

Know your FYNBOS ENDEMIC BIRDS



Introduction

Fynbos is well known for its very large number of plant species (>7000), most of which are found nowhere else in the world. Plants that dominate the Fynbos are *Erica*, *Protea* and *Restios*.

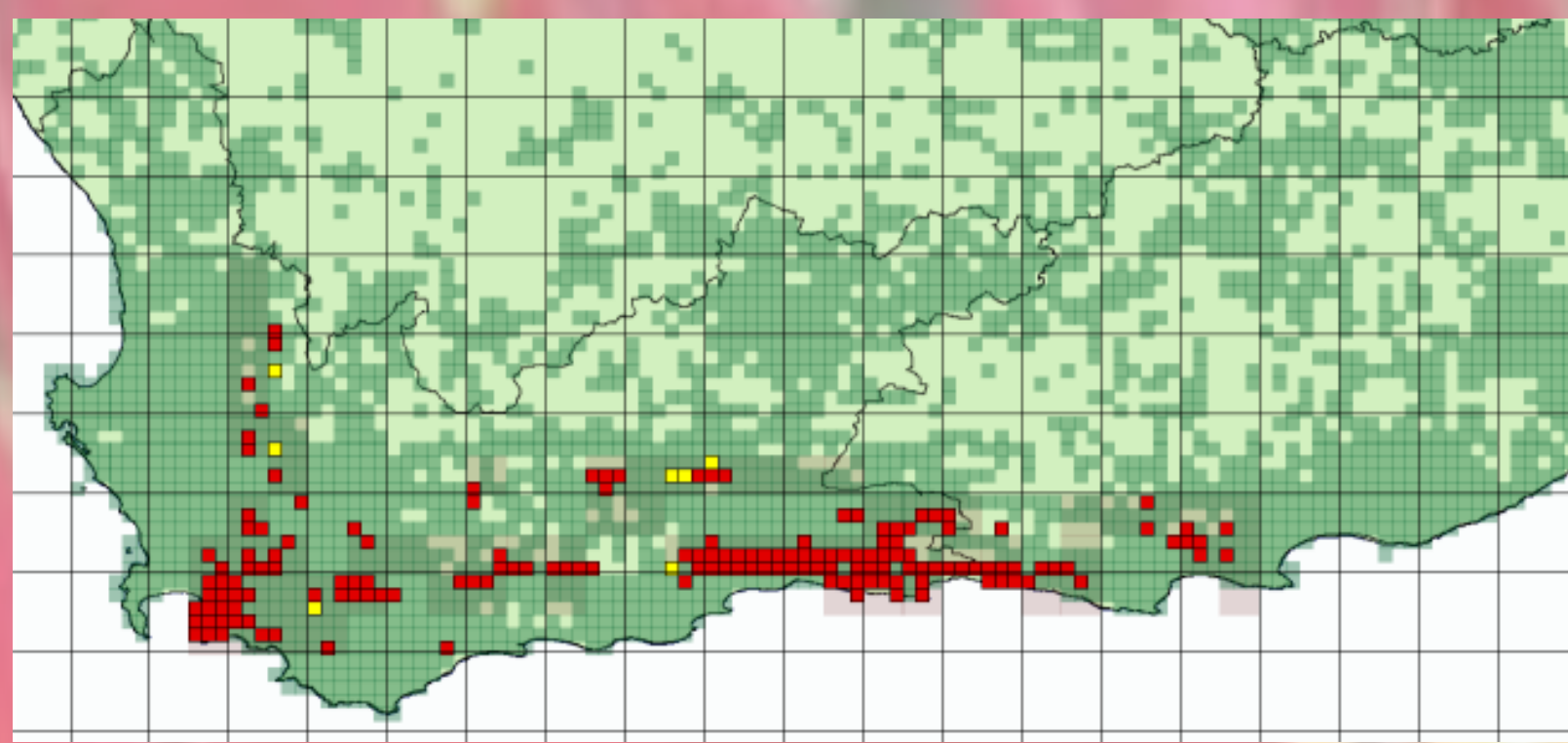
There are also six species of bird found nowhere else in the world except in the Fynbos biome (endemics). None of these species is currently considered endangered, but increased fire frequency, alien vegetation encroachment, land-use and climate change are impacting habitat integrity. Some evidence suggests range contractions for some species.

Victorin's Warbler

More often heard than seen, this is a distinctive looking, skulking warbler, that sings its melodic verse concealed in thick vegetation. Strongly territorial, sightings are rarely of more than 1 or 2 birds. Feeds on insects.

