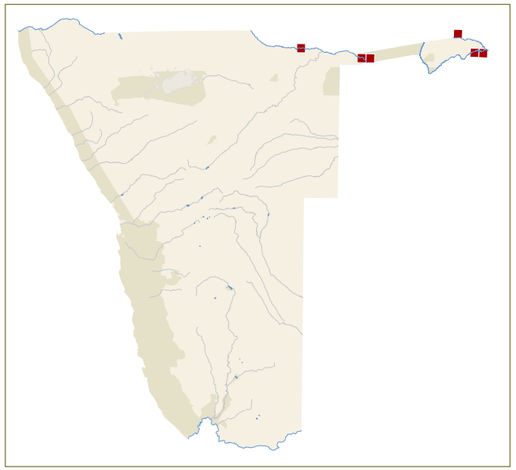
Orange-breasted Waxbill | *Amandava subflava*



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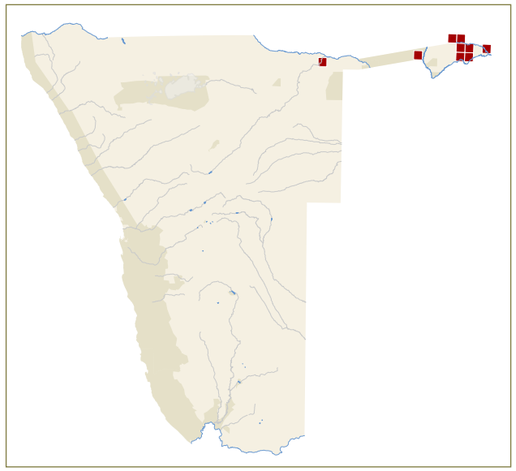
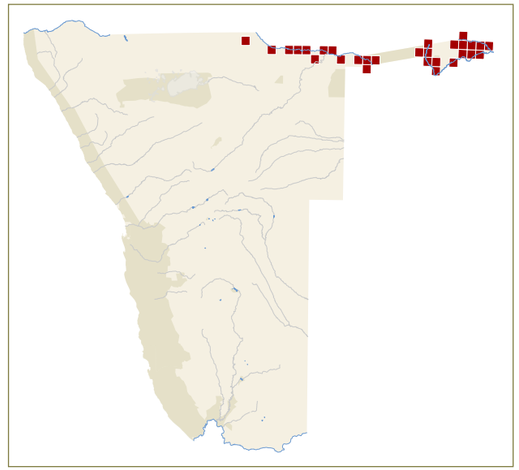


The few records from north-east Namibia, including the Okavango River, comprise the southern tail of the distribution of the subspecies *A. s. niethammeri*, which is abundant in tropical central and western Africa (Clancey 1980). It differs therefore from the subspecies common in central Zimbabwe and northern and eastern South Africa (Colahan 1997). Reporting rates for this subspecies were low, averaging just below 5% (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). It may be overlooked in the moist grasslands in which it occurs because it is a ground-feeder. It breeds in previously used bishop and widow nests, so breeding is also rarely recorded. It occupies an area of 2,300 km^2, of which 53% lies within protected areas. It could be argued that this species may be a conservation priority because of its rare subspecific status and potential targeting as a cage bird. However, there is no current evidence to support this (Goodwin 1982).

Orange-winged Pytilia (Golden-backed Pytilia) | *Pytilia afra*

This sister species to the Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) *P. melba* was not recorded in Namibia during the 24-year SABAP1 atlas period (Tree 1997k). However, its irruptive nature explains the sightings made by Koen (1988) in the Zambezi region of a species that is widespread and frequently recorded. It has also been recorded in a number of places around Katima Mulilo, particularly in thickets along the banks of the Zambezi River, and in piles of cleared vegetation from cultivated fields on the edge of the woodlands (CJ Brown pers. obs.). More recently, it has been seen in the Bwabwata National Park, about 15 km west of the Kwandu River (P Funston pers. comm.) and about five kilometres east of Shamvura in the Kavango East region (Paxton 2010). Other records come from across the Chobe River in Botswana (reviewed in Tree 1997k). Its absence during the atlas period may arise from confusion with the Green-winged Pytilia, or because of its skulking nature in thick grass and bush in broad-leafed woodland (Tree 1997k, CJ Brown pers. obs.). It appears to be resident in Zimbabwe and is expected to be resident in Namibia, too. Perhaps the best guide to its presence is the occurrence of the much more conspicuous Broad-tailed Paradise-Whydah *Vidua obtusa* that brood parasitises this species (Randall *et al.* 1994). Since the paradise-whydah is associated mainly with the Chobe and lower Zambezi rivers in Namibia, the Orange-winged Pytilia should be looked for in these areas. It is not a conservation priority in Namibia given its wide distribution stretching into north-east Africa.

Brown Firefinch | *Lagonosticta nitidula*



A relatively widespread species in north-east Namibia, this bird occupies 14,800 km^2 of dense thickets adjacent to perennial rivers (Nuttall 1997a). It enters the *Rare and Peripheral* category because in southern Africa it is restricted to the Okavango Delta of Botswana, the Okavango, Kwando, Chobe and Zambezi river systems of Namibia and extreme western Zimbabwe. It is a poorly known species whose density, population size and conservation needs are virtually unknown. It breeds from October to April in Zimbabwe (Dean & Payne 2005); only two nests are known from Namibia, with eggs being laid in February (Brown *et al*. 2015). It is the host of the Village Indigobird (Steelblue Widowfinch) *Vidua chalybeata* (Dean & Payne 2005). Some conservation concern for this resident firefinch is expressed because of the high pressure on wetland margins by local people and their livestock. In the Mahango area of the Bwabwata National Park, where it occurs in the thickest undergrowth about 500 m from the Okavango River (M Paxton pers. obs.), thickets are impacted in areas where large numbers of elephants are resident (P Lane pers. obs.). Surveys of this diminutive species would greatly assist in providing population estimates for different areas in Namibia.

