

Avian Models for 3D Applications

by Ken Gilliland

Songbird ReMix

Finches of the Caribbean

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Songbird ReMix

Finches of the Caribbean

Introduction

Songbird ReMix Finches of the Caribbean most of the common finches found throughout the region. From the striking bullfinches of St. Lucia, St. Kitts and the Greater Antillies to the Grassquits of Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica, these island faring birds with perfect for nature and vacation to rogue and freebooter imagery.

Songbird ReMix Finches of the Caribbean recreates these wondrous birds for use in DAZ Studio and Poser and supports Iray, Superfly, 3Delight and Firefly renderers.

Overview and Use

The set is located within the **Animals : Songbird ReMix** folder. Here is where you will find a number of folders, such as **Bird Library**, **Manuals** and **Resources** . Let's look at what is contained in these folders:

- **Bird Library:** This folder holds the actual species and poses for the "premade" birds. Birds are placed into a "type" folder (such as "Birds of Prey (Order Falconiformes)" which for example would hold falcons, hawks and eagles). The birds for this set can be found in the following folder(s):
 - **Perching Birds (Order Passerines)**
- **Manuals:** Contains a link to the online manual for the set.
- **Props:** Contains any props that might be included in the set
- **Resources:** Items in this folder are for creating and customizing your birds
 - **Bird Base Models:** This folder has the blank, untextured model(s) used in this set. These models are primarily for users who wish to experiment with poses or customize their own species of bird. When using physical renderers such as Iray and Superfly, SubD should be turned to at least "3".

Poser Use

Select **Figures** in the **Runtime** Folder and go to the **Animals : Songbird ReMix** folder. Select the bird from the renderer *Firefly or Superfly*) folder you want and simply click it

to load. Some birds in the Songbird ReMix series may load with attached parts (*Conformers*) such as tail or crest extensions. Some of these parts have specific morphs. You will need to click on the attached part to access those controls. Associated poses can be found in the same folder- **Bird Library : (Type) : Poses**.

DAZ Studio Use

Go to the **Animals : Songbird ReMix** folder. Select the bird from the renderer (*3Delight or Iray*) folder you want and simply click it to load. Some birds in the Songbird ReMix series may load with attached parts (*Conformers*) such as tail or crest extensions. Some of these parts have specific morphs. You will need to click on the attached part to access those controls. Associated poses can be found in the same folder- **Bird Library : (Type) : Poses**. **Note:** Using the "Apply this Character to the currently selected Figure(s)" option **will not** properly apply the correct scaling to the bird selected. It is better to delete the existing character first and load the one you want to use.

One Folder to Rule Them All

When I reworked the entire Songbird ReMix library starting in 2018, I decided to abandon the way the birds were sorted (by product name) and choose an Ornithological approach. All birds are found in the Bird Library folder and are arranged by type of bird. This approach is hopefully easier for most to find what bird they are looking for. Admittedly, it will take some getting use to for some longtime users, but I've always approached the Songbird ReMix series as a learning tool as well as a graphics tool, so hopefully some knowledge will rub off by seeing how birds are grouped. Probably the most deceiving subfolder in the Bird Library is "Perching Birds (Order Passeriformes)". This is folder you probably will end up "favoriting" because this one folder (Passeriformes) holds more than 50% of all birds. Perching birds range from cardinals and jays to chickadees, crow and swallows.



Finding the bird you want within the "Perching Birds (Order Passeriformes)" folder can be daunting, even for an experienced birder (such as myself), so I've included an online reference tool within this folder that helps to make your search easier. Click the "Perching Birds Finder" icon and when loaded, look at the first column and search for the type of bird you want. For example, I want a "manakin" (a bird common to Central and South America). Scroll down the first column alphabetically and stop on "manakin". Looking across to the second column, you will now know that manakins can be found in the "Tyrant Flycatchers & their Allies" subfolder.

Where to find your birds

Type Folder	Bird Species
<p>Perching Birds (Order Passeriformes)</p> <p>Finches, Old World Sparrows & their Allies</p>	<p>Black-faced Grassquit St. Lucia Black Finch Barbados Bullfinch Lesser Antillean Bullfinch Cuban Grassquit Yellow-shouldered Grassquit Greater Antillean Bullfinch Cuban Bullfinch St. Kitts Bullfinch Puerto Rican Bullfinch Orangequit Yellow-faced Grassquit</p>

Where to find your poses

Type Folder	For what species?
<p>Perching Birds (Order Passeriformes)</p> <p>Poses can be found in “Universal Poses” & “type” folders</p>	<p>All Songbirds</p>

Physical-based Rendering

Iray and **Superfly** requires more CPU and memory horsepower than the legacy renderers because of ray-trace bounces and higher resolution meshes needed for displacement. Poser’s **Superfly** renderer will require that the “Min Transparent Bounces” be set to **at least 16** and that the “Max Transparent Bounces” be set to **at least 32** in render settings. Superfly renders may show artifacts in the head area. This is a known Poser issue and may be addressed in the future. Increasing the SubD may minimize this issue. A good work around solution for Superfly artifacts is to HIDE Fluff areas (Correction Controls).

Posing & Shaping Considerations

This volume has various species, so when using generic poses not every pose will work perfectly with every bird. You may find that some minor alteration on the stock poses may be warranted.

Here are some of the most common alterations you may need to make:

- Birds will not be flat on the zero plane due to leg size and overall scale.

- Because of the numerous beak shapes, closing the beak may range from 0.5 to 1. Usually 0.8 is about right.
- **Raise Upper Beak** (*in Action Controls*): This morph is a “one size fits all” control. Because of the variety of beak shapes. It may not work with all birds.
- **Tongue poke-through** (especially when the beak is open). This can be easily solved by using the **Throat-Fuller1 & 2** morphs (*found in Creation Control/Head Shapes*).

IK Concerns

Some poses may go askew when IK is turned on. By default, Poser’s IK feature is turned off when loading a bird. To turn it on, select the “Figure” category from the main tool bar and “Use Inverse Kinematics” from the submenu.

By default, DAZ Studio’s IK feature is turned on when loading a bird. This will cause the thigh and shin rotations change when the character is moved. The **CTRL K** keypress will turn IK on and off in DAZ Studio. IK doesn’t work that well in Studio, so I suggest selecting the character in the **Scene tab** and simply deleting the two IK body parts to remove IK.

Placing the Pyrate Hat

First, why “pyrate” instead of “pirate”? I simply like the old English spelling which was commonly used in the “Golden Age” of Pyrates (1600-1750).

The Pyrate Hat is a conforming figure that you’ll find the Songbird ReMix Props section. In Poser, you’ll use the “Comform to...” command and in DAZ Studio the “Fit to...” command. The internal structure of the hat model is labeled “head” so it should work on almost any Songbird ReMix bird (*with prominently crested birds being the exception*). The hat should automatically scale to the size of the bird once fitted/comformed.

Once you’ve fitted/comformed the hat, you’ll probably need to do some adjustment. In the Main/BODY section of the hat, you’ll find a series of controls (scale, rotates and trans) to make those adjustments to fit the hat properly.



