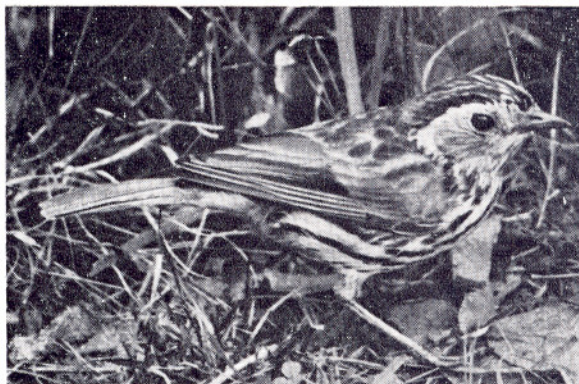


## SPECKLED WARBLER



• *Speckled Warbler (male) approaching nest.*

Photo: K. A. Hindwood



• *Speckled Warbler (female) with food for nestlings.*

Photo: R. Edden

## Speckled Warbler *Chthonicola sagittata*

Interpretation of the black and reddish 'eyebrows' in the Speckled Warbler was first attempted by S. and D. Wilson (1965). They found that this difference was not seasonal, but they failed to show whether it was a sex character because skins they examined were incompletely labelled.

### Sexing

Examination of more recent material has shown that 'eyebrow' colour is indeed a sex character, male Speckled Warblers having a black 'eyebrow' and females having a reddish 'eyebrow'. It appears that this difference between the sexes is assumed with the first feathers. The sexes also differ in size—adult males are larger—but there is an overlap with juvenile and immature birds. A detailed description of these characters follows.

### Male

White lores extend as a white stripe over and behind the eyes. An increasingly broad black band runs above this stripe from the lores to the side of the nape. This band may be partly hidden by the crown feathers above the eye, but is always visible behind the eye.

### Female

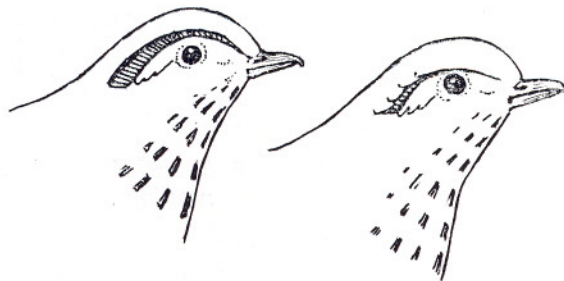
Similar to male but with band reddish brown instead of black. As with the male this band may be obscured over the eye, but is usually plainly visible behind it.

### Ageing

It is likely that juvenile, first and second year birds can be distinguished, but further material is needed to confirm this.

### Reference

Wilson, S. and D. (1965), 'A Plumage Problem in the Speckled Warbler', *Aust. Bird Bander* 3:52.



- The 'eyebrow' is shown fully exposed in the figure at left, and partly hidden in the other figure (see text).

Drawings by C. Tanner