Distribution: Common in the Langeberg and Outeniqua mountains. It prefers thick vegetation, ranging from stream and ericoid habitats in drier areas to moist *Protea* veld, especially in wetter areas e.g. south facing slopes.

Status: Due to its preference for thick vegetation, this species may already be less common in areas prone to increased burning regimes, and it will also be vulnerable to habitat changes under a drier climate.

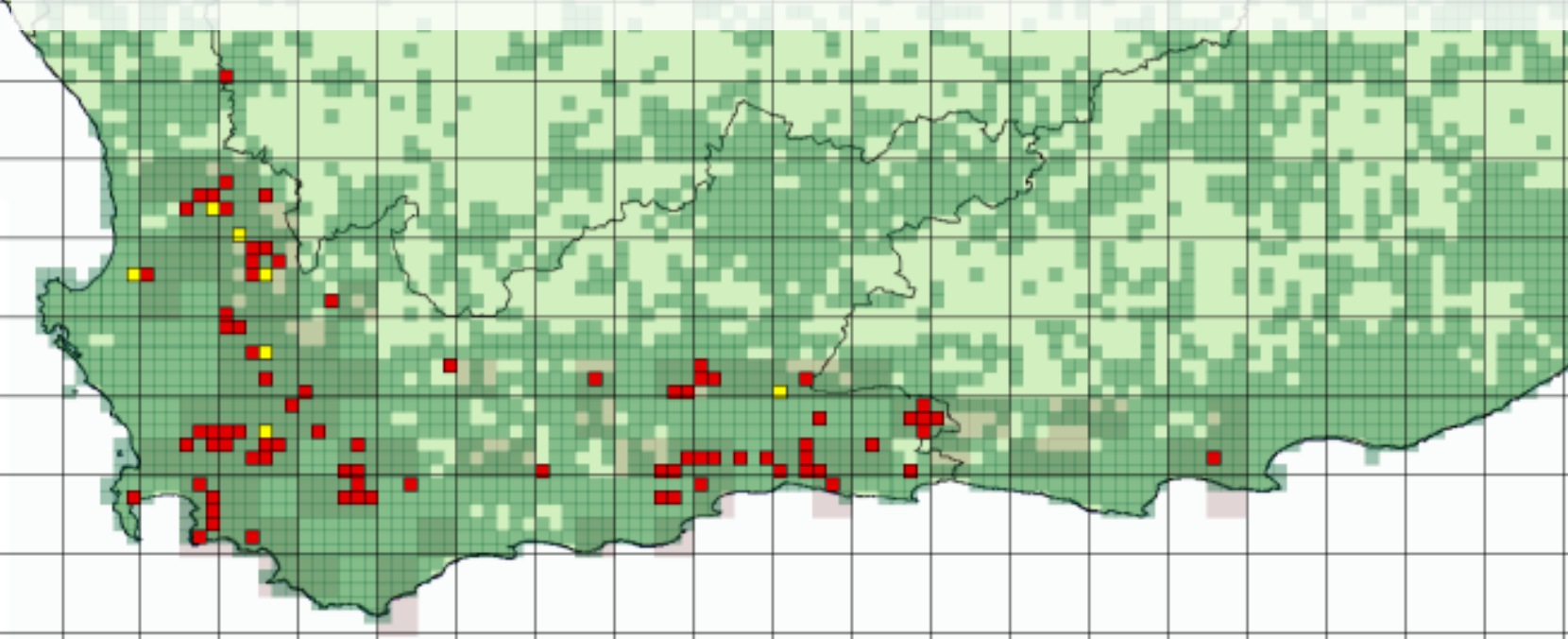


Protea Seed eater

Males and females are alike, with contrasting black and white chin patch and pale wing-bars. Usually in pairs, sometimes flocks.

Distribution: Patchily distributed across the Fynbos in a mix of habitat types, not necessarily *Protea* dominated.

Status: Uncommon. While probably robust to temperature changes, if reliant on *Protea* seeds, then it will be threatened from increases in fire which reduce this food source.