Songbird ReMix

Finches of the Caribbean

Black-faced Grassquit

St. Lucia Black Finch

Barbados Bullfinch

Lesser Antillean Bullfinch

Cuban Grassquit

Yellow-shouldered Grassquit

Greater Antillean Bullfinch

Cuban Bullfinch

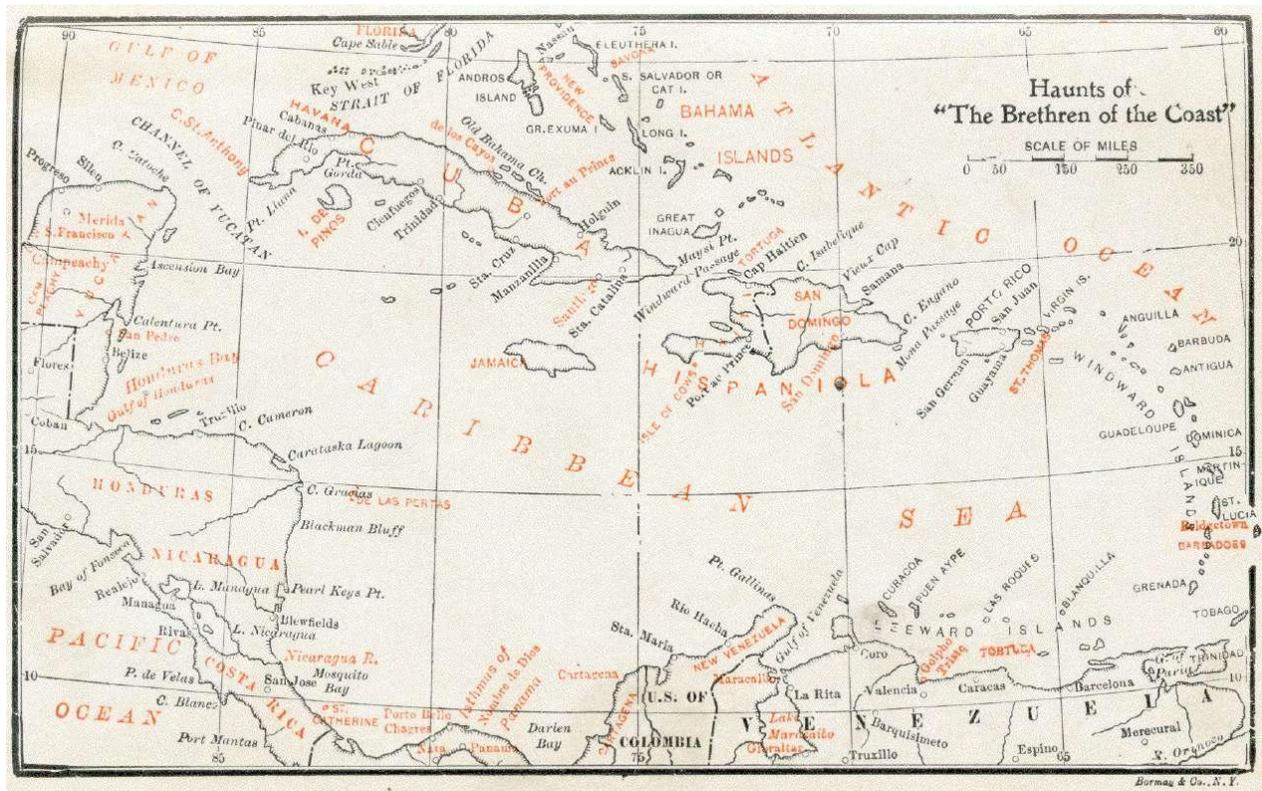
St. Kitts Bullfinch

Puerto Rican Bullfinch

Orangequit

Yellow-faced Grassquit

About the Caribbean



The Caribbean is a massive archipelago located in the Caribbean Sea, that can be subdivided into a few different regions: the Lucayan Archipelago, the Greater Antilles, the Lesser Antilles and the ABC Islands. There are 13 sovereign states and 17 dependent territories in the Caribbean, and the predominant languages are English, Spanish, French, Dutch and Antillean creole. The Caribbean sprawls across more than 1.06 million square miles and is primarily located between North America and South America.

The Caribbean islands have one of the most diverse eco-systems in the world. The animals, fungi and plants, and have been classified as one of Conservation International's biodiversity hotspots because of their exceptionally diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems, ranging from montane cloud forests, to tropical rainforest, to cactus scrublands. The region also contains about 8% (by surface area) of the world's coral reefs along with extensive seagrass meadows, both of which are frequently found in the shallow marine waters bordering the island and continental coasts of the region.

Many of the ecosystems of the Caribbean islands have been devastated by deforestation, pollution, and human encroachment. The arrival of the first humans is correlated with extinction of giant owls and dwarf ground sloths. The hotspot contains dozens of highly threatened animals (ranging from birds, to mammals and reptiles), fungi and plants. Examples of

threatened animals include the Puerto Rican amazon, two species of solenodon (giant shrews) in Cuba and the Hispaniola island, and the Cuban crocodile.

The Caribbean is home to over 700 species of bird, including 171 species that are endemic to the region and found nowhere else in the world. In fact, there are over 110 bird species in the Caribbean that only live on one island. Overall, half of the resident birds—the ones that don't migrate—in the region are endemic.

The region is also the seasonal home for over 150 migratory species that winter in the region after breeding in North America during the summer or travel through the region on their way to South America. As a stopover or wintering ground, the Caribbean is a vital resource for these migrants as they make their astounding journeys—thousands of miles each year.

A Turbulent History

In October, 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on the shores of the Bahamas. He also island-hopped and developed the first European settlement on the island that today is split between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Columbus and his fellow conquistadores recognized the riches in the region and saw money when they gazed upon the bountiful seas and fertile land. They exploited both the natural resources and the native populations, claiming lands as their own and enslaving the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and other islands.

The English followed suit in the 17th century, claiming St. Kitts, Barbados, Antigua and other lands, and the French soon followed, claiming Guadeloupe and Martinique. The Dutch also wanted a piece of the Caribbean, settling St. Martin, Saba and Sint Eustatius. For the next two centuries, the Europeans battled for control of the islands, and possession frequently changed hands.

The era of piracy in the Caribbean began in the 1500s and phased out in the 1830s after the navies of the nations of Western Europe and North America with colonies in the Caribbean began combating pirates. The period during which pirates were most successful was from the 1660s to 1730s. Piracy flourished in the Caribbean because of the existence of pirate seaports such as Port Royal in Jamaica, Tortuga in Haiti, and Nassau in the Bahamas.

England, France and the Dutch Netherlands had all become New World colonial powerhouses in their own right by 1660. Worried by the Dutch Republic's intense commercial success since the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, England launched a trade war with the Dutch. The English Parliament passed the first of its own mercantilist Navigation Acts that required that English colonial goods be carried only in English ships and legislated limits on trade between the English colonies and foreigners. These laws were aimed at ruining the Dutch merchants whose livelihoods depended on free trade. This trade war would lead to three outright Anglo-Dutch Wars over the course of the next twenty-five years. Meanwhile, King Louis XIV of France had finally assumed his majority with the death of his regent mother Queen Anne of Austria's

chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin, in 1661. The "Sun King's" aggressive foreign policy was aimed at expanding France's eastern border with the Holy Roman Empire and led to constant warfare (Franco-Dutch War and Nine Years' War) against shifting alliances that included England, the Dutch Republic, the various German states and Spain. In short, Europe was consumed in the final decades of the 17th century by nearly constant dynastic intrigue and warfare—an opportune time for pirates and privateers to engage in their bloody trade.

The colonial infighting between European powers created an opportunity for locals to fight for their own independence. Haiti led the way, declaring independence from its colonizer in 1804, and Cuba and the Dominican Republic followed, along with other smaller islands in the region. Some islands, such as Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe, still maintain strong neocolonial relationships with their parent nations.

Since 1830, the United States gained a major influence on most Caribbean nations. In the early part of the 20th century this influence was extended by participation in the Banana Wars. Victory in the Spanish–American War and the signing of the Platt Amendment in 1901. This amendment ensured that the United States would control over most Cuban political and economic affairs, militarily if necessary. Most of the Platt Amendment provisions were repealed in 1934 as part of Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor policy" toward Latin America. Cuba removed the remainder of the agreement in Cuba's constitution in 1940.

After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, relations with the United States deteriorated rapidly leading to the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the successive attempts to destabilize the island, based upon Cold War fears of the Soviet threat.

The United States invaded and occupied Hispaniola for 19 years (1915–34), subsequently dominating the Haitian economy through aid and loan repayments. It invaded Haiti again in 1994, and in 2004, were accused by CARICOM (Caribbean Community of 15 Member States) of arranging a coup d'état to remove elected Haitian leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In 1965, 23,000 US troops were sent to the Dominican Republic to quash a local uprising against military rule. President Lyndon Johnson had ordered that invasion to stem what he deemed to be a "Communist threat." However, the mission appeared ambiguous and was roundly condemned throughout the hemisphere as a return to US "Gunboat Diplomacy."

