

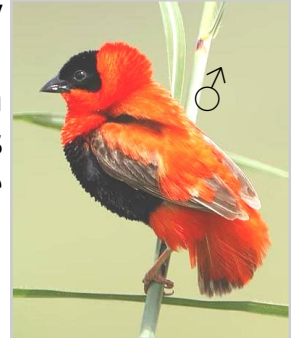
THE NAPOLEAN WEAVER



Male in Nuptial Plumage
Photo: Steve Garvie

The Napoleon Weaver, *Euplectes afer*, occurs over much of Africa south of the Sahara. Alternate common names include: Yellow Bishop, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Golden Bishop, Napoleon Bishop and Black-winged Golden Bishop. The Afrikaans name is “Goudgeelvink”.

The species was first described by the German naturalist Johann Friedrich Gmelin in 1789. In captivity it has been recorded as interbreeding with the Orange Bishop, *Euplectes franciscanus*.



Orange Bishop
Photo: Steve Garvie

There are three recognised subspecies:

- *E. afer afer* (J. F. Gmelin, 1789), Mauritania, Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo and Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Sudan and Nile Valley, P R Congo, D R Congo, Angola (Luanda region); sporadic records from Liberia, Chad, Gabon and Uganda.
- *E. a. strictus* G. Hartlaub, 1857, found in central Ethiopia.
- *E. a. taha* A. Smith, 1836, Taha Golden Bishop or Tahaweber (in German), inhabits Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Lesotho lowlands; occasional records from Swaziland and Mozambique.

The Napoleon Weaver is 95-105mm (3.7-4.1 inches) in length and 15g (½oz) in weight. During the breeding season, the male has distinctive golden-



Hen Napoleon Weaver

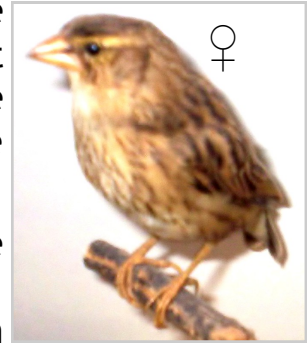
yellow and black plumage. The beak of both sexes is short and conical. The colour of the male's beak is black during breeding season; but during the non-breeding season, it is horn in colour, as is that of the female. The legs and feet are pinkish brown. The male has a black lower face, throat, breast and belly, a wide black collar on the back of the neck, and a brilliant yellow crown, forehead, and hind-crown. There is a yellow patch on the shoulder, and the rump and back are yellow. The wings and tail are brown. When not in nuptial plumage the male assumes female-like plumage.

The female has pale brown upperparts, with darker streaking. The eyebrow is paler and the underparts are off-white with fine dark streaks on the breast and flanks.



Yellow Bishop

The male in breeding plumage resembles the Yellow Bishop, *Euplectes capensis*, but this species is larger and lacks the yellow crown. Non-breeding males and females can be confused with those of the Grenadier Weaver, *Euplectes orix*, but the Napoleon has white rather than the buff-coloured underparts of the Grenadier.



Grenadier Weaver
Photo: "Estrildidae"

The Napoleon Weaver occurs in the African countries of: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It prefers habitats such as grasslands, vlies (swamps), and pans. It likes wheat and sorghum fields, and weedy vegetation beside wetlands.

The diet consists of insects, grain, and seeds. It is usually found in mixed sex flocks. In the non-breeding season these flocks may contain other weaver and sparrow species. The call is a "high-pitched, rasping, buzzing swizzling, somewhat insect-like: "zzzzzzz, zzzit, zzzit, zzzz". The breeding season is from November to May, with December to March being the peak months. The polygynous males do not breed in colonies. Each male builds two or more oval nests with a top opening and attempts to attract a female to each nest by flaring its yellow feathers and display flights.

Napoleon Weavers are both gregarious and nomadic, wandering to breeding areas in response to rainfall. Nests are built among the standing stems of grasses, sedges or shrubs, usually low over water. Bent over stems of live grass help hide the nest. A clutch consists of two to four eggs. The female alone incubates for the twelve to fourteen days it takes for the eggs to hatch, and then undertakes all parental duties. Chicks leave the nest after eleven to twelve days and are fully independent after an additional five weeks.



Male Displaying

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia 