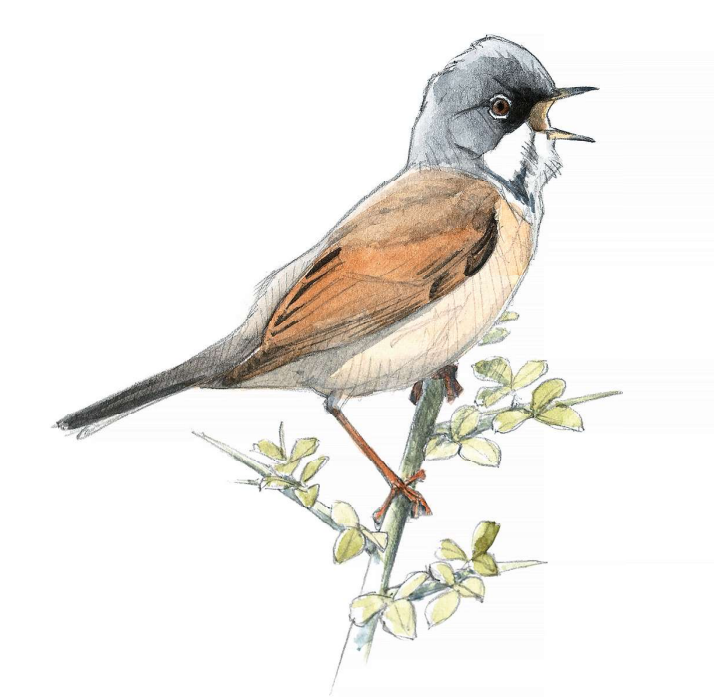


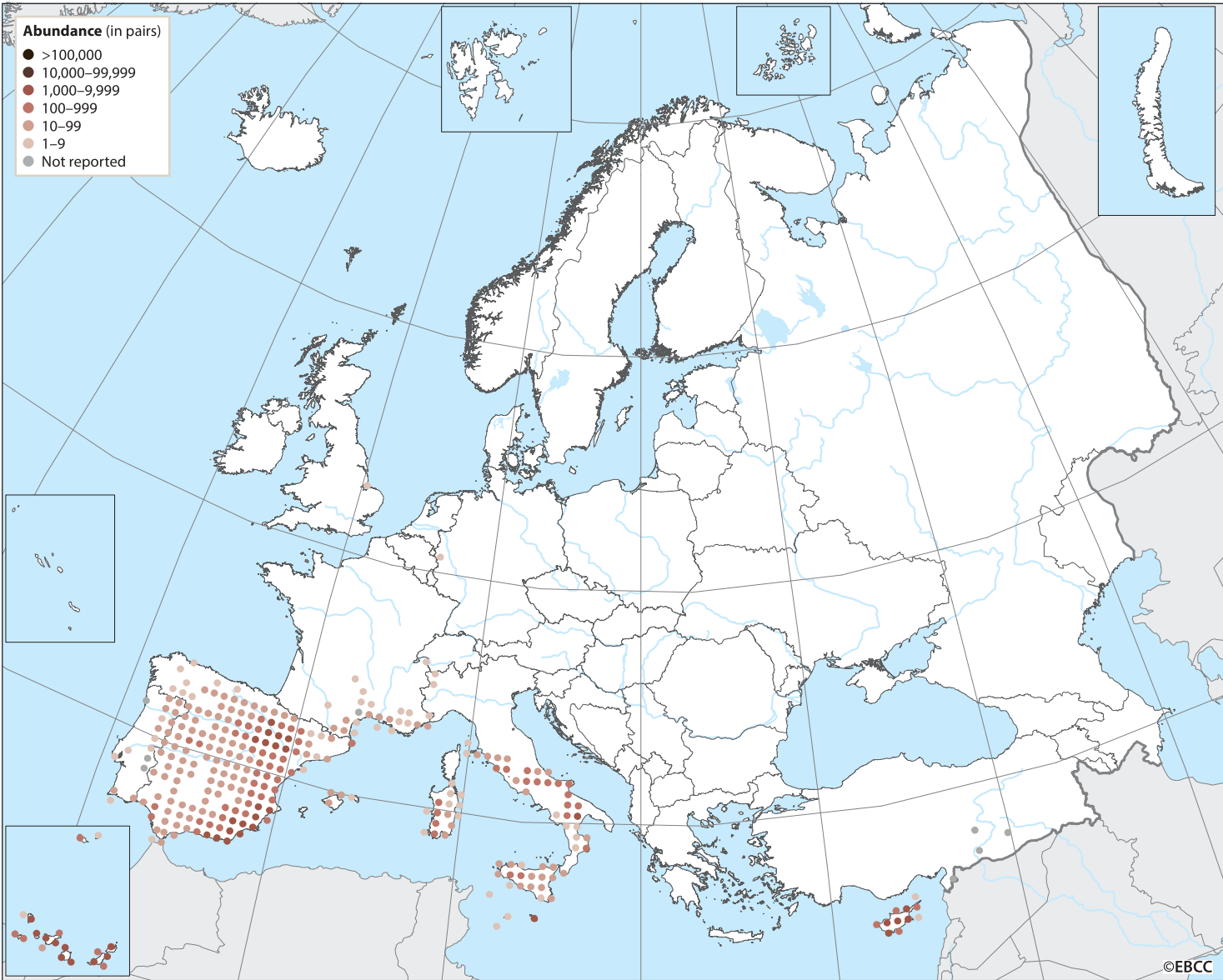
*Sylvia conspicillata*

Spectacled Warbler



The Spectacled Warbler shows a patchy distribution around the Mediterranean Basin, from the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula to the Levant, while it is widespread in the Macaronesian archipelagos of Madeira, the Canary Islands and Cape Verde [HBW]. In general, Mediterranean populations are considered medium-distance migrants wintering in the pre-Sahara or the Sahara [HBW], whereas populations in Macaronesia, SE Spain, Sicily and Cyprus are mostly sedentary. Nevertheless, dispersal movements have been detected in all populations by using molecular markers (Illera *et al.* 2014). Only two subspecies are recognised: *conspicillata*, which occurs around the Mediterranean region, and *orbitalis*, which is only found in Macaronesia [HBW].

Results from the abundance map show a widespread distribution in the Iberian Peninsula, except along the Atlantic coasts, with 125,000–300,000 estimated breeding pairs [ERL]. In Italy (10,000–20,000 pairs; ERL) the species appears with a continuous distribution in Sicily and Sardinia and a patchier one in the S half of the Italian Peninsula. This warbler is also locally abundant and widespread across the Canary Islands (20,000–100,000 pairs; ERL) and Cyprus (7,000–15,000 pairs; ERL). However, distribution is always uneven, and its true absence from many areas that appeared suitable for this species in the EBBA2 modelled map is noticeable. Its real occurrence is very patchy, as observed at the 10-km level in France [AtFR] or Spain [AtES].



The change map does not show a very clear pattern of gains and losses, but the former are slightly more frequent in the N half of the map and the latter in the S. Such a northward shift would be consistent with climatic projections for the species (Doswald *et al.* 2009). The confirmed breeding in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) in 2017 (König *et al.* 2017) is a striking example of such a trend. The population is considered stable as a whole in Spain [ERL], but decreasing in France [AtFR]. Population trends in the core regions (SE Spain, Canary Islands) are not well known.

The species inhabits open and semi-arid habitats characterised by sparse shrublands from the coast to high altitudes (>2000 m asl). Where the Spectacled Warbler occurs sympatrically with other *Sylvia* warblers, it prefers lower open scrub, while in areas with fewer competitors it also occupies more vegetated and diversified habitats (Shirihai *et al.* 2001). In the Canary Islands, this warbler also occurs in farmland, gardens and close to urban areas (Martín & Lorenzo 2001). Its habitat becomes unsuitable with the development of intensive agriculture (greenhouses, tree crops, etc.) or urbanisation, as has happened in SE Spain. Reforestation of rangelands may also provoke the development of unfavourable habitats, as has occurred in NE Spain. By contrast, forest fires in E Spain have locally created new appropriate ecological conditions for this species [AtES].

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