In 1983, a military junta took control of Grenada and executed populist left-wing leader Maurice Bishop. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the nations of Barbados and Jamaica appealed to the United States for assistance. The US defended its invasion of Grenada as an action to protect American citizens living on the island. The UN voted 108 to 9 against the invasion, saying it "deeply deplores the armed intervention in Grenada, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that State." It called for an "immediate cessation of the armed intervention" and demanded, "that free elections be organized". The resolution was vetoed by the United States.

The United States still maintains a naval military base in Cuba at Guantanamo Bay.

Common Name: Black-faced Grassquit
Scientific Name: *Melanospiza bicolor*

Size: 4-4.5 inches (10.2–11.5 cm)

Habitat: North and South America; found mainly in the Caribbean, north to the Bahamas, and south to northernmost South America, particularly in coastal sites. It is also found on Tobago, but not Trinidad.

It is found in open, dry areas of acacia and cactus scrub with grasses and shrubs in forest clearings, along roads, urban areas, and plantations and gardens; in the Netherlands Antilles occurs in manzanilla de la muerte (“the little apples of death”/*Hippomane mancinella*) bushes and mangroves. On Curaçao, it is present even high in the St. Christoffel Hills, from sea-level to 860 m.



Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 3,760,000 mature adults with a slightly increasing population trend. It is still fairly common in Colombia and Venezuela, but very rare in Cuba, where it is only found on Cayo Tío Pepe and other small islands off the northern coast. Although it is still common, has apparently declined in number in Netherlands Antilles.

Diet: Almost exclusively seeds. In the Netherlands Antilles, it also eats the fruit of large candle cactus (*Lemaireocereus*).

It forages most of the time on or near the ground. It is found singly and in pairs. It is often found in small groups as well. It may roost communally in large numbers.

Breeding: A small, short-tailed finch. The male (nominated race) has a black head, throat and most of its under parts, with dark greenish flanks posteriorly. The upper

parts, including the upper wing and tail, are green to olive in color. It has a dark iris. Its bill is black, and the gape becomes vivid pink during breeding season. The legs are dusky pinkish. The female is a drab olive-green and somewhat browner or grayer below. It has a darker upper mandible and paler lower mandible. The bare parts are otherwise much like the male. The juvenile is similar to the adult female.

It breeds throughout the year in the West Indies, April–June in Cuba, the rainy season, and June–January in Tobago. It nests in small colonies or loose groups. The male sometimes performs an aerial song display by rapidly vibrating its wings and drifting downwards.

The nest is a globular mass of grasses with entrance at the side or bottom. The nest is placed on the ground among *Opuntia cacti* or up to 2.5 m up in a small bush. Two to four eggs are laid. They are dull white, marked with pale reddish-brown at large end.

Cool Facts: Races differ mainly in size and plumage coloration. Eight subspecies are recognized.

- *M. b. bicolor*. The nominate race is found in the Bahamas; Cayo Tío Pepe (NW of Isabela de Sagua), Cayo Paredón Grande and other small islands off northern Cuba.
- *M. b. marchii*. This race is found in Jamaica and Hispaniola, including nearby small islands. It is similar to Race *omissa*, but the male has black on its under parts and is confined to anterior half.
- *M. b. omissa*. This race is found in Puerto Rico eastward through the Lesser Antilles to Tobago, and mainland from northern Colombia (Guajira Peninsula and western Santander; probably this race in northern part of central Andes) eastward through coastal Venezuela to Sucre and Margarita Island. It is like the nominate, but smaller.
- *M. b. huilae*. This race is endemic to the Magdalena Valley, in central Colombia. It is paler brownish-olive above, with paler grayish flanks.
- *M. b. grandior*. This race is found in the San Andrés Archipelago (Providencia, Santa Catalina and San Andrés), in the southwestern Caribbean. This race is like Race *omissus*, but much larger and brighter olive-green above.
- *M. b. johnstonei*. This race is found in La Blanquilla and Los Hermanos, off northern Venezuela. This is the blackest race, with its upper parts, wings and tail brighter olive-green than the nominate.
- *M. b. sharpei*. It is found in the Leeward Antilles (Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire). This is similar to Race *johnstonei* but paler.
- *M. b. tortugensis*. This race is endemic to the Island of Tortuga, off northern Venezuela. This race is paler than Race *sharpei* and gray olive above.

Common Name: St. Lucia Black Finch
Scientific Name: *Melanospiza richardsoni*

Size: 5.1-5.5 inches (13-14 cm)

Habitat: North America. Endemic to St. Lucia Island in the south-central Lesser Antilles.

It is found in moist montane forests. It lives in the lower strata of the forest, particularly near forest openings.

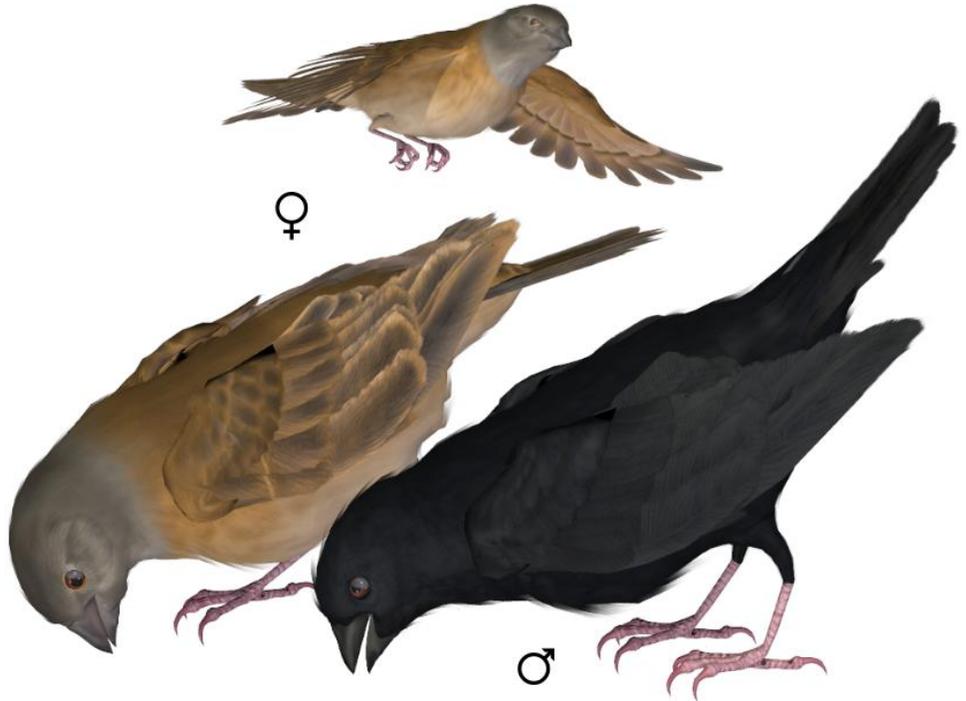
Status: **Endangered.** **Global Population:** 250-999 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. It has a tiny global range and very small population. The highest densities are found in moist montane forests. Its slow decline is the result of continuing habitat loss and degradation, coupled with effects of introduced predators. The main threat is probably the clearing of undergrowth, especially in timber plantations, which makes such areas totally unsuitable for this species. Its breeding success has also hampered by introduced mongooses and rats to the island, which may prey on both nest contents and adults. This finch occurs in the La Sorcière and Edmond Forest Reserves, and perhaps some other protected areas.

Proposed conservation measures include surveys to ascertain the species' present distribution and population, and efforts to stop the clearing of undergrowth in wooded areas.

Diet: Arthropods, fruits and seeds.

It is found primarily on the ground, where it forages in leaf litter in the dense understory. It also commonly perches within 1 m of the ground and is often seen in pairs.

