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NEW BREEDING RECORD FOR YELLOW-BELLIED GREENBUL AT DIE OOG RETIREMENT CENTRE, MOOKGOPONG, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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The range of the Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* has expanded to the southwest as detected by the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2; June 2013; Fig 1) is compared to earlier records 1974-1987 (Tarboton *et al.* 1987; 1981) and 1981-1993 (SABAP1, Harrison *et al.* 1997). Since 1987 the species has expanded its range from Lephalale in the Limpopo Province to areas as far south as Rietvlei in Gauteng Province (pentad 2550_2815; 0.2%, n=1) and the Magaliesberg Mountains (pentad 2545_2735; 3.1%, n=1 and pentad 2540_2755; 3.8% n=2) in Northwest Province, and as far west as Madikwe Nature Reserve (pentad 2445_2620; 8.33.1%, n=1), also in the Northwest Province. The current distributional range of Yellow-bellied Greenbul also indicates a western expansion in KwaZulu-Natal, but to a lesser extent. It is possible that their range will expand even further. According to Tarboton *et al.* (1987), there were no breeding records for this species in the former Transvaal, but it is assumed to have bred where it occurred and that its breeding range has also expanded.

There are few breeding records for Yellow-bellied Greenbuls from South Africa as nests are not usually easy to locate. The only pub-

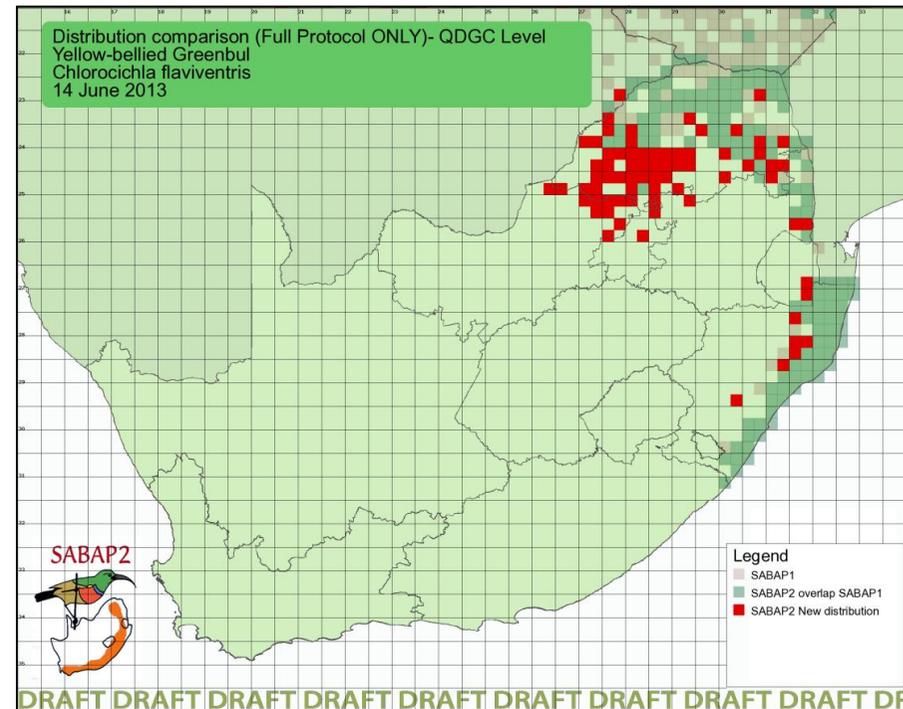


Fig 1 - Comparison of the current (SABAP2) and historical (SABAP1) range of the Yellow-bellied Greenbul as of June 2013 (Courtesy of SABAP2 – www.sabap2.adu.org.za)

lished records are from Kwazulu-Natal, with egg laying recorded in June and from September to January (Hockey *et al.* 2005). The Nest Records Card Scheme of the Animal Demographic Unit, University of Cape Town, only has three new breeding records for the species since 1995, all from Kwazulu-Natal Province, two from St Lucia (26-28 February 1998 and 18 December 1998; unclear if both from the same locality) and one from Tembe Elephant Park (10-11 February 2001). Within the southwest range extension, the only breeding report lacks any details but came from the Bela-Bela area [(2428CD quarter-degree grid cell (QDGC)] in SABAP1; Harrison *et al.* 1997).



Fig 2 - Female on the nest built on top of a *Schlumbergera* sp (*Liddoring*) plant in a hanging pot (Photo: T Booysen).

The only other SABAP1 breeding records for the Limpopo Province are from Venda (2230DA) and Louis Trichardt (2329BB) and there are no SABAP2 breeding records for this species (D Harebottle pers. comm.).

On 13 November 2012, an active nest of Yellow-bellied Greenbul was found in a small garden at Die Oog Retirement Centre, 11.4 km north-west of Mookgopong (Naboomspruit), Limpopo Province (T Booysen pers. comm.). This locality is situated within the 2428BC QDGC and more specifically the 2425_2835 pentad. The coordinates for the nest site were S24°26.917' E28°37.083'. The female was sitting on the nest, which was built on top of a *Schlumbergera* sp.



Fig 3 - Nest position of the Yellow-bellied Greenbul under the thatched roof adjacent to the main house (Photo: T Booysen).

(*Liddoring*) plant in a hanging pot (Fig 2), 2 m above ground and concealed under a thatched roof (Fig 3).

The nest contained a single egg, described as olive green with brown blotches. The incubation period lasted 15 days and the nestling (Fig 4) fledged (Fig 5) after 10 days, compared to the 16-18 day fledging period reported previously (Hockey *et al.* 2005; Tarboton 2011). The fledgling was not seen again after it fledged. The male and female revisited the nest after two weeks for a brief inspection of the nest.

The outside diameter of the nest measured 90 mm, the inside or cup diameter 55 mm and the cup depth 35 mm.



Fig 4 - Nestling aged 7 days still in nest (Photo: T Booysen).



Fig 5 - Fledgling aged 14 days (Photo: T Booysen).

There are no previous records of this species being present or breeding in the 2428BC QDGC (Tarboton et al. 1987; Harrison *et al.* 1997). To date (June 2013) the SABAP2 data indicated a reporting rate of 24.2% (n=8) for the entire 2428BC QDGC and 28.6% (n=2) for the 2425_2835 pentad with no breeding records.

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