



## Yellowbreasted Apalis

### Geelborskleinjantjie

*Apalis flavida*

The Yellowbreasted Apalis occurs in a narrow strip along the east coast littoral from c. 24°E eastwards through KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland, the eastern Transvaal and southeastern Zimbabwe, where it occurs up to 1600 m in the eastern highlands (Irwin 1981). In KwaZulu-Natal and the Transvaal it occurs from sea-level up to 1200 m. It is largely absent from the plateau watershed of central Zimbabwe. It occurs in northern Zimbabwe, northern Botswana and northern Namibia. The apparently disjoint ranges in southeastern and northern Zimbabwe are linked in Mozambique where it occurs widely (Maclean 1993b). To the north it occurs in much of sub-Saharan Africa, from Sierra Leone to Ethiopia southwards, except in the Congo Basin (Hall & Moreau 1970).

The core of the distribution in southern Africa lies in KwaZulu-Natal north of Richards Bay (2832CC), Swaziland and the eastern Transvaal, with high reporting rates also in southeastern Zimbabwe, the Okavango Delta in Botswana and northwestern Kavango (1718B) in Namibia. Four races have been described for southern Africa (Clancey 1980b); their ranges appear to be continuous.

It occurs in pairs or small groups and often joins bird parties (Maclean 1993b).

**Habitat:** It typically occurs in tall, dense woodland and evergreen forest. Particularly in the relatively arid northwestern parts of the range, it occupies riparian woodland, usually with the semi-evergreen Camelthorn *Acacia erioloba*. It occurs over a wide range of vegetation types, but association with Mopane results from its presence in thickets (mostly *Acacia*) along drainage lines.

**Movements:** The atlas data reveal no evidence for seasonality in the two northernmost Zones. A slight peak of reporting rates in winter further south may indicate some movement to lower elevations (where it is more likely to be recorded) during winter and early spring. Alternatively, but less likely, there could be an increase of vocalizations outside the breeding season or it could otherwise behave more conspicuously in winter. No reference to seasonal movements could be traced and it may be resident throughout its range in southern Africa.

**Breeding:** Atlas records were September–May, confirming published evidence that breeding takes place in spring and summer (Dean 1971; Irwin 1981; Tarboton *et al.* 1987b).

**Interspecific relationships:** Its range embraces that of the Rudd's Apalis *A. ruddi* in northern KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland, where both species frequently occur together at the same localities. Through most of its range it occurs with the Barthroated Apalis *A. thoracica*, except in northern Namibia, northern Botswana and western Zimbabwe where the latter is absent. In Zimbabwe, the Yellowbreasted Apalis tends to replace the Barthroated Apalis at lower altitudes, but at intermediate altitudes they may be found together without any obvious ecological separation. However, the Yellowbreasted Apalis is usually found on the edges of forest, while the Barthroated Apalis occurs in the forest interior (Irwin 1981) and a similar separation is found in the eastern Transvaal and

KwaZulu-Natal (pers. obs). From KwaZulu-Natal northwards, the reporting rates on the distribution maps for these two species reveal a clear complementarity; the areas with highest reporting rates for the Yellowbreasted Apalis are mainly in the tropical lowlands, while those of the Barthroated Apalis are at higher altitudes.

**Historical distribution and conservation:** The present map appears to be little changed from the historical distribution (McLachlan & Liversidge 1957). It is widespread and common, and under no particular threat in the region.

D.H. Day

Recorded in 597 grid cells, 13.2%  
Total number of records: 7267  
Mean reporting rate for range: 16.7%

#### Reporting rates for vegetation types