Breeding: It is a stocky and pink-legged finch with thick and proportionately large bill. Its legs and feet are slightly oversized for a finch and it has a relatively short tail. The male is uniformly deep black with the under surface of primaries being slate-colored. Its iris is also black. The bill is black and the legs are pink to pinkish-gray. The female has



a grayish head with contrasting brown upper parts, including the upper wing and tail. It is dull light brown on the lower parts. Its bill is grayish-horn to black and its legs are pink. The juvenile appears like the female.

Breeding season goes from November to June. Its nest is a loosely constructed and spherical structure with an entrance at side. It is made from dried leaves, twigs, rootlets and ferns, and placed up to 3 m above ground in small palm or shrub. Two white with brownish-red spots and specks eggs are laid.

Cool Facts: The St. Lucia Black Finch is part of a group that includes the Darwin's Finches, Grassquits, Bananaquit, and Antillean bullfinches. So it is related to the Darwin's Finches, although not a part of that group directly.

Common Name: Barbados Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Loxigilla barbadensis*

Size: 6.1 inches (15.5 cm)

Habitat: North America; this finch is endemic to Barbados.

It is found in open country, woodlands, dry scrub, hotel lawns and villages. Essentially, it can be seen in any habitat having a mix of taller vegetation and shorter shrubs or grass.

Status: Least concern. **Global Population:** 500+ mature adults with a stable population trend. It has adapted well to humans and can be found almost anywhere on Barbados, and in nearly all habitats on the island (including urbanized areas, as well as agricultural sites, and even the front lawn of the international airport).



Diet: Varied diet, including seeds (36%), flowers (29%), insects (20%) and fruit (10%).

It forages from ground level to 12 m up. It is most often on the ground, where it pecks for seeds. When higher up, it may glean for insects. It also hunts for insects at the bases of flowers, or may even take nectar from them. It is often observed in small feeding flocks with Black-faced Grassquits (*Melanospiza bicolor*), particularly during the dry season.

Breeding: It is a small, comparatively dull-colored finch with relatively short and rounded bill that is slightly longer than it is deep. Often, the upper mandible is slightly longer than lower mandible. Sexes are similar. It has gray-brown head which is slightly browner on the crown. It has unmarked brown-gray upper parts (including the upper wings and tail). the back of the neck and nape are often slightly more grayish than its

back and crown. The upper wing is edged with cinnamon-brown on the coverts and less so on the flight-feathers. The chin is whitish, while its throat and most of the under parts are gray with some subtle gray-brown streaking. Its lower belly and vent are whitish. The crissum is pale cinnamon (some individuals have crissums creamy to whitish; these are presumed to be immatures or perhaps dull females). The iris is dark and the bill is black. The legs are also blackish. Juveniles resemble adults.

Breeding season occurs February through August. The nest is a domed structure with side entrance, and made of woven dry grass. It is usually placed less than 4 m from ground in a small tree or shrub. The clutch is three to four eggs. The male performs the greater role in breeding, including the bulk of the nest-building, and a greater effort in feeding female on nest and nestlings, than does the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*Loxigilla noctis*).

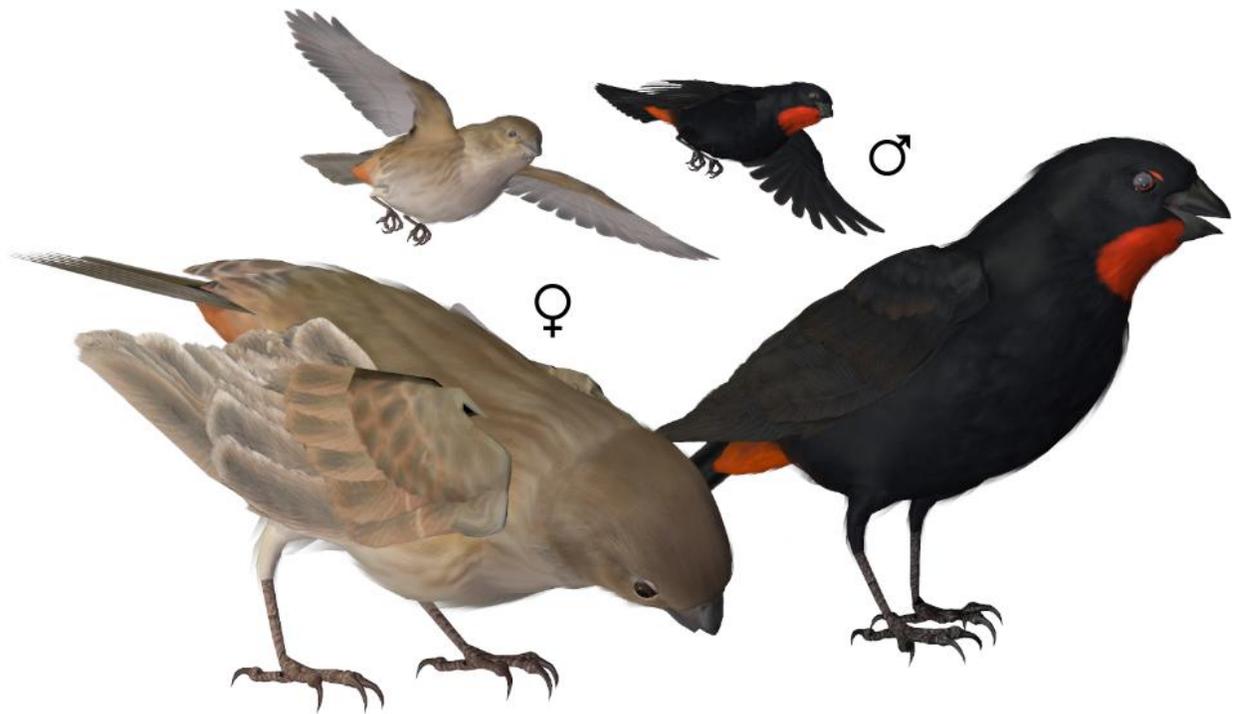
Cool Facts: The Barbados Bullfinch has only recently been separated as a species different from the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*Loxigilla noctis*), and this change in taxonomy makes it the only bird species endemic to Barbados. Unlike its congeners, the Barbados Bullfinch lacks a black and rufous male plumage; instead the males are dull and pale brownish like the females. This monomorphic plumage is one of the prime reasons species status was given to this form.

Common Name: Lesser Antillean Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Loxigilla noctis*

Size: inches (14-15.5 cm)

Habitat: North America; it is a widespread resident of the Lesser Antilles except for the Grenadines.

This species is a common inhabitant of many habitats at all elevations, from dry forest and gardens to mangroves and rainforest, and can be easily seen in yard and bird feeders in towns all the way through pristine rainforest.



Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 167,000 mature adults with a stable population trend. It is common in the Lesser Antilles, it is fairly common and widespread on St John and a local breeder on St Croix. It arrived about 1960 in the Virgin Islands, where it is found primarily in dry scrub. It is considered to likely expand its range to nearby islands.

Diet: Varied; nectar, fruits and seeds, as well as arthropods.

It is known to rob flowers of their nectar by biting a small hole at base of calyx. It uses its foot to secure fruits as it eats them (essentially stepping on fruit against a branch while it feeds from it). It forages in trees but may occasionally descend closer to ground. It has been known to enter dwellings and other buildings in search of food scraps.

Breeding: The nominate race male is all black, with a small red patch above and in front of the eye. There is also a red patch on the throat. Its iris is dark. The bill is black and the legs are dusky dark gray. The nominate race female is brown with slightly rusty upper wing-coverts and upper tail-coverts. It is grayer below with subtle brown streaking. The rump is orangish. Its bill is grayish-brown above and paler below. The juvenile resembles the female.

Egg laying occurs February through August (January and February in the Virgin Islands). The nest is domed with an opening at the side. The nest is usually below 3 m in a shrub or tree. A clutch of two to four eggs is laid. The eggs are white with fine red specks; these mainly at wide end.

Cool Facts: This species is sexually dimorphic, as opposed to the recently split Barbados Bullfinch (*Loxigilla barbadensis*), which is monomorphic on the female type plumage.