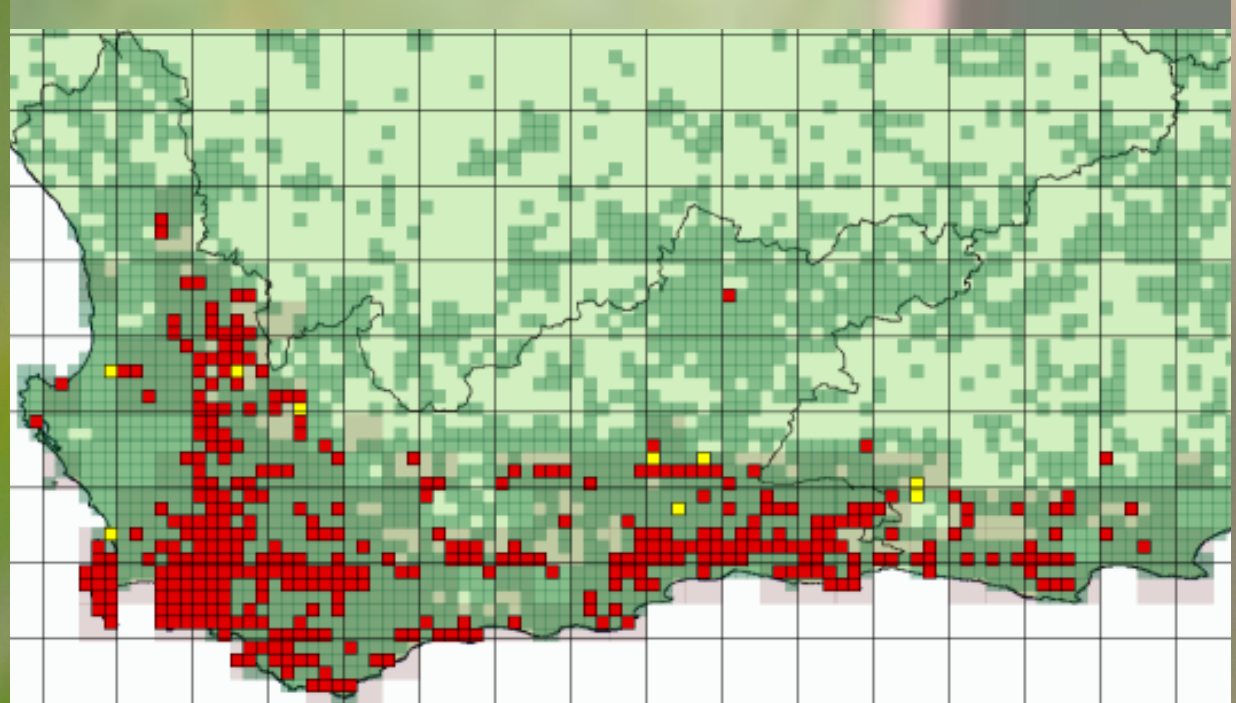
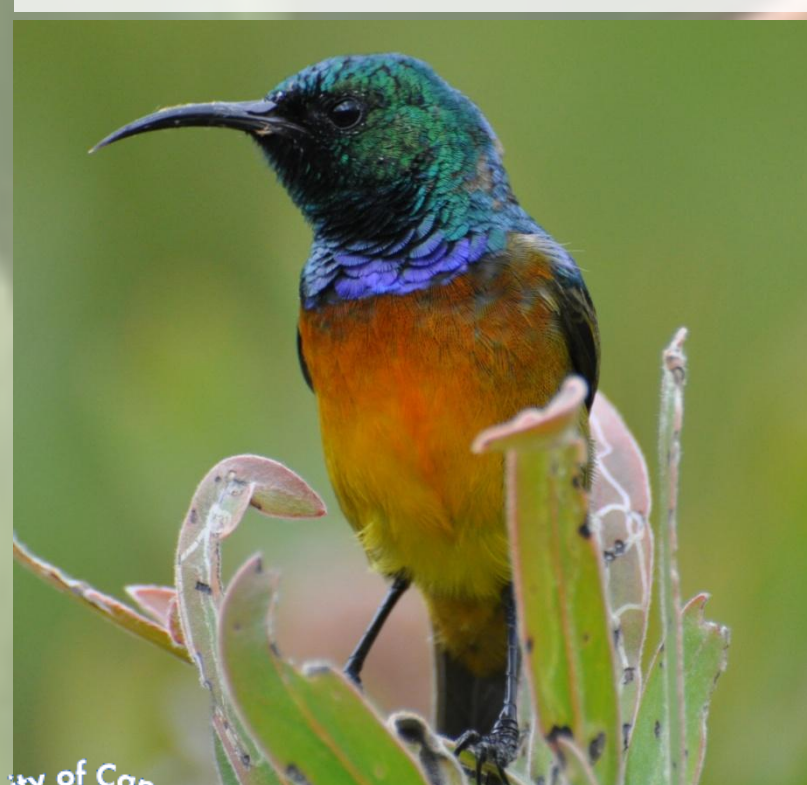


Orange-breasted Sunbird

The male is unmistakable. The female is yellowish and so distinguished from the grey female Southern Double-collared Sunbird. They are pollinators of several *Erica* species, but they also eat insects and spiders. Males defend small territories, but loose flocks can occur in favourable conditions.

