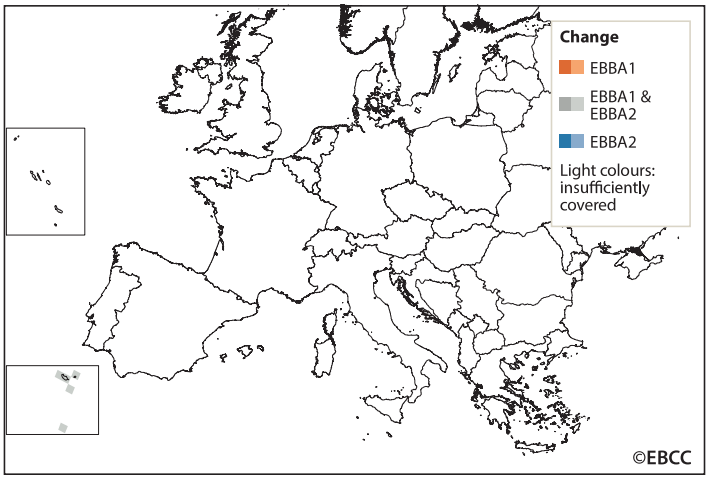
Anthus berthelotii Berthelot's Pipit



The Berthelot's Pipit is endemic to the archipelagos of Madeira, Selvagens and the Canary Islands. Two subspecies are recognised, *berthelotii* in the Canaries and Selvagens, and *madeirensis* in Madeira, but a strong genetic structure and significant differences in some morphological traits have been found in the three archipelagos. The limited genetic structure within archipelagos suggests dispersal events among islands (Illera *et al.* 2007, Spurgin *et al.* 2014). The genetic relationships and patterns imply that the Berthelot's Pipit originally colonised the Canary Islands and only later spread from there to the Madeiran Archipelago and Selvagens Islands (Illera *et al.* 2007).

The largest breeding population is found in the Canary Islands (>100,000 pairs), followed by the Madeiran Archipelago (2,500–10,000 individuals) and Selvagens (>300 individuals; Equipa Atlas 2013), reflecting the size and habitat availability of each island group. Berthelot's Pipits inhabit all main islands and the biggest islets of the three Macaronesian archipelagos, and are absent only from the smallest islets. The species occurs from the coast to over 3000 m asl in El Teide, Tenerife (Canary Islands). Its distribution in the Canary Islands is positively related with open habitats dominated by shrubs and herbs, and negatively associated with dense woodland habitats (Carrascal & Palomino 2005). Habitat selection is similar in Madeira and Selvagens. Berthelot's Pipit is the only breeding land bird in the Selvagens, and the most widespread terrestrial bird species breeding in the Canary Islands, where it can reach high densities, much higher ones than the related Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* in the Iberian Peninsula (Carrascal & Palomino 2005).

There is no information about population trends. However, according to the information published during the 20th century, it is plausible that distribution and abundance have remained stable.

Recent studies have recorded high prevalence values of both avian malaria and poxvirus in the E and central Canary Islands, and in Porto Santo in Madeira (Illera *et al.* 2008a). Studies on the dynamics of these pathogens as well as their effects on pipit fitness and population trends are needed.

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