- *L.n. coryi*. It is found on Saba, St Eustatius, St Christopher (St Kitts), Nevis and Montserrat, in the northwestern Lesser Antilles. This race is similar to Race *ridgwayi* but is slightly darker overall.
- *L. n. ridgwayi*. It is found on St John and St Croix (US Virgin Is) and the northern Lesser Antilles (Anguilla, St Martin, Barbuda and Antigua). It is like Race *dominicana*, but smaller, with a proportionately large bill and feet. Also, its plumage is grayish-black (not straight black) and its under parts are slate-gray.
- *L. n. desiradensis*. It is found on La Désirade, in the north-central Lesser Antilles. This race is similar to Race *grenadensis* but has shorter wings and tarsus.
- *L. n. dominicana*. It is found on Guadeloupe, Isles des Saintes, Marie Galante and Dominica, in the north-central Lesser Antilles. It has rufous under tail-coverts which are sometimes mixed with black.
- *L. n. noctis*. The nominate race is found on Martinique, in the south-central Lesser Antilles.
- *L. n. sclateri*. It is found on St Lucia, in the south-central Lesser Antilles. It is similar to the nominate, but smaller
- *L. n. crissalis*. It is found on St Vincent, in the southern Lesser Antilles. It has a rufous throat patch that is more extensive, also the under tail-coverts are extensively chestnut-rufous colored.
- *L. n. grenadensis*. It is found on Grenada, in the southern Lesser Antilles. It is like Race *crissalis*, but its throat patch is more restricted and the under tail-coverts are partly black.

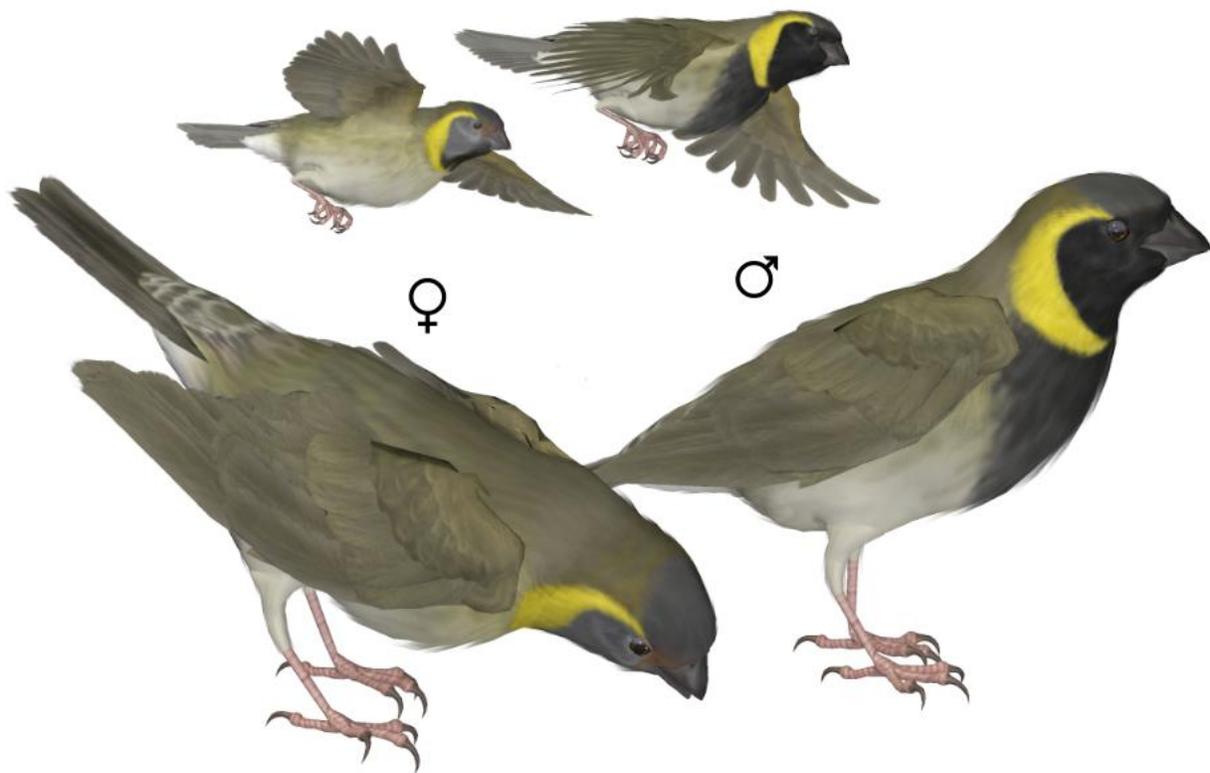
Common Name: Cuban Grassquit
Scientific Name: *Phonipara canora*

Size: 4.5 inches (11.5 cm)

Habitat: North America; endemic to Cuba. It has been introduced to the Bahamas (New Providence).

It is found primarily in semi-arid country, and commonly near the coast. It will forage near open pines forests, brushy areas, shade coffee and citrus plantations, and rural farmland with shrubbery. It is found from sea-level to middle elevations.

Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 182,000 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. It is common in some parts of Cuba. It appears to be declining in some places near human settlements.



Diet: Seeds and small fruits.

It forages generally near the ground and will leap upwards to reach seeds still on stems of plants. It can be seen alone and in pairs. It can be found in flocks outside of breeding season.

Breeding: A small and short-tailed finch with a distinctive plumage pattern. The male has a black face and throat which contrasts with a broad yellow patch starting above eye, then curving around rear ear-coverts and extending forward as a broad collar to lower throat. This collar is often broken in the center. The crown and upper parts, including the upper wing and tail are olive. The crown is often grayer, and the primaries are edged with yellow. The breast is black (forming a triangle) while its sides and the rest of the under parts are an olive-gray, which is paler posteriorly. The iris is dark brown and the bill is black. The legs are pink to a dusky dark pink. The female is similar to male, but duller, lacking black in the face and missing the black breast triangle. Its face is dark chestnut, and its collar, a paler yellow. The juvenile resembles the female, but duller in color.

Breeding season occurs from April to June. The nest is a large globular mass of woven dried grasses, lined with softer materials, with an entrance on the side. It is placed low in the spiny branches of a tree. The clutch is two to three eggs which are pale greenish-white with lilac or brown spots, especially at large end.

Cool Facts: Amongst members of the genus *Tiaris*, this species, which is naturally endemic to Cuba, must certainly be regarded as one of the most attractive.

Common Name: Yellow-shouldered Grassquit
Scientific Name: *Loxipasser anoxanthus*

Size: 4-4.5 inches (10.2-11.5 cm)

Habitat: North America; it is endemic to Jamaica.

It can be found at the edges of forest, which include montane evergreen forests, woodlands, and gardens near wooded areas. Its range is from sea-level to 1800 m.

Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 13,500 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. This bird is fairly common but has a very limited range (only found in Jamaica).



Diet: Seeds, fruits, probably also insects.

It forages low in bushes and in trees, but usually above the ground. It can be seen in small groups, presumably pairs and family groups.

Breeding: It is a very small finch with a moderately short tail and large head. Its bill is thick and has a strongly rounded culmen. The male has black on its head and its under parts to the belly. The lower belly and flanks are greenish, contrasting with a rusty-colored rump. On the upper parts, the black of the head extends to the nape and lower neck, where it strongly contrasts with its grass-green mantle and back to its tail. The upper wing is also greenish, contrasting bright yellow-green shoulders. Its iris is dark and its bill and legs are black. The females head and breast are gray with a slightly

green wash. The entire upper parts are greenish with a yellow wash. The green wings are strongly marked with yellow on the shoulders. The under parts, below the breast are a gray-green with a pale rusty crissum. The bill is horn-colored and the legs black. The juvenile is like the female, but with reduced yellow at bend of wing.

Breeding season occurs from March to September with egg-laying starting March to July. /the nest is a finely woven dome of grass and down, with a side entrance, and built in a tree or bush, or concealed among epiphytes. The clutch is three to four eggs, which are white with reddish or dull brown speckles and spots (these sometimes concentrated at broad end).

Cool Facts: While this species is only one of several finches that are endemic to Jamaica, it is the sole member of *Loxipasser*. It shares the island with two other, more widespread grassquits, the Black-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris bicolor*) and the Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*). This species is distinctly more arboreal than either of the latter two.

Common Name: Greater Antillean Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Melopyrrha violacea*

Size: 5.2-6.9 inches (13.2–17.5cm)

Habitat: North America; a resident of the Greater Antilles (Hispaniola, Jamaica, and the Bahamas).

Dense thickets and undergrowth in habitats ranging from dry coastal scrub to wet mountain forest, including pine (*Pinus*) woods and gardens. Sea-level to 2000 m.



Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 667,000 mature adults with a stable population trend. This species is considered “common” and suspected to be stable in the absence of evidence for any declines or substantial threats.

Diet: fruits and seeds , also on flower parts and snails (*Gastropoda*).

It tends to keep in dense vegetation; probably feeds on or near ground.

Breeding: The male of the nominate race is black, with red-orange short supercilium, throat and under tail-coverts. Its iris is dark and its bill is a dark gray. The legs are dusky black in color. The female nominate is similar to male, but is a duller black, and

more slaty-colored, especially on the upper parts. The juvenile is like the female, but less grayish. Its upper parts are brown and it has the reddish-orange markings as on the adults, but the markings are reduced in size on the throat.

Egg-laying begins March through June. The nest shape is sometimes a cup, but usually a spherical structure with a side entrance. It is made from twigs and leaves, lined with bromeliads, fine pieces of bark and other fine material, and placed on tree branch or in tree cavity. Sometimes, the nest is in a shrub or in grass clump. The clutch is three to four eggs which are a very pale bluish-white with thin red-brown and yellow-brown marks, these concentrated at wide end.

Cool Facts: This species shows variation in bill size between islands, but is generally large-billed for its body size in comparison to other *Loxigilla* bullfinches. It has a high, thin, and raspy call and song, and can be seen foraging low in the under-story individually or in small groups.

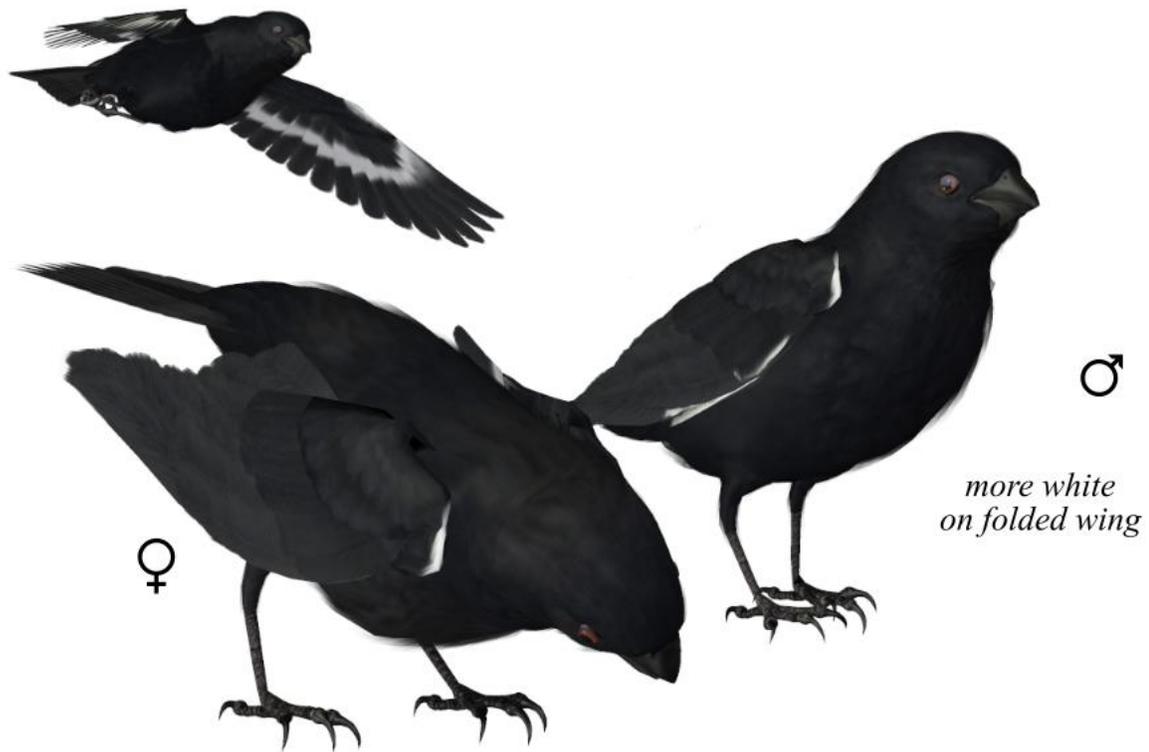
- *M. v. violacea*. The nominate race is found on most of the larger islands in the Bahamas.
- *M. v. maurella*. This race is endemic to the Isle of Tortue (off NW Hispaniola). It is like Race *affinis*, but larger.
- *M. v. affinis*. This race is endemic to Hispaniola and Isla Catalina. It is smaller and glossier than the nominate race.
- *M. v. parishi*. This race is endemic to Île-à-Vache and Beata Island. (off Hispaniola). It resembles the nominate race, but is smaller.
- *M. v. ruficollis*. This race is endemic to Jamaica. It is larger than the nominate race, duller and grayer, with a paler rufous on throat and supercilium.

Common Name: Cuban Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Melopyrrha nigra*

Size: 5.5 -5.75 inches (14-14.6 cm)

Habitat: North America; endemic to Cuba, Grand Cayman and Little Cayman.

The Cuban Bullfinch prefers tropical dry forest and thickets, scrubby vegetation and forested areas, and is more common at sea level and up to 300 m.



Status: Near Threatened. **Global Population:** 223,000 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. It is thought to be undergoing a moderately rapid decline due to habitat loss and fragmentation as well as capture for the cagebird trade.

Diet: Fruits, flower buds, seeds and insects.

It usually occurs alone or in pairs during both the breeding and non-breeding seasons. In the non-breeding season, it is also found in small groups of 4 to 5 individuals.

Breeding: The male is shiny black while the female is a duller black, with a smaller, less conspicuous white wing patch. The immature male resembles the female, but has a glossy black head and flight feathers. The juvenile is similar to the female, with greenish tipped feathers.

Nesting on Cuba occurs from March to August. The nest is made of dry grasses, leaves, tree bark, rootlets, horse and goat hair, and feathers, and is located in a bush or low part of a tree no more than 2 m above the ground. The nest is constructed by both sexes.

It lays three to five eggs that are whitish with a greenish cast, spotted with reddish brown and lilac, the spots concentrated at the larger end. The female incubates the eggs for 13 to 14 days. Fledging occurs at 14 to 17 additional days.

Cool Facts: On Grand Cayman, it is called the "Black Sparrow".

Two subspecies are recognized:

- *M. n. nigra*. First reported by Linnaeus in 1758. The nominate race is endemic to Cuba and Isle of Pines
- *M. n. taylori*. First reported by Hartert in 1896. This race is endemic to the Cayman Islands. The female and immature are grayish olive with a darker head.

