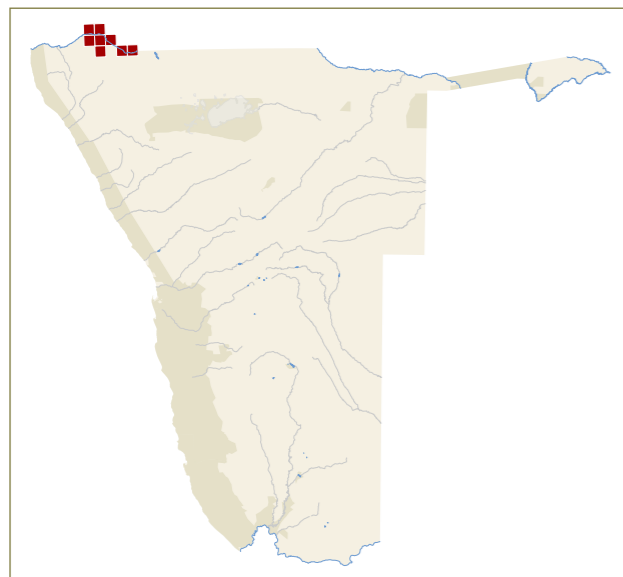


occur in the Okavango Delta where this habitat is abundant (Pollard & Herremans 1997). Although it was not recorded during the 24-year SABAP1 atlas period in Namibia, isolated populations have been found on Impaliila Island and near Kwetche in the Mahango area of the Bwabwata National Park (C Hines, C Boix-Hinzen unpubl. data), where at least one pair and possibly up to five pairs may occur in *Hyphaene* palm habitat (Paxton 2010, C Boix-Hinzen pers. obs.). No formal surveys have been undertaken. It is not a conservation priority, given its relative abundance in East Africa and its location within a conservation area in Namibia. Surveys of its population are, however, required to determine its full status.

**Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush |
*Cichladusa ruficauda***



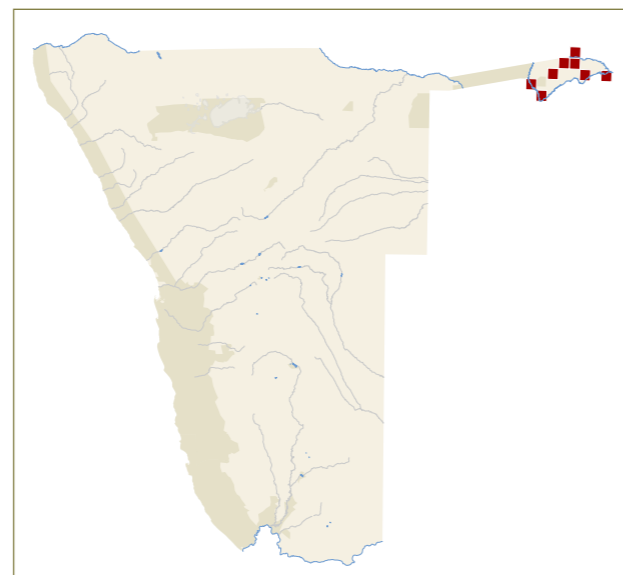
This is a relatively common species outside southern Africa, from Gabon southwards, that is always associated with *Hyphaene* and *Borassus* palms (Underhill & Brown 1997a). It is confined in Namibia to just seven quarter-degree squares between Epupa Falls and Ruacana on the Kunene River, an area of 2,300 km² (Jarvis *et al.* 2001), but has also been noted on the Ombuku River (W Swanepoel pers. obs.). It is a relatively conspicuous species with a reporting rate of 23% and may be more common than believed (Underhill & Brown 1997a). In a 10-day survey of this region in March 1997, it was found on seven of the 10 days, with 25 birds recorded at a density of 8.7 birds per 10 km of suitable riverine vegetation. Most sightings occurred around Epupa Falls and the luxuriant palm vegetation associated with Epupa Falls and rapids (Simmons 1997p). None occurred in the Baynes Mountains, where palm-fringed river banks are rarer. It breeds in *Hyphaene* palms in a narrow strip near the Epupa Falls, laying in December (two), February (two) and March (three) (Simmons 1997p, Brown *et al.* 2015). While this is



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an Important Bird Area (Simmons *et al.* 2001b) it has no formal protection, and these palms will be submerged if a hydro-electric dam is built at Epupa (see Cinderella Waxbill *Estrilda thomensis* for further details). Since this represents a tiny proportion of the African range of this species, it will not unduly influence the conservation status of the species. Nonetheless, every effort should be made to conserve this population in Namibia.

