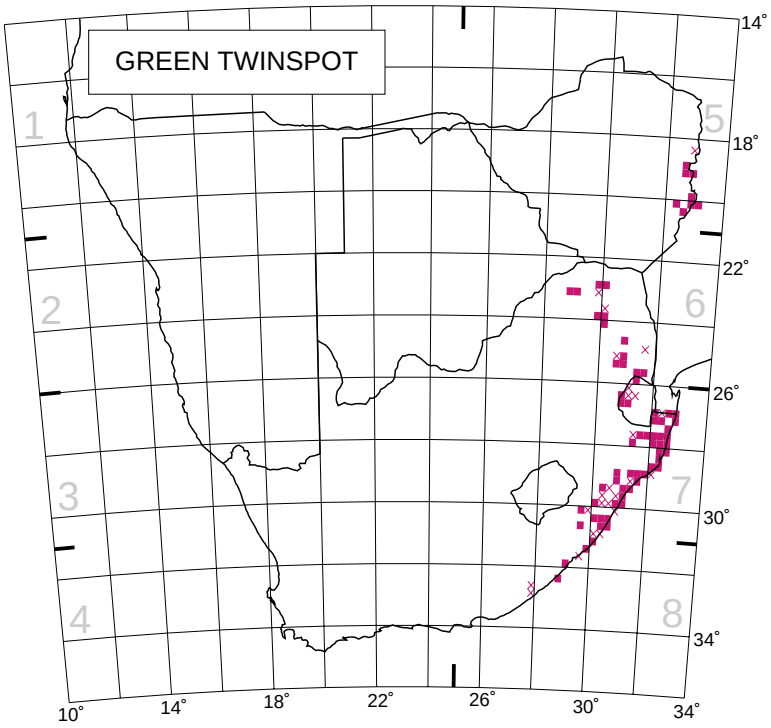
Green Twinspot

Groenkolpensie

Mandingoa nitidula



This diminutive forest seedeater has a wide Afrotropical distribution from Senegal across to Kenya and southwards mainly in the eastern half of the continent to its southernmost limit in the eastern Cape Province (Hall & Moreau 1970). It is primarily a lowland species but ranges as high as 1850 m in the Afromontane zone. Although its plumage pattern is similar to twinspots of the genus *Hypargos*, it is more closely related to the crimsonwings of the genus *Cryptospiza* (Wolters 1966). It is replaced in high Afromontane forest by the Redfaced Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza reichenovii*, e.g. in the eastern Zimbabwe highlands.

The vegetation analysis identifies the East Coast Littoral, the Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands and the Afromontane Forest as important. The low reporting rates are no doubt occasioned by its small size, cryptic green coloration and soft calls which can only be heard at close quarters. It freely enters plantations of exotic trees, especially those where the pioneer grass *Setaria chevalieri* grows abundantly; a family group of seven Green Twinspots can all perch on the 150-cm-long, seed-bearing raceme of this favoured food plant.

No seasonal movements are known or suspected and variations in reporting rates may result from the increased mobility and conspicuousness of family groups (as opposed to singletons or pairs) hunting seed crops during the dry months when vegetation is less dense than in the summer wet season (cf. Lawson & Edmonds 1983).

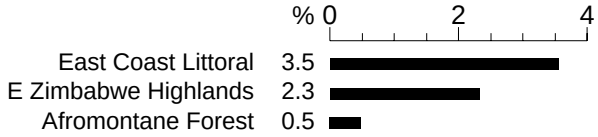
Nests may be sited as high as 7 m and thus not easily located. Maclean (1993b) gave a breeding season of October–April.

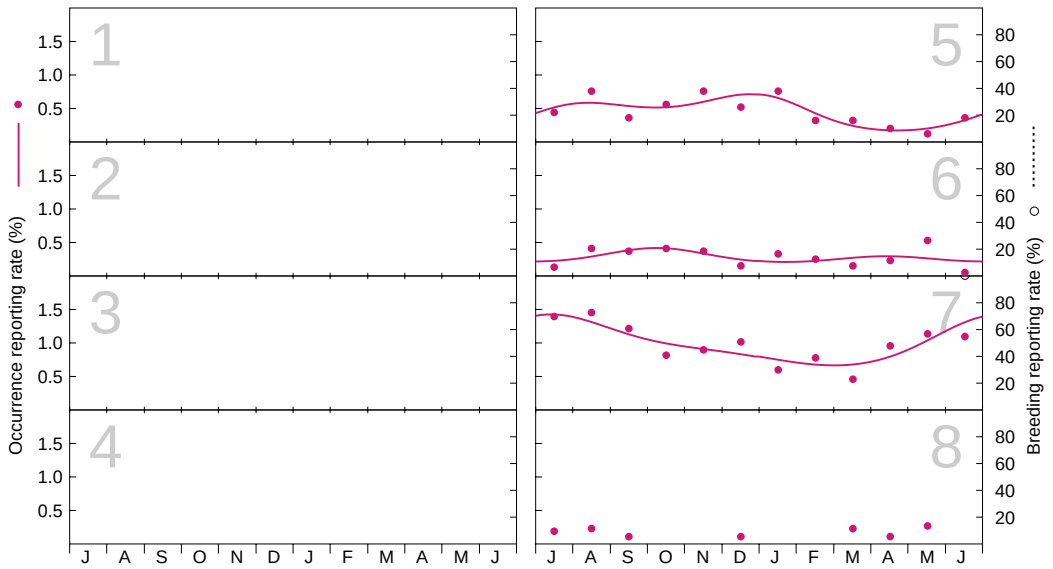
The Green Twinspot is not considered to be under threat, but it is much sought after by aviculturists and is consequently the target of illegal trapping, especially in the vicinity of population centres such as Durban (2931CC). It may also be locally affected by overgrazing of forest grasses (Macdonald & Birkenstock 1980), especially of *Oplismenus hirtellus*, whose seeds are a significant food resource.

T.B. Oatley

Recorded in 94 grid cells, 2.1%
Total number of records: 579
Mean reporting rate for range: 3.9%

Reporting rates for vegetation types





Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 0, 0, 0, 0, 53, 69, 445, 12; Breeding: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0.