Distribution: Common in *Erica* and *Protea* dominated Fynbos

Status: This ubiquitous beauty is versatile in its choice of Fynbos habitats and does not yet show reductions in range or abundance, although a reduction in suitable habitats has been predicted.

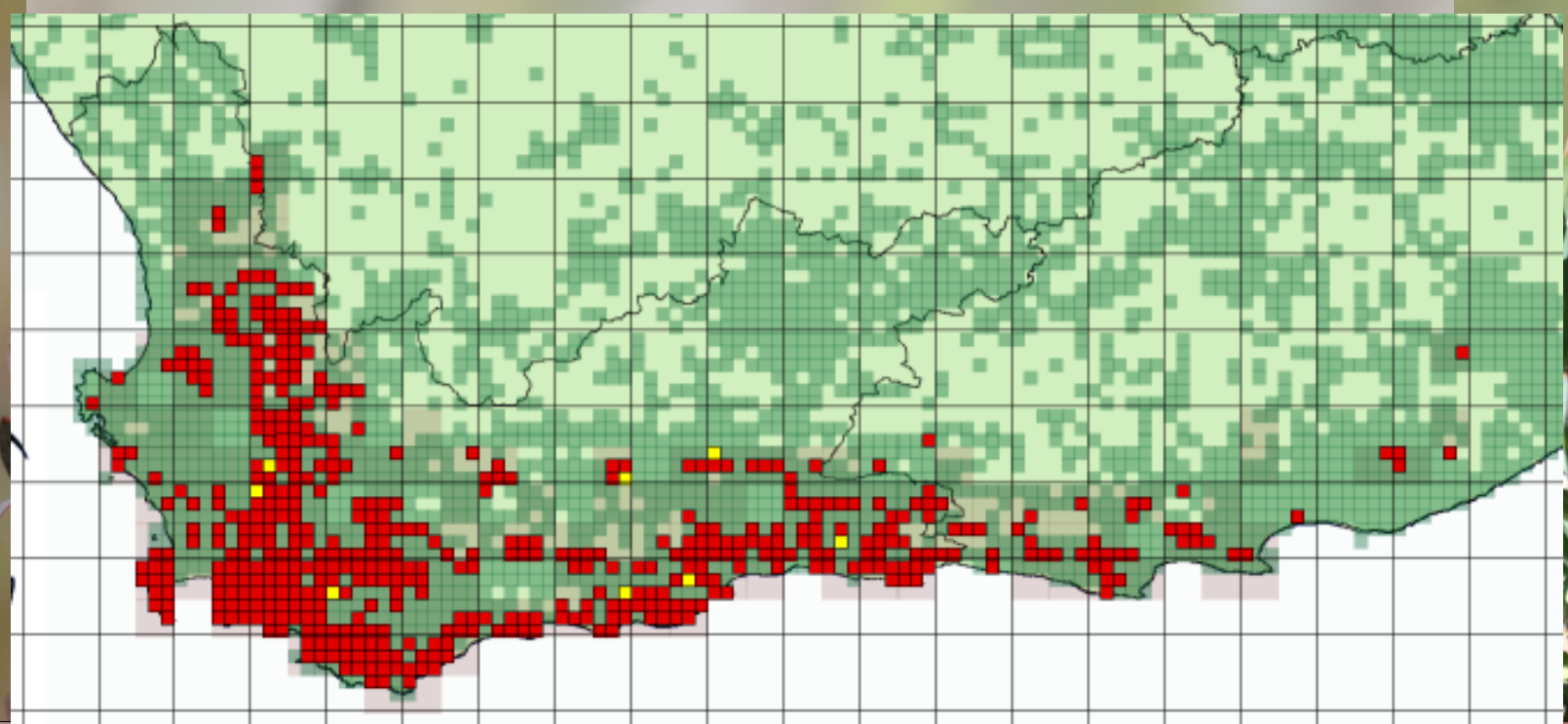


Cape Sugarbird

An important pollinator of several *Protea* species, the male differs from the female by having a much longer tail. Pairs of breeding birds can be strongly territorial but flocks of 20+ can be encountered.

Distribution: The range map closely mirrors the distribution of Fynbos capable of supporting *Protea*. Cape Sugarbirds are found throughout the Fynbos, and is most common in old stands of flowering *Protea*.