**Bearded Scrub-Robin
(Bearded Robin) |
*Erythropgia quadrivirgata***



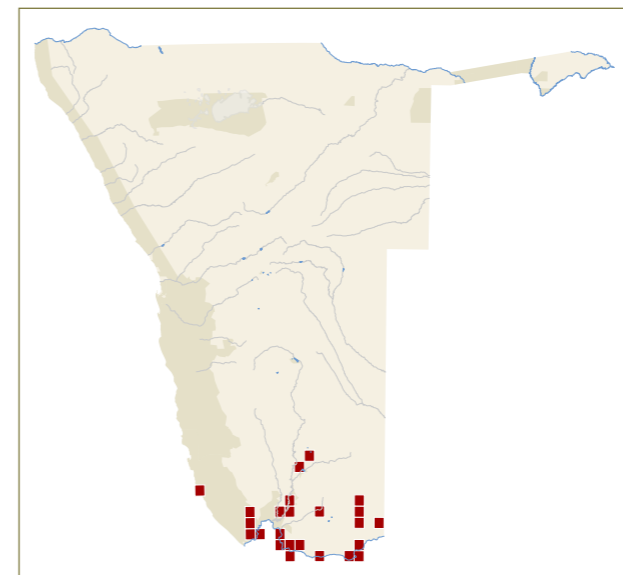
This is a rare species in Namibia, but with a widespread distribution from Somalia to South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal coast. It favours closed sandveld woodland associated with rivers or thickets around termite mounds (Oatley & Arnott 1998). In Namibia, it is only recorded from the Zambezi region, including from the Kwando, Chobe, and Zambezi rivers and intervening woodland (Oatley 1997f). Like other birds of woodland thickets, it may



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be overlooked and is possibly more common than the 3,300 km² area of occupancy and low reporting rate of 6% suggest (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). Surveys of singing males during the breeding season between September and December may be the best way to survey this resident species (Oatley & Arnott 1998). It is most easily confused with the White-Browed Scrub-Robin (White-Browed Robin) *E. leucophrys*, but the two can be distinguished by the harsher, simpler song of the latter species (Oatley & Arnott 1998).

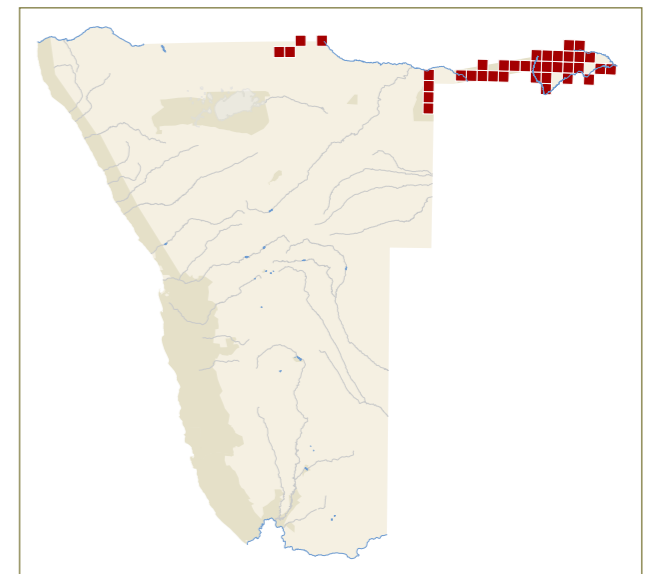
**Sickle-winged Chat |
Emarginata sinuata
(*Cercomela sinuata*)**