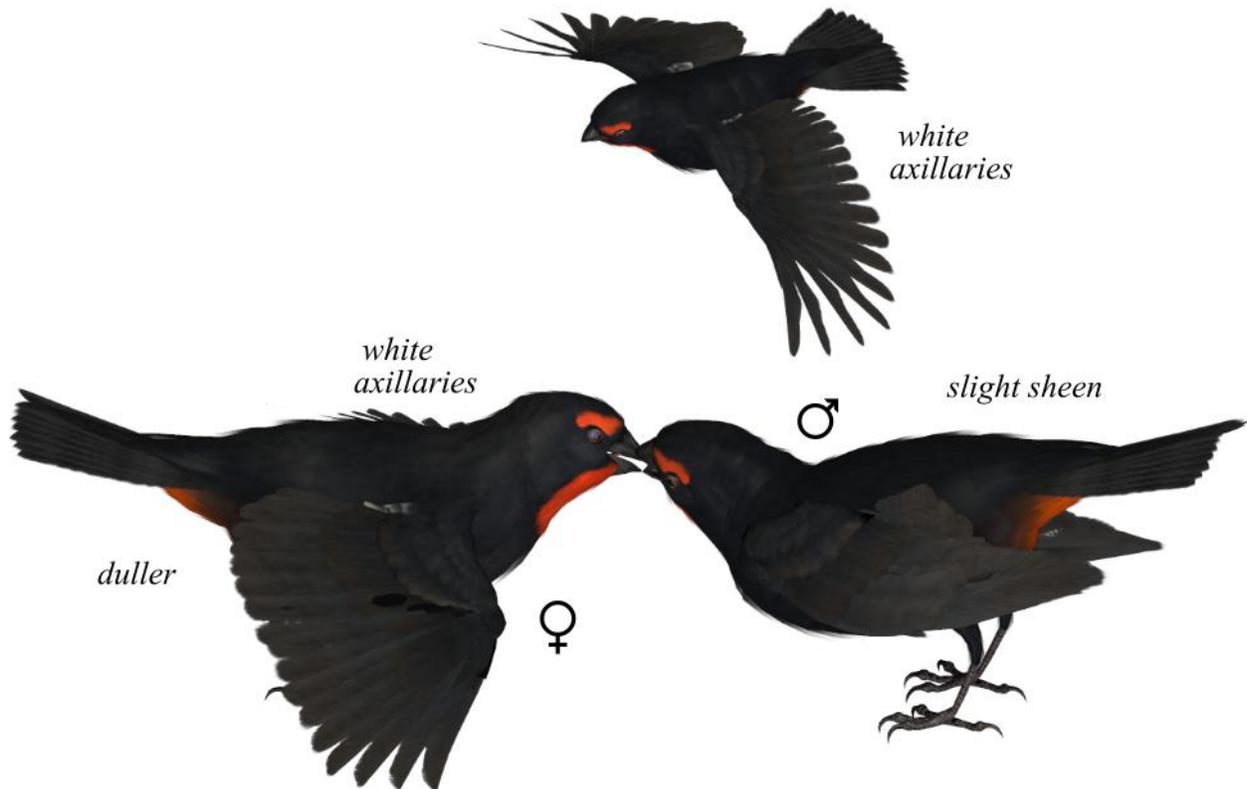
Common Name: St. Kitts Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Melopyrrha grandis*

Size: 7-7.9 inches (18-20 cm)

Habitat: North America; endemic to St. Christopher Island (aka St. Kitts).

Historically, it was restricted to the higher forested slopes.

Status: **Presumed Extinct.** **Global Population:** 0?. By 1880, it was only known from the montane forests of Mount Liamuiga (then Mount Misery), although it was reported to be "not uncommon" there. However, for many years, this report was known to be the last record of the species, as following the 1899 San Ciriaco hurricane and Hurricane



Four, there were no reports of the species, and it was thought to have been driven to extinction. However, a single specimen was collected in July 1929 by Paul Bartsch and preserved in the Smithsonian, with the specimen remaining overlooked until 1984, when it was described by Storrs L. Olson, with this description published by David Steadman in 1997. Bartsch's collection of a specimen is unusual, as while the bird would have presumably remained extremely rare and hard to collect by this time, Bartsch's field notes indicated a brief and perfunctory visit to the island, which would likely be inadequate to collect such a rare species. No other confirmed sightings or specimen collections have been made since 1929, and the species is presumably extinct.

Several possible causes for its decline have been proposed including predation by introduced species such as the Green Monkey, as well as competition with the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, although no clear cause has ever been determined.

Diet: Seeds and fruit.

Breeding: The St. Kitts Bullfinch was distinctive for being relatively large and glossy black, with white axillaries and a rusty-red or dark terracotta-colored throat (extending barely to the chest), crown and under tail-coverts which have interspersed dark marks. Females were not as glossy black as males, but probably there was much individual variation in blackness (as there is with the Puerto Rican Bullfinch). Juveniles were described as having reddish-brown upper parts with pale reddish under tail-coverts differing from Puerto Rican Bullfinch by being browner overall with a grayer head. The St. Kitts Bullfinch is also substantially larger than its close relative and apparently lacks the sexual size dimorphism seen in Puerto Rican Bullfinch.

Cool Facts: The St. Kitts Bullfinch was originally described as a subspecies of the Puerto Rican Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha portoricensis*) and has recently been elevated to a species, making it the only endemic species on St. Christopher. Unfortunately, it is also presumed extinct, with no **verified** sightings in nearly 100 years, but hope still remains...

Despite the lack of reliable sightings for over a century, it is possible that the species may still be extant due to its elusive nature, as well as potential sightings in 1993, 2012, and 2021, which have been considered reliable by BirdsCaribbean. Although several ornithological surveys were taken after Barstch's sighting, with none finding the species, interviews with the surveyors found that most of the surveys were too short or performed in poor weather to be an adequate search for the bird.

In 1993, a potential sighting of the species was recorded by Saint Kitts' most eminent naturalist, Campbell Evelyn. Evelyn and his wife, Joyce, were hiking near the Bloody River when they spotted a bird matching the description of the species, being almost entirely black with red on top of the head and on the throat below the chin. The bird was also much larger than the Lesser Antillean bullfinch, which they were both familiar with, and it thus could have been a St. Kitts bullfinch. On November 16, 2012, coincidentally 1 day after Evelyn's passing, a Puerto Rican naturalist, Alejandro Sanchez, who was familiar with the Puerto Rican bullfinch, reported hearing a bird call similar to that of a Puerto Rican bullfinch high in the tree canopy of Mt. Liamuiga; however, despite cameras being at the ready, the bird did not show itself. The report of the bird's call was also confirmed by one of Sanchez's companions. In 2021, a scientific experiment by Saint Kitts' Department of the Environment recorded a sonogram of a bird song that could potentially be that of *M. grandis*, which requires further investigation.

Common Name: Puerto Rican Bullfinch
Scientific Name: *Melopyrrha portoricensis*

Size: 6.7-7.5 inches (17-19 cm)

Habitat: North America; endemic to Puerto Rico.

It is widespread on Puerto Rico, although less abundant in the eastern third of the island and absent from some coastal habitats in that region. It appears to prefer dense mountain forests, but can also be found in dry coastal thickets, and infrequently in mangroves.



Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 9,900 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. The population is suspected to be in decline owing to the likelihood of ongoing habitat destruction.

Diet: Seeds, fruits and other plant matter.

It forages from the ground to the top of the tree canopy, although it appears to prefer low-to-medium under-story vegetation for foraging and is rarely seen foraging on the ground. The foraging behavior of bullfinches is described as a "deliberate, methodical foraging style" in which "birds carefully inspect nearby foliage, branch, and trunk bark substrates from a perch before moving to the next perch" by J.S. Greenlaw. Foot-holding behavior, in which ripe or partially ripe fruits are held under one foot and eaten in pieces has been

observed. Foraging appears to occur mostly in the mornings and evenings.

This bullfinch is reported to be very secretive, more frequently heard than seen.

Breeding: The sexes are similar, although on average the female may be less glossy than the male. The adult Puerto Rican Bullfinch is distinctive for being relatively large and very black, with reddish brown forecrown and supercilium, throat, and under tail

coverts. The juvenile is dark olive-green with reddish brown under tail coverts. All ages have large, black finch-type, conical bills.

The nest is constructed in a variety of tree and cacti species, and may hang or sit on branches. In Guánica Forest of southwestern Puerto Rico, heights of observed nests ranged from 0.9 to approximately 6.0 m, with an mean height of 2.4 m above the ground.

The nest is exceedingly variable in shape. Many are rather typical cup-shaped nests, open at the top; some nests have a partial roof with a partly sideways entrance; and other nests are totally enclosed, domed-type nests with openings on the side. Two to four eggs are laid. The incubating female often sits low in the nest, with its head held against the bottom of the nest and the tail raised up and laying against the back side of the nest.

