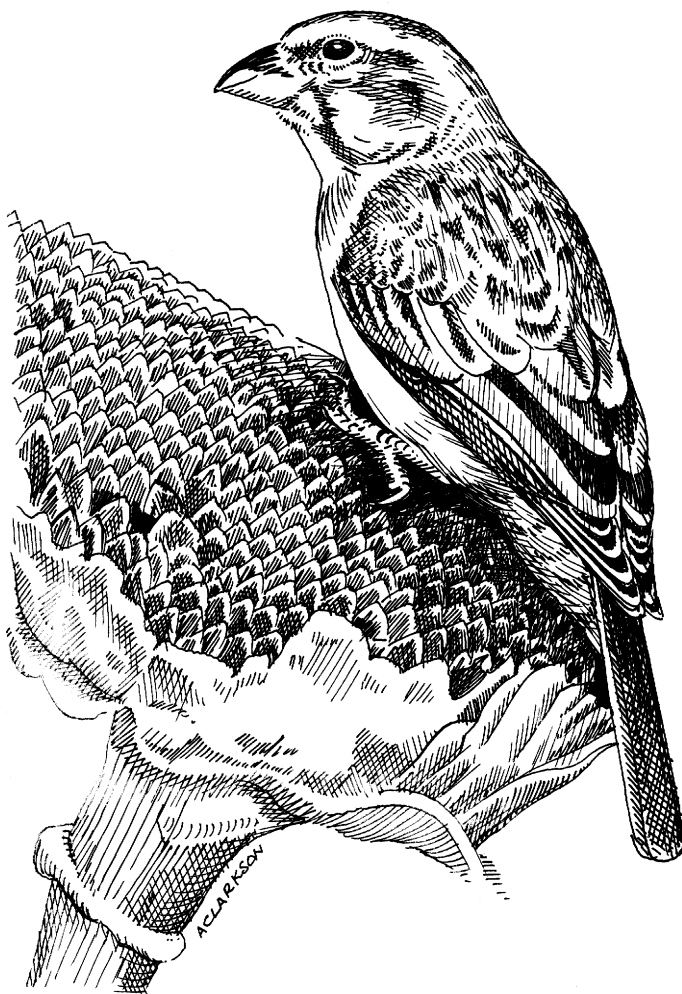




Bully Canary

Dikbekkanarie

Serinus sulphuratus

The Bully Canary occurs southwards from East Africa, through most of Zimbabwe, the escarpment and adjacent areas of the Transvaal and Swaziland, and along the coast and adjacent interior of KwaZulu-Natal, and the eastern and southern Cape Province. In Zimbabwe it is localized, being common only in the eastern highlands (Irwin 1981). In the Transvaal and KwaZulu-Natal it is also localized and not very common (Clancey 1964b; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b). Reporting rates suggest that it is most abundant in the Cape Province. It can easily be confused with the similar Yellow Canary *S. flaviventris*.

The obvious break in distribution through the Limpopo Valley separates *S. s. languens* in the north from *wilsoni* in the south. However, the former is also found in Mozambique, with the two forms coming into close contact in the lowveld of northern KwaZulu-Natal and eastern Swaziland (Clancey 1980b). There is no visible discontinuity between *wilsoni* and the nominate race at the Great Fish River (3327AC) (cf. Clancey 1980b).

Habitat: The vegetation analysis shows that it was most frequently recorded from the following vegetation types: Afromontane Forest (where it is restricted to the fringes), Eastern Zimbabwe Highlands, Fynbos (particularly strandveld), Valley Bushveld, Miombo and East Coast Littoral. It favours areas of bush and rank vegetation alongside streams and areas fringing cultivation. In montane areas it is found in secondary growth, bracken-briar and scattered *Protea* bushes (Irwin 1981).

Movements: Although regarded as largely sedentary (e.g. Tarboton *et al.* 1987b) there are some indications of seasonal movements. In Zimbabwe there is possibly an increase in records on the plateau and in the Zambezi Valley during winter (Tree 1993d). The model for the eastern Cape Province (Zone 8) shows an increase in observations during winter; it is likely that this is the result of altitudinal movement coastwards with peak numbers June–October. It appears that considerable wandering occurs.

Breeding: In Zimbabwe, Irwin (1981) recorded breeding throughout the year with an August–October peak. The atlas data for Zone 5 confirm the spring peak, but also suggest bimodal breeding with a second peak in records March–April. In Zones 6 and 7 most records were August–November. Tarboton *et al.* (1987b) had two November records from the Transvaal. Breeding in southern Cape Province (Zones 4 and 8) was also in spring and early summer with a September–December peak, according well with the July–November egg-laying period given in Winterbottom (1968a).

Interspecific relationships: There is an overlap in range with the similar Yellow Canary in the winter-rain-fall area of the Cape Province, but the two species are unlikely to breed in the same habitat.

Historical distribution and conservation: There appears to have been little change in distribution over time and the Bully Canary is not of conservation concern.

A.J. Tree

Recorded in 571 grid cells, 12.6%

Total number of records: 10 922

Mean reporting rate for range: 18.6%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

