

**Drakensberg Siskin**  
Bergpietjiekanaar  
*Pseudochloroptila symonsi*

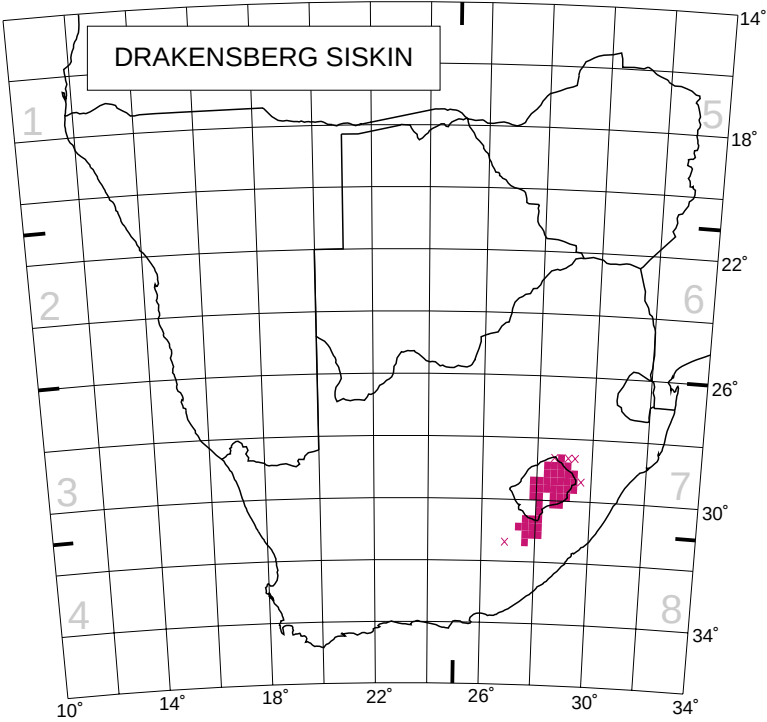
The Drakensberg Siskin is endemic to the highlands of Lesotho, the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and the mountains of the northeastern Cape Province. It is a common to abundant resident in its restricted range (Tarboton *et al.* 1993). It can only be confused with the Cape Siskin *P. totta*, but the ranges of these two species are widely separated. It is generally seen in pairs in summer, but in winter may form large flocks.

The vegetation analysis shows it to be almost entirely restricted to Alpine Grasslands. In a study conducted in the Katse River basin, Lesotho, Tarboton *et al.* (1993) found that in winter the Drakensberg Siskin occurred in flocks feeding in cultivated lands along the major rivers. Although found at all altitudes in this highland area, it was most common between 2000–2600 m.

It has been reported to move to lower altitudes during severe winter weather (Brown & Barnes 1984; Osborne & Tigar 1990), but the scale of the present models is not appropriate to show this. The lower reporting rates during winter may reflect fewer encounters when the species is flocking. Only a few breeding records were collected during the atlas period, all in late summer (January–April). Maclean (1993b) stated that breeding occurs November–January, and Tarboton *et al.* (1993) reported a nest with young in April.

The Drakensberg Siskin is considered to be globally ‘near-threatened’ (Collar *et al.* 1994) because of its restricted range, and it is one of three endemic species which define the Drakensberg Mountains ‘endemic bird area’ (Bibby *et al.* 1992). Much of its preferred habitat is inaccessible to development, and given its abundance and ability to thrive in cultivated areas (Tarboton *et al.* 1993), it probably is not threatened.

A.R. Jenkins



Recorded in 49 grid cells, 1.1%  
Total number of records: 337  
Mean reporting rate for range: 17.0%