Status: Despite a large current population, we suspect declines linked to the loss of mature *Protea* stands. While able to adapt to suburban gardens and introduced plants, these populations are vulnerable to avian pox.

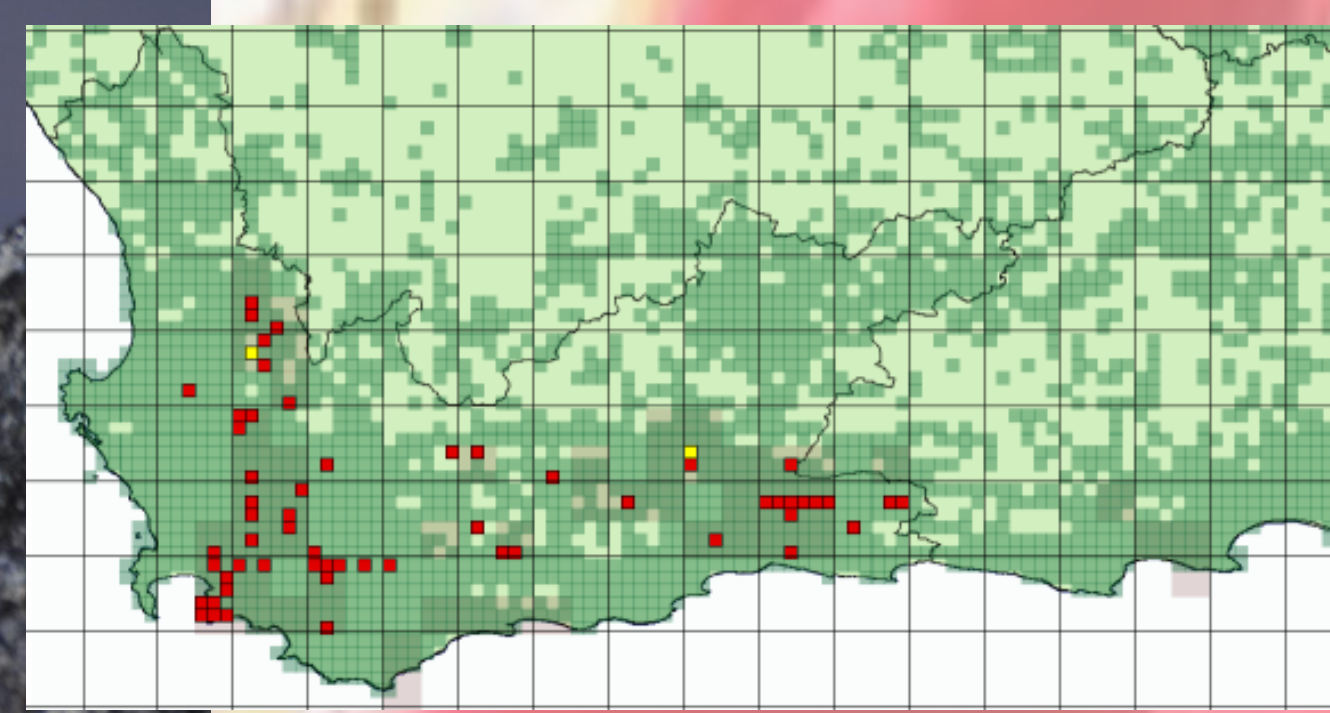
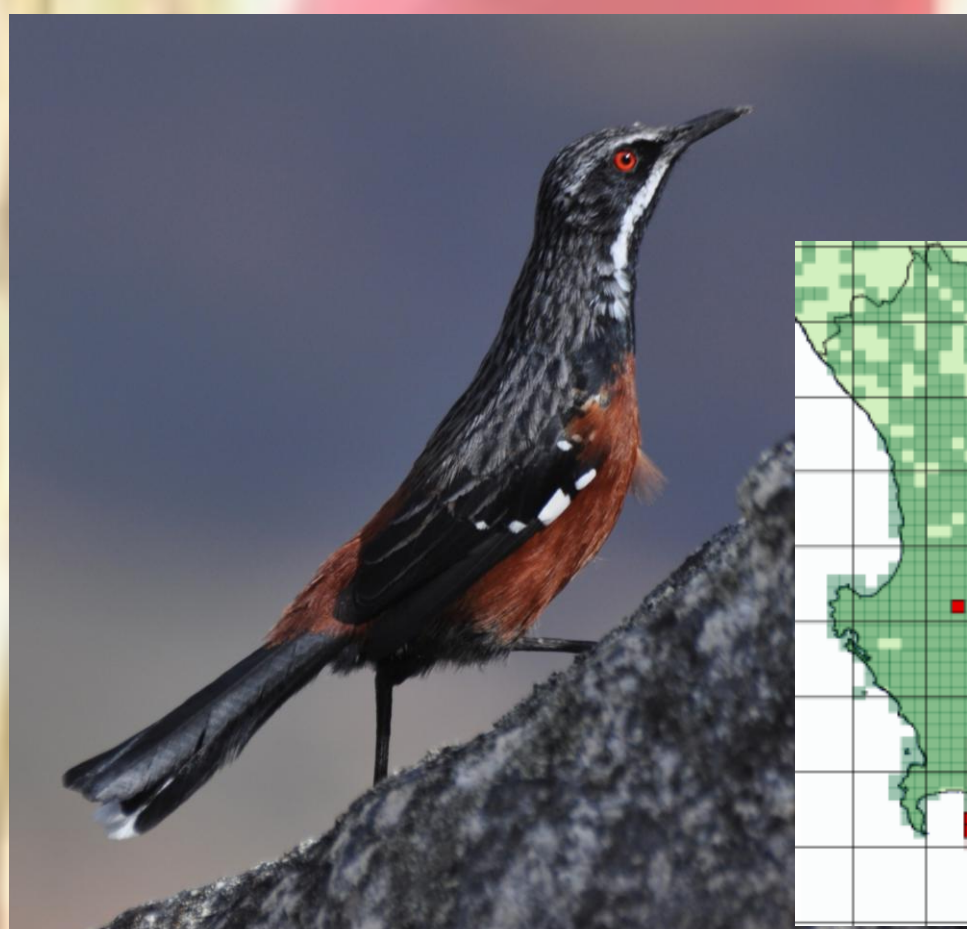


Cape Rockjumper

The male Cape Rockjumper has a striking red eye and rufous underparts, with a bolder facial pattern than the female. Usually encountered in pairs, small family groups can occur as 1-year old offspring help their parents defend a territory. Feed on insects

Distribution: Found in the rocky mountain regions of the Fynbos, preferring low growing vegetation. Strongholds include Cederberg and Swartberg.

Status: The species is uncommon and the fragmented range is cause for concern. It may also avoid areas subject to extreme summer temperatures, making it vulnerable to global warming.

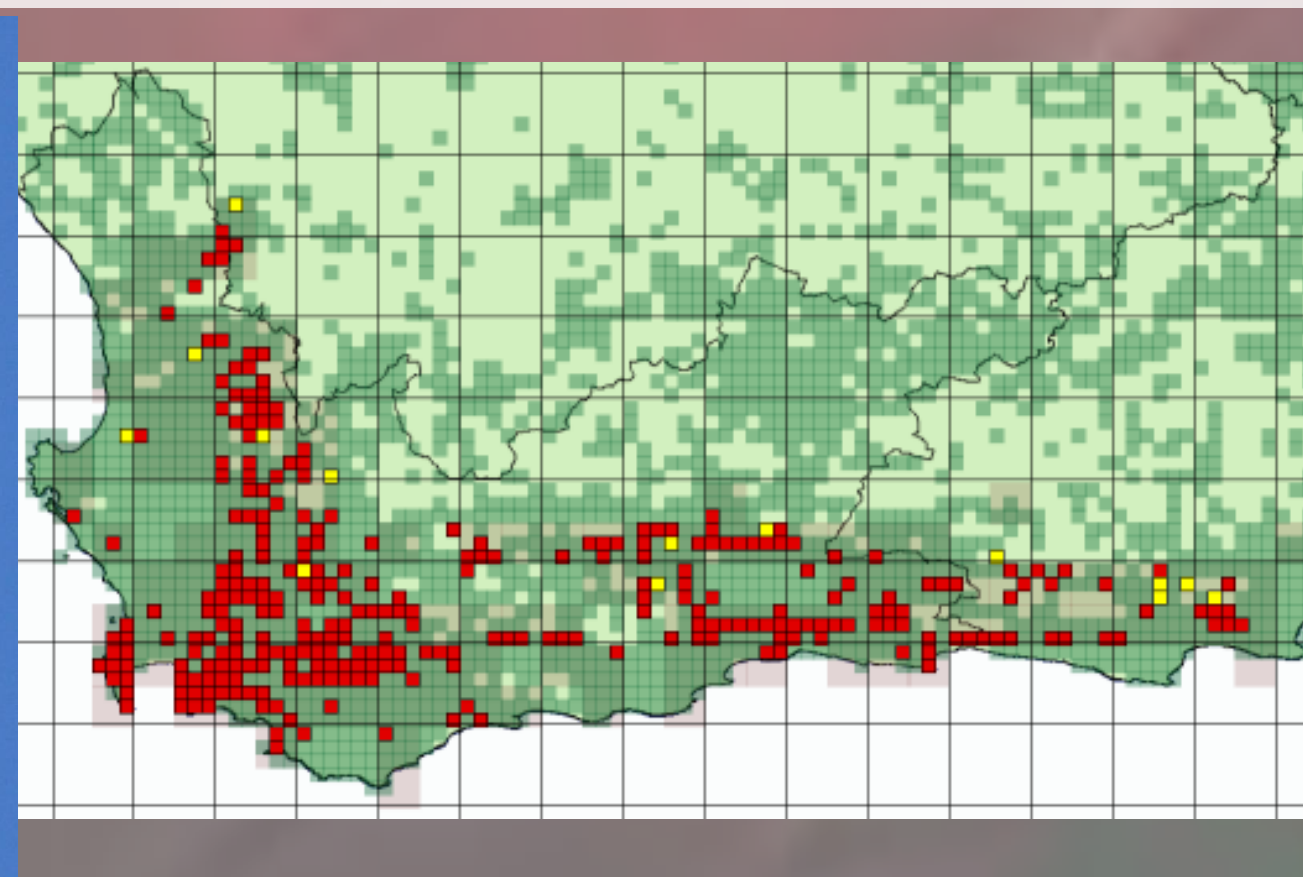
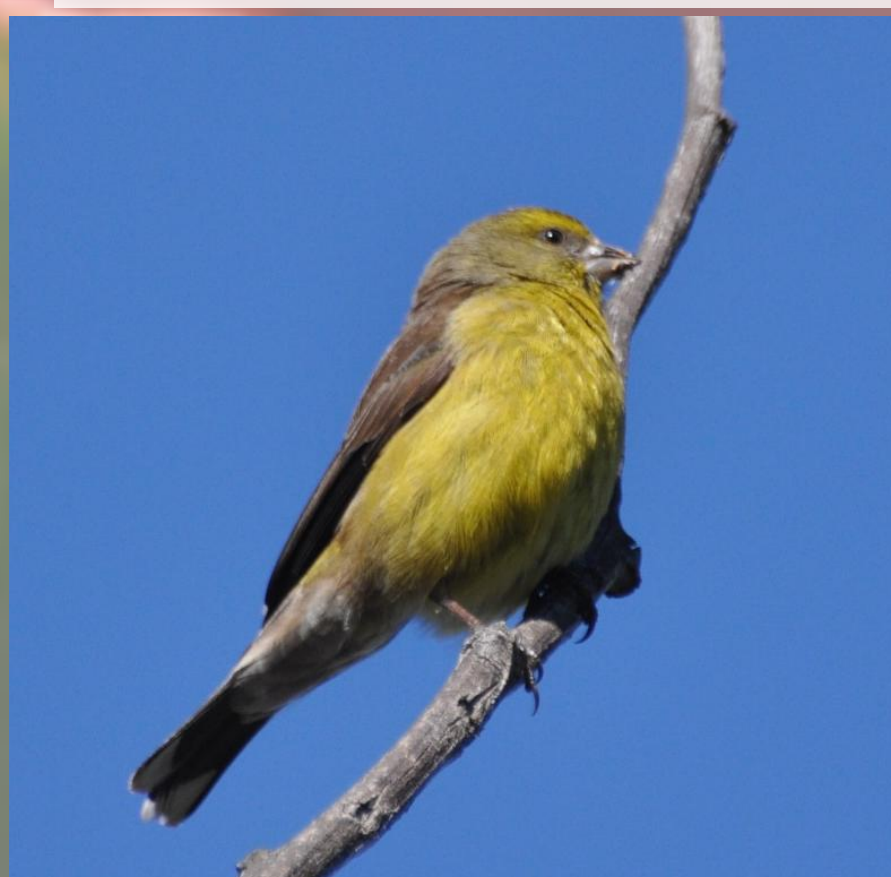