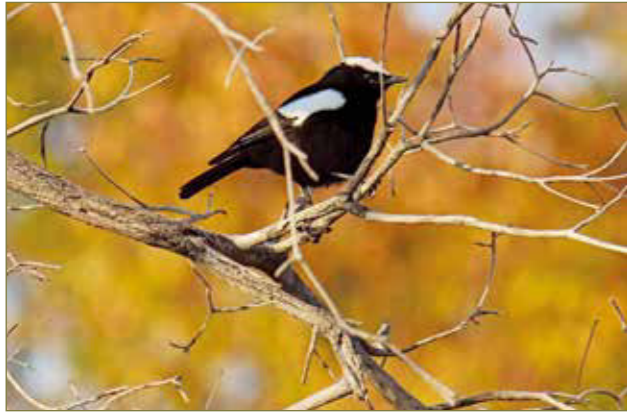
Easily confused with the larger, more robust Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*, this southern African endemic just touches the southern edge of Namibia along the Orange River and the open scrub and overgrazed grasslands at about 28°S (Harrison 1997). Its reporting rate here is below 10%. It is a summer breeder in the southern part of the Western Cape,

South Africa (Harrison 1997), with most records from October and November, but it has never been recorded breeding in Namibia (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). Given that its range covers 10,400 km² in Namibia (6% of which is in protected areas), and densities of 10 to 28 birds per km² are known from the highest reporting rate areas of Lesotho (Brown & Barnes 1984), Namibia's population is unlikely to exceed about 20,000 birds. The species appears to benefit from the sparsely covered, over-grazed sections of the Karoo in both Namibia and South Africa (Harrison 1997).

**Arnot's Chat |
*Thamnoleae arnoti***



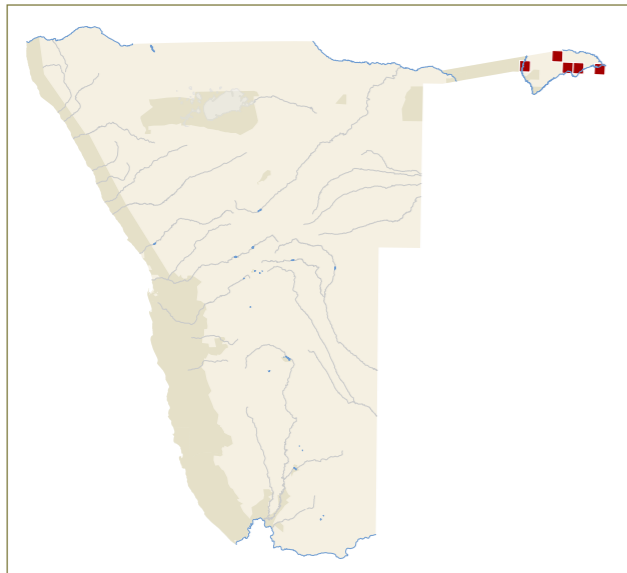
This striking black and white chat is found in the broad-leaved woodlands of the southern African tropics where it is confined to north-east Namibia, northern Botswana, northern South Africa and north-west Zimbabwe. In Namibia, it occurs in well-developed woodland in the north-east Ohangwena, and northern Kavango regions, and in Mopane woodland throughout the Zambezi region (Herremans 1997d). Density estimates of 833 birds per 10 km² have been recorded along rivers in Botswana (Herremans 1997d), but population sizes are much lower in the Salambala woodlands bordering the Chobe River, where only two birds were recorded in 7 km² of blocks in Mopane-dominated woodland (Ward & Robertson 2002). In a survey of Mopane woodland some 40 km south-west of Katima Mulilo, a population density of about 22 birds per 10 km² was estimated (Brown 2012b). There are some indications that populations have declined in both Zimbabwe and Botswana where miombo and Mopane woodlands have been extensively cleared for agriculture, and where use of pesticides has had a negative effect on these insectivorous birds (Herremans 1997d). Their unusually low numbers in parts of their range in Namibia