Cool Facts: The name "bullfinch" does not occur among birds of continental North America, but its widespread occurrence in the West Indies must reflect both the early history of colonization of that region, and the fact that most of these islands remained as British or French colonies until fairly recently. Any West Indian island of decent size has at least one species of bullfinch, with the Cuban Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha nigra*) on Cuba, some of its offshore islands, and Grand Cayman; the Greater Antillean Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha violacea*) on most of the larger Bahamas, Hispaniola and its satellites, and Jamaica; the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*Loxigilla noctis*) on all the Lesser Antilles except the Grenadines and Barbados; the Barbados Bullfinch (*Loxigilla barbadensis*) on Barbados; the Puerto Rican Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha portoricensis*) on Puerto Rico; and the probably extinct St. Kitts Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha grandis*), formerly on St. Kitts.

To locals, the Puerto Rican Bullfinch is known as the comeñame, comeñame puertorriqueño, capacho, or carpacho.

Common Name: Orangequit
Scientific Name: *Euneornis campestris*

Size: 5.5 inches (14 cm)

Habitat: North America; endemic to Jamaica.

It is found in humid forests, also commonly in shade coffee plantations. It ranges from sea-level to 1500 m, but is commonest at middle elevations.

Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 13,500 mature adults with a decreasing population trend. The population is suspected to be in decline owing to the likelihood of ongoing habitat destruction.

Diet: Mostly nectar; also fruit (*Cecropia* and *Ficus*), as well as invertebrates and seeds. It also takes tree sap at holes drilled by sapsuckers.

It forages at low to medium heights. This species will travel in pairs or in mixed-species flocks of nectivores and insectivores, especially when feeding on flowering emergent trees.



Breeding: A small finch-like bird with slightly decurved bill. The male is almost entirely gray-blue (which can appear dark in poor light), with orange-red throat. The iris is dark brown, while the bill and legs black. The female has its crown and nape olive-gray,

upper parts warmer and browner. It is dull grayish-white below and faintly streaked, flanks washed light buffish. Juveniles appear is like the female.

Breeding season April to June. The nest is a moderately deep cup, usually uncovered, made from grass and plant fibers. Nests are constructed up to 6 m above ground in a tree or shrub. Sometimes the abandoned nests of Jamaican Becard (*Pachyramphus niger*) are re-used. The clutch is two to four eggs which are white with reddish-brown and gray-brown markings that are concentrated at wide end. The incubation is by the female.

Cool Facts: The orangequit was formally described by the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus in 1758 in the tenth edition of his *Systema Naturae* under the binomial name *Motacilla campestris*. Linnaeus based his description on the "American Hedge-Sparrow" that George Edwards had described and illustrated in his 1750 work, *A Natural History of Uncommon Birds*, from a specimen collected in Jamaica. The species was moved to the genus *Euneornis* by the Austrian zoologist Leopold Fitzinger in 1856.

Common Name: Yellow-faced Grassquit
Scientific Name: *Tiaris olivaceus*

Size: 3.9-4.2 inches (10-10.7 cm)

Habitat: North and South America; it occurs from southeastern Mexico south to northern South America, and throughout the Greater Antilles.

It is a common species that occurs in open grassy fields, pastures, roadsides, and clearings.



Status: Least Concern. **Global Population:** 500,000-4,999,000 mature adults with an increasing population trend. The Yellow-faced Grassquit recently has been expanding its range. It first was recorded in Meta department in Colombia in 1997. It first was reported from Ecuador in 1976, with a record of a single bird in Amazonian Ecuador. There is only a single subsequent record for eastern Ecuador, but in the early 1980s it was reported from the west slope of the Andes in northwestern Ecuador, and now is fairly common in this region. This species seems to benefit from deforestation, quickly moving into and utilizing recently cleared areas.

Diet: Mostly grasses and its seeds, some other seeds and berries and occasionally insects and flowers.

It forages in mixed flock, over bare ground, it hops, searching for seeds. It forages perched from grass stems in which it is eating, occasionally using their feet to hold the tip of the blade. When grass seeds become scarce, it searches bushes for berries and under foliage for insects in a warbler-like manner.

Breeding: Sexes are dimorphic. It has a conical, sharply pointed bill. The forecrown, sides of the face, and the upper breast of the male are black, contrasting with a yellow superciliary and throat. Females are duller and more uniformly colored. They primarily are olive green, with a paler superciliary and throat.

In Costa Rica and Panama, breeding is associated with wet seasons. In Costa Rica, breeding primarily occurs May-August, but may take place at a very low level until as late as January. The domed nest has thick walls and a side entrance. The nest is composed of straw, grass blades, and weed stems, lined with fine pieces of grass or shredded fibers.

The nest is constructed by both sexes, although the two birds rarely work together. The male initiates construction of the nest but sometimes contributes little afterward. The construction takes 3-6 days. The nest is placed in a grass tussock or in a low bush, from 0.2-1.8 m above the ground.

Usually two eggs are laid which only the female incubates. The incubation period lasts about 12 to 14 days. Both sexes feeds the young.

Cool Facts: In 1760, the French zoologist, Mathurin Jacques Brisson, included a description of the Yellow-faced grassquit in his "Ornithologie" based on a specimen collected in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti). He used the French name "Le bruant de S. Domingue" and the Latin name *Emberiza dominicensis*. Although Brisson coined Latin names, these do not conform to the binomial system and are not recognized by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. When in 1766 the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus updated his "Systema Naturae" for the twelfth edition he added 240 species that had been previously described by Brisson. One of these was the Yellow-faced grassquit. Linnaeus included a terse description, coined the binomial name *Emberiza olivacea* and cited Brisson's work. The specific name *olivaceus* is New Latin for "olive-green". This is now the only species placed in the genus *Tiaris* that was introduced by the English naturalist William John Swainson in 1827. The genus formerly contained additional species. A molecular phylogenetic study published in 2014 found that the genus was non-monophyletic and in the subsequent rearrangement four species were moved to other genera.

The Yellow-faced grassquit was traditionally placed with the buntings and New World sparrows in the family *Emberizidae*, but molecular phylogenetic studies have shown that it is a member of the tanager family *Thraupidae* and belongs to the subfamily *Coerebinae* that also contains Darwin's finches.

Five subspecies are recognized:

- *T. o. pusillus*. First reported by Swainson in 1827. This race is found in east Mexico to Ecuador and Venezuela. It is similar to Race *intermedius*, but "with the black markings in adult males still more extended, that beneath extending over breast, and in fully adult males the auricular region and crown black or mostly black".
- *T. o. intermedius*. First reported by Ridgway in 1885. This race is found on the island of Cozumel (off southeast Mexico). It is similar to the nominate race, but "larger, the adult male with black on chest extending farther backward".
- *T. o. ravidus*. First reported by Wetmore in 1957. This race is found on Coiba Island (off south Panama). It is darker than the nominate. In the male, the "black extends to nape, entire side of head, and to belly; green of upper surface darker;" in the female, "grayer green throughout" compared to Race *pusillus*.
- *T. o. olivaceus*. First reported by Linnaeus in 1766. The nominate race is found on Cuba, Isla de la Juventud, Cayman Islands, Jamaica and Hispaniola
- *T. o. bryanti*. First reported by Ridgway in 1898. This race is found on Puerto Rico and nearby islands. It is similar to the nominate race, but "decidedly smaller, color much brighter olive-green above and the under parts more yellowish, the abdomen often light yellow".

Special Thanks to my Beta-Testing Team...

FlintHawk & Alisa

Species Accuracy and Reference Materials

The author has tried to make these species as accurate to their real life counterparts as possible. With the use of one generic model to create dozens of unique bird species, some give and take is bound to occur. The texture maps were created in Painter with as much accuracy as possible.

Field Guide Sources:

- **The Cornell Lab of Ornithology Birds of the World** <https://www.hbw.com/>
- **Wikipedia** <https://en.wikipedia.org/>
- **BirdLife International** <https://www.birdlife.org/>
- **Birds Caribbean** <https://www.birdscaribbean.org/>
- **eBird Caribbean** <https://ebird.org/caribbean/home>

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