Cape Siskin

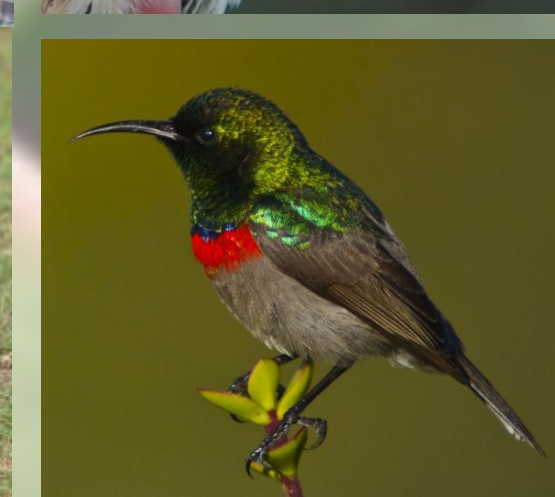
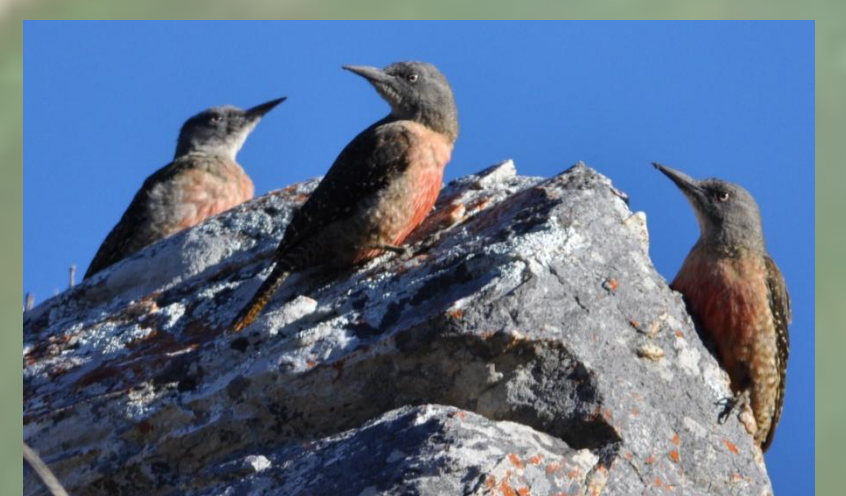
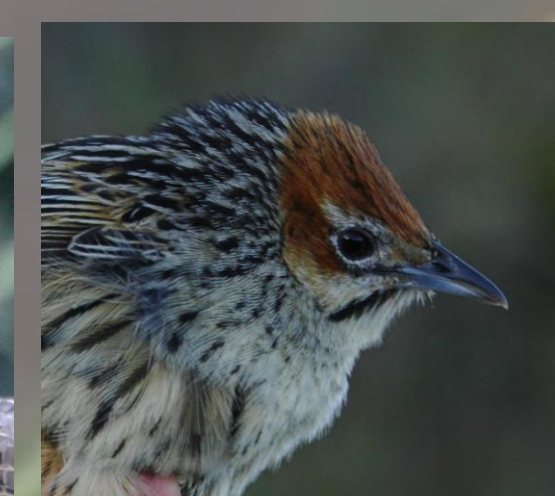
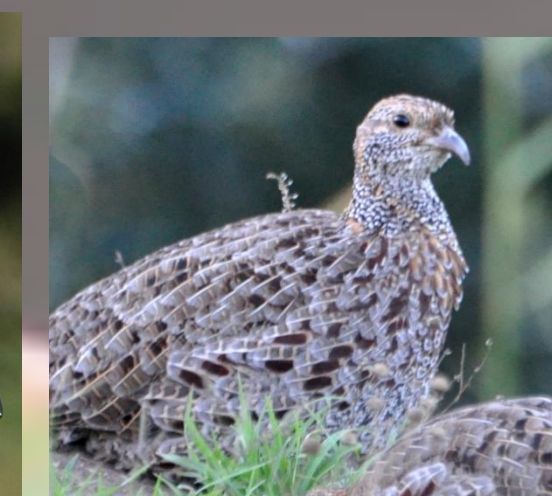
Small, seed-eating birds. The male Cape Siskin has a chestnut back and distinct white tips to the wing and tail feathers. The female is less obviously marked and has a more streaky head. Often seen flying over-head in small groups to large flocks.

Distribution: Common in younger Fynbos dominated by *Restios* and grasses, and also often seen in Karoo habitats close to Fynbos. Most common along the Swartberg mountain range.

Status: It is tolerant of a range of temperature and aridity gradients, as well as alien vegetation. How reliant it is on available drinking water is unknown.



Other birds with distribution strongholds associated with Fynbos



Top left to right: Cape Bulbul, Grey-winged Francolin, Cape Grassbird, Ground Woodpecker, Bottom left to right: Cape Rock-thrush, Cape Spurfowl, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Southern Boubou
Also: Hottentot Buttonquail & Striped Flufftail

