



Redfronted Tinker Barbet

Rooiblestinker

Pogoniulus pusillus

Two isolated populations of the Redfronted Tinker Barbet occur in Africa, in East Africa and in southern Africa where the range is smaller (Fry *et al.* 1988). The species occurs from 24°E to northern KwaZulu-Natal along the littoral and immediate hinterland, generally below 1000 m. It also occurs in lower-lying areas of eastern Swaziland and southern Mozambique (Clancey 1971c). The two subspecies recognized by Clancey (1980b) show continuous ranges on the present map.

It is easily overlooked when not calling as it sits unobtrusively high up in the forest canopy. However, in summer it spends a large part of the day calling a long series of monotonously repeated notes. It is a solitary, territorial species. An orange-fronted form of the Yellowfronted Tinker Barbet *P. chrysoconus*, occurring in the Transvaal, can be confused with the Redfronted Tinker Barbet (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

Habitat: It prefers forest and adjacent thick bush; it also occurs in lush riparian woodland. The highest reporting rates are in the East Coast Littoral of KwaZulu-Natal and Valley Bushveld in the eastern Cape Province.

Movements: The atlas data show no evidence for seasonal movements and it appears to be resident throughout its range in South Africa. In East Africa it apparently moves between more arid woodlands and forests (Fry *et al.* 1988).

Breeding: Evidence for breeding was recorded August–April, which considerably extends the October–December breeding season previously reported in the region (Dean 1971; Maclean 1993b).

Interspecific relationships: The ranges of Redfronted and Yellowfronted Tinker Barbets meet in northern Swaziland (Parker 1994) and there is marginal overlap, e.g. at Tshaneni (2631BA) (Monadjem *et al.* 1994b). The territorial vocalizations of both species are more similar in the area of sympatry than anywhere else in the ranges (Monadjem *et al.* 1994b), suggesting that interspecific territories may be established, which would act as a mechanism against wider overlap. The Goldenrumped Tinker Barbet *P. bilineatus* also occurs in this region of northern Swaziland and overlaps with both Redfronted and Yellowfronted Tinker Barbets (Parker 1994). Redfronted and Goldenrumped Tinker Barbets often

occur together in the littoral forests of KwaZulu-Natal and in the east of Swaziland. In the Transvaal, the Redfronted Tinker Barbet occurs in the extreme southeast, south of Swaziland, between Pongola (2731BC) and Golela (2731BD) where the other species are absent (Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). The two populations of Redfronted Tinker Barbet in the Transvaal are separated by an area in which Yellowfronted Tinker Barbets occur (Ross 1970). Milstein (1995), however, recorded both species in the same area along the Drakensberg escarpment in the eastern Transvaal.

Historical distribution and conservation: Although McLachlan & Liversidge (1957, 1970) and Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1962) showed the Redfronted Tinker Barbet for the southern and central Transvaal, it is doubtful that it ever occurred there. There are also numerous subsequent records reported in local Transvaal bird club newsletters. These may refer to the orange-fronted form of the Yellowfronted Tinker Barbet. In the southeast of the province this species was probably overlooked in the past. Its distribution is thus unlikely to have changed, with the present map only reflecting more accurate knowledge.

The Redfronted Tinker Barbet is not considered to be threatened in South Africa and it occurs in game and nature reserves within its range.

D.H. Day

Recorded in 241 grid cells, 5.3%

Total number of records: 6492

Mean reporting rate for range: 27.1%

Reporting rates for vegetation types



