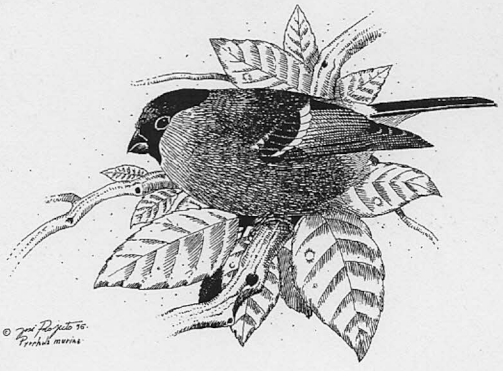
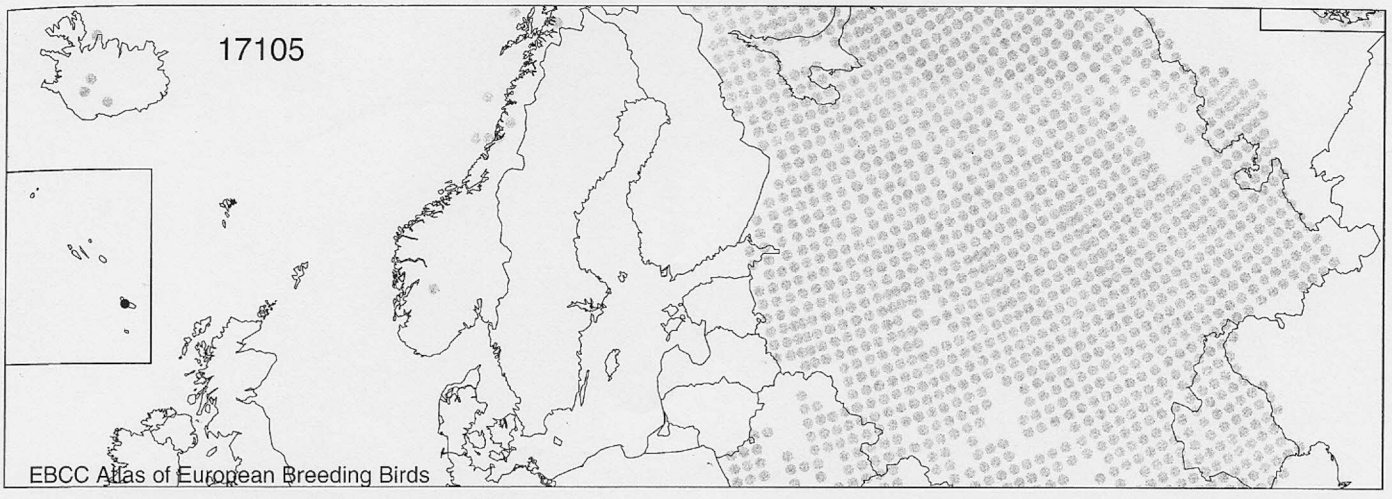
Pyrrhula murina

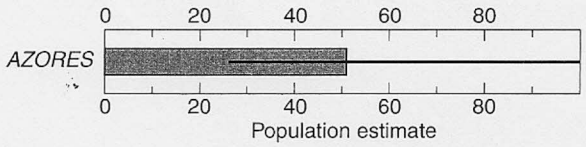
Azores Bullfinch

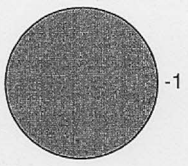


CZ	Hýl Azorský
D	Azorengimpel
E	Camachuelo de las Azores
F	Bouvreuil des Açores
FIN	Azorienpunatulkku
G	Πύρρουλας των Αζορών
H	Azori süvöltő
I	Ciuffolotto delle Azzorre
NL	Azorengoudvink
P	Priôlo
PL	Gil azorski
R	Азорский снегирь
S	Azordomherre

Criteria not applied







% in top 10 countries: 100.0
Total number of populated European countries: 1
Total European population 26–100 (51)

The large and monomorphic Azores Bullfinch is known only from the eastern part of Sao Miguel island in the Azores. The population of *c*120bp (J. Ramos, pers obs) is now restricted to *c*580ha of high-altitude native forest, although from 1840 to *c*1920 it had a wider range and was regarded as a pest in orange orchards, being easily collected for museums (Bannerman & Bannerman 1966, Ramos 1993). Its range contains two main patches of native vegetation, the larger being centred on Pico da Vara summit, where birds breed and occur all year round and the smaller being at Salto do Cavalo, in the W of its range, where birds occur only from September to December (Ramos in press). The vegetation around Salto do Cavalo is less diverse and has significantly lower densities of native food plants, especially the Azorean holly *Ilex perado*, whose berries are consumed during the winter food scarcity period (Ramos 1995).

To complete its annual cycle the Azores Bullfinch needs a habitat mosaic of several vegetation types. It uses native vegetation intensively year-round but in summer it also selects open areas containing herbaceous vegetation and forest margins, both of native and exotic trees such as Japanese cedar *Cryptomeria japonica* and cheese-wood *Pittosporum undulatum* (Ramos in press). Birds move from area to area following the fruiting of food plants. They are more mobile in summer than in winter, making movements of *c*3km along streams, from higher to lower altitudes in late spring (Ramos in press).

Random population fluctuations probably affect numbers, but may not be a major factor because the population trend appears to be stable (Ramos 1994), some recently introduced exotic plant species providing food over winter and early summer (Ramos 1995). However, the plant community equilibrium on which the Azores Bullfinch depends is being upset by the loss of native vegetation and by the large-scale invasion of native forest by *P. undulatum*, ginger lily *Hedychium gardnerianum* and lily-of-the-valley tree *Clethra arborea*, leading to the gradual contraction of its range and small population.

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