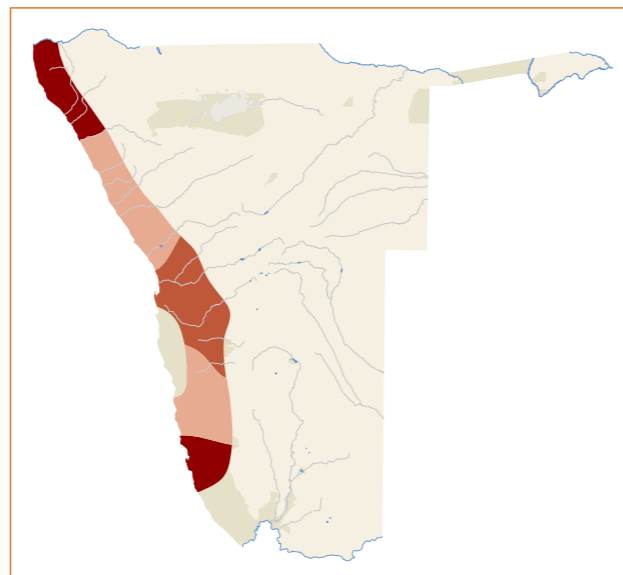


Gray's Lark | *Ammomanopsis grayi* (*Ammomanes grayi*)



© Eckart Demasius

This small, pale grey lark is endemic to the Namib Desert, where it is found in small flocks of up to 30 birds on the pale gravel plains from Pico do Azevedo in south-west Angola to the Koigab Pan region in the south (Dean 2000). The area occupied in Namibia is about 115,500 km², of which 63% (72,300 km²) occurs within protected areas (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). This species avoids only the Namib sand sea, with its complete cover of mobile sand dunes. It may be commonest in the areas around Swakopmund, where reporting rates are highest (Dean 1997e), but this area has many more observers than areas north or south. Population size and breeding density is unknown, but it must number more than 100,000 birds, given the extent of its occurrence. Two subspecies are recognised – *A. g. hoeschi* north of Cape Cross (large and dark grey-brown) and *A. g. grayi* south of Cape Cross (smaller and paler sandy brown) (Dean 2005e). Both breed opportunistically after rains and have been found to have co-operative helpers at the nest (Boix-Hinzen & Boorman 2003, Demasius 2003). It usually lays eggs from February to June, with a peak in April and May (n=46); the average clutch is 2.3 eggs and 1.1 young are reared per nest (Dean 2005e, Brown *et al.* 2015).



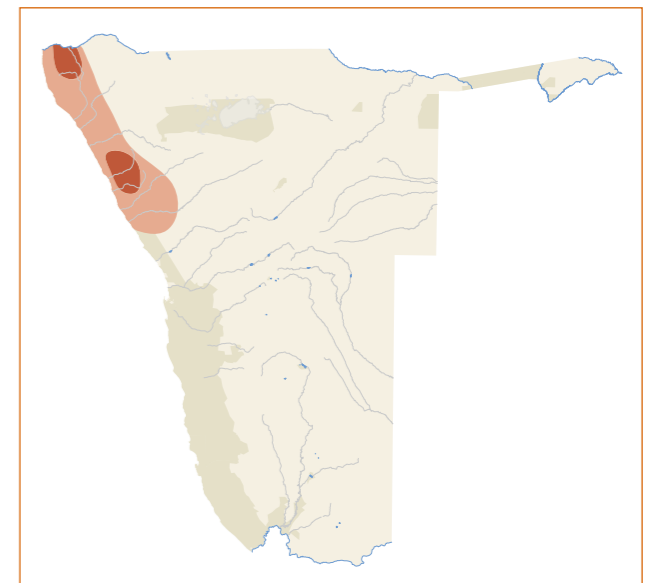
It is not threatened in any way, given the proportion of its range in protected areas and its dry barren habitat requirements, though the uranium rush in the central Namib, within the Namib-Naukluft National Park, could pose a threat to this part of the population.

Benguela Long-billed Lark | *Certhilauda benguelensis*



© Dayne Braine, Batis Birding Safaris

This species is one of the most recent additions to Namibia's avifaunal list, even though it may be among the most ancient of species. It occupies an area of about 56,000 km² on Nama Karoo plains north of the Brandberg Mountain and extends north-westwards into southern Angola (Ryan & Bloomer 1999 and Dean 1997b). It differs from the other five recently recognised long-billed lark species in having a less streaked dorsal plumage, and differs genetically by about 2% in base pairs (Dean 1997b, Ryan & Bloomer 1999). An apparent gap exists in distribution between the species occurring north and south of the Brandberg and Spitzkoppe mountains (Dean 1997b). The species occurs in a variety of arid habitats, from inland vegetated areas to more open plains in the Kaokoveld. There are no data on density of birds or population size and few birds have been studied in this region, even though males are relatively conspicuous when singing. It lays two or three eggs in April and May (n=5) (Brown *et al.* 2015). Two subspecies exist based on genetic differentiation – *C. b. benguelensis* is found in Angola and the far north-west of Namibia, and *C. b. kaokoensis* occurs



from Kaokoveld down to the Brandberg Mountain. The latter is smaller, paler and less streaked (Ryan & Dean 2005b).