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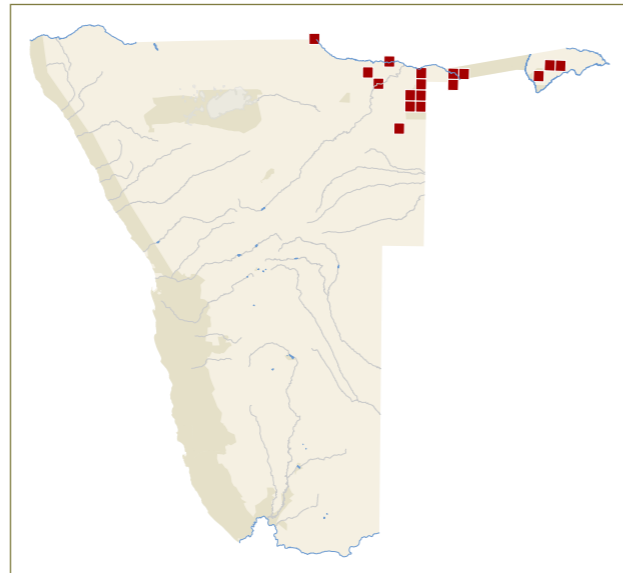
require further research and this rare species requires monitoring as it may need to be elevated to threatened status in the near future.

**Miombo Blue-eared Starling
(Lesser Blue-eared Starling)
| *Lamprotornis elisabeth*
(*Lamprotornis chloropterus*)**



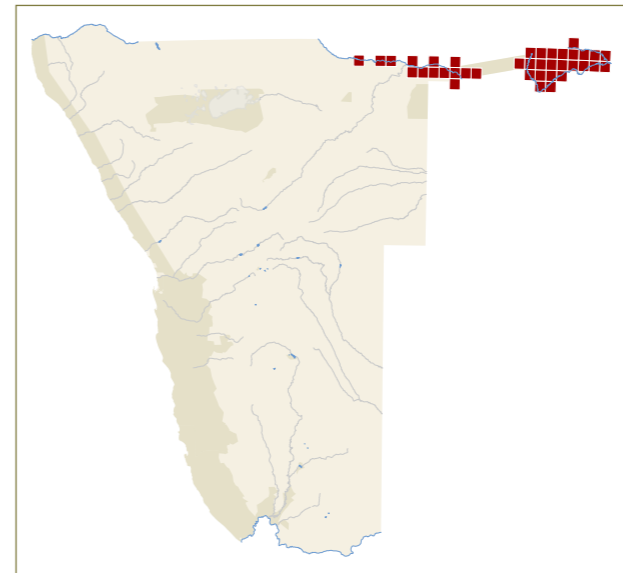
A difficult species to distinguish from the Greater Blue-eared Starling *L. chalybaeus*, this bird is found mainly in Zimbabwe, but with scattered records from the Zambezi region (Tree 1997h). It is found in the mixed arid (broad-leaved) and Mopane woodlands adjacent to the rivers, and it is more likely to form large flocks than the other two glossy starlings here, the Cape Glossy Starling (Glossy Starling) *L. nitens* and the Greater Blue-eared Starling (Tree 1997h). Its reporting rate is 5% in these areas and its area of occupancy is 2,800 km², of which only 4% occurs in protected areas of Mudumu National Park (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). Because of its widespread distribution in sub-Saharan Africa's woodlands it is not a conservation priority in Namibia.

**Sharp-tailed Starling |
*Lamprotornis acuticaudus***



This species differs from the other glossy starlings by its orange or red eyes and wedge-shaped tail (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Its southern African range only encompasses the Kavango and Caprivi sandveld region of Namibia and adjacent areas of Botswana (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Elsewhere it is found in Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is rarely reported, with an average reporting rate of 12% and a maximum reporting rate of 36% at Khaudum camp. It occupies an area of 9,400 km², of which 48% occurs in the protected area of Mahango in the Bwabwata National Park and in the Khaudum National Park (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). There, it is resident in the mature deciduous broad-leafed woodland, especially the *Burkea-Pterocarpus* habitat (Brown 1990). A small population was found in 2011 in Mopane woodlands some 40 km south-west of Katima Mulilo at a density of about 20 birds per 10 km² (Brown 2012b). Another population has been found in the vicinity of Shamvura in the Kavango East region (Paxton 2014). Population size could be gleaned from flocks that form after breeding, which takes place from November to March (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Little is known about its breeding biology (Craig 2005). Seven breeding records for Namibia have egg-laying in October (one) November (three) and December (three) (Brown *et al.* 2015). One nest containing chicks was monitored during December 2011 (Paxton 2014). The nest was located in a sheltered nest hole in the dead branch of a *Guiboutia coleosperma* tree growing in a mahangu field. There were sub-adult cooperative helpers at the nest and the birds were not disturbed by nearby plowing activities. Brood size and breeding success could not be ascertained.

**Red-billed Oxpecker |
*Buphagus erythrorhynchus***



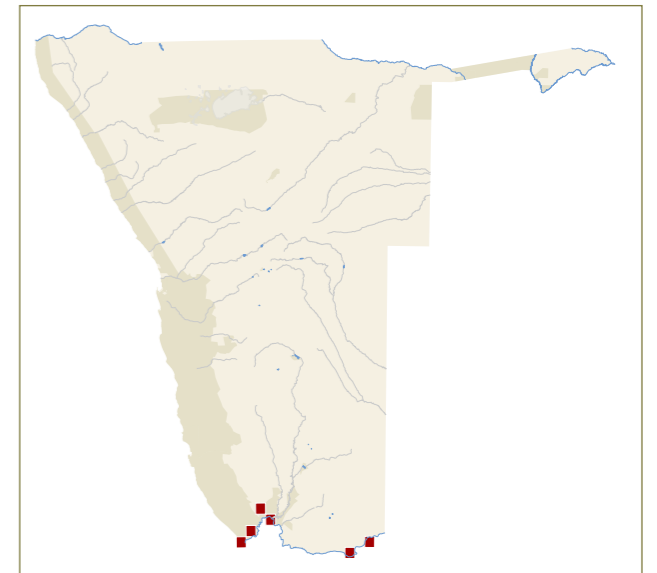
Accurate population figures for this species were derived from two sets of counts undertaken on the two oxpecker species found in the Caprivi Strip, the only area of Namibia in which they both occur (Mundy 1997f). An increase in numbers was recorded over a 15-year period, with an estimated 3,627 to 4,902 birds recorded in 1997 and 1998 (Robertson & Jarvis 2000), compared with 2,285 to 3,780 birds recorded in 1983



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and 1984 (Stutterheim & Panagis 1985, Brown & Brown 1987). They are most numerous around the Okavango River and the river systems of the Zambezi region, where their main modern-day host, domestic cattle, increased at least three-fold in the same time period (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1997, Robertson & Jarvis 2000). They appear to be unaffected by reduced rainfall and increasing frequency of fire; factors that may have caused the decline in the red-listed Yellow-billed Oxpecker *B. africanus* populations in the same areas (Robertson & Jarvis 2000). Red-billed Oxpeckers occupy an area of 18,000 km² in Namibia, of which 65% falls into conservation areas. Many locations are well away from the riverine systems favoured by the Yellow-billed Oxpecker (Robertson & Jarvis 2000). The species was listed as *Near Threatened* in South Africa due to the historical decline in range size induced by arsenic-based cattle dips that killed ticks as well as oxpeckers (Barnes 2000a). This may have occurred in Namibia, but the more traditional farming methods in the rural north-east make this less likely. Populations have rebounded in South Africa and the species was recently downgraded there to *Least Concern* (Taylor *et al.* in press). Red-billed Oxpeckers are not threatened in Namibia, but any population assessment of the *Endangered* Yellow-billed Oxpecker should include this species.

**Malachite Sunbird |
*Nectarinia famosa***



This common species is found from the Ethiopian highlands southwards to South Africa, where reporting rates are above 35% over much of its large range (Fraser 1997a). It just touches the Namibian border along the Orange River from the mouth (where it is common in gardens in Oranjemund) east to about 20°E. It occupies an area of 1,800 km², of which 25% occurs within the