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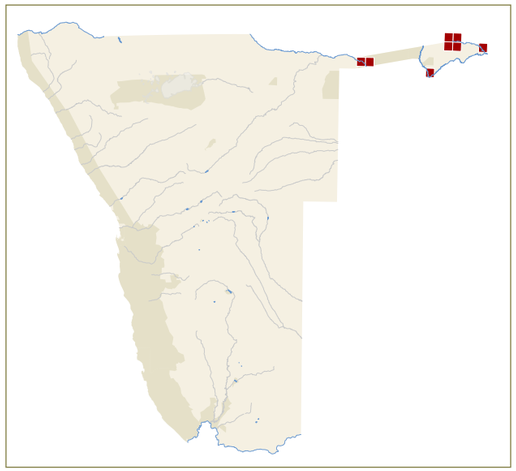
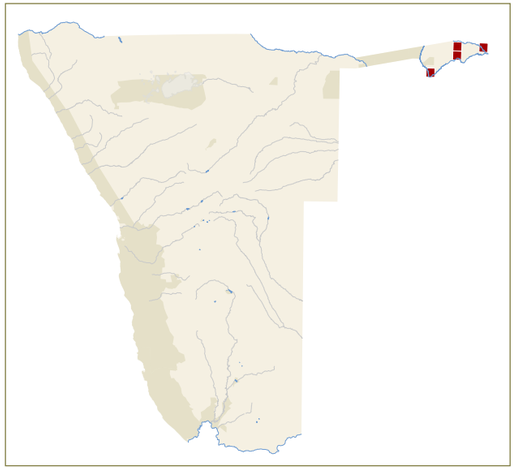
Bronze Mannikin | *Lonchura cucullata (Spermestes cucullatus)*



This small species, widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa, just touches the Zambezi and eastern Kavango regions. While it is inconspicuous, it occurs in flocks and is unlikely to be mistaken for any other species. It occupies edge habitat often near water over an area of 3,700 km^2, of which 40% occurs within conservation areas of the Nkasa Rupara (Mamili) National Park and the Mahango area of the Bwabwata National Park (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). This explains its presence along the Okavango, Zambezi and Kwando rivers in Namibia (Nuttall 1997b). It has low reporting rate in Namibia of 6%, despite probably being resident here. This species may be spreading as water points become more common. It is not considered a conservation priority because of its wide range and large abundance, as well as its pest status in parts of West Africa (Nuttall 1997b).

Broad-tailed Paradise-Whydah | *Vidua obtusa*

Within southern Africa, this exotic-looking *Vidua* is found predominantly but sparsely in Zimbabwe, and spills into the Zambezi region along the Chobe and Zambezi riverine woodlands, where its reporting rate is a mere 4% (Tree 1997l). It brood parasitises the Orange-winged Pytilia (Golden-backed Pytilia) *Pytilia afra*, an erratically occurring species rarely observed in north-east Namibia (Brown 1990). This may explain the bird's sudden appearance in other parts of southern Africa where it has not been seen before, displaying and probably breeding (Randall *et al.* 1994). Breeding habits in the wild are poorly known, with laying months given as February to April (Tarboton 2011). It occupies an area of 2,100 km^2, of which 14% occurs within conservation areas of the Nkasa Rupara (Mamili)



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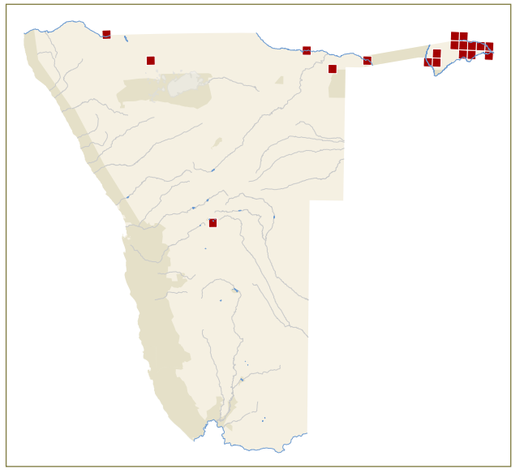
National Park. There are several additional records from the Salambala Conservancy that offers it further protection from possible overgrazing by the large number of cattle present in the Zambezi region. It is not a conservation priority in Namibia because birds occur well beyond Namibia's borders in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola (Tree 1997l).

Village Indigobird (Steelblue Widowfinch) | *Vidua chalybeata*

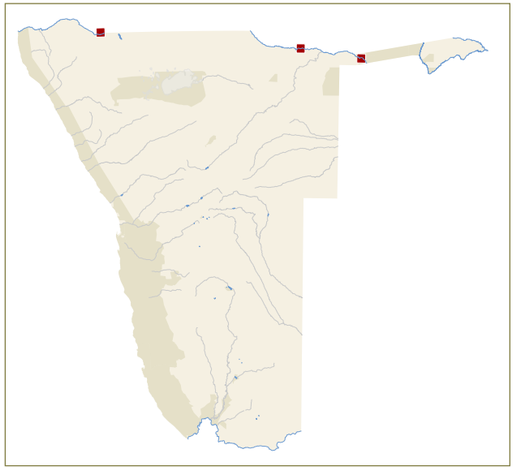
This species and the Purple Indigobird (Purple Widowfinch) *V. purpurascens* show great similarity in their distributions which, in southern Africa, are predominantly in the savannahs and broad-leafed woodlands of Zimbabwe, northern South Africa, and eastern and northern Botswana. In Namibia, both occur very rarely along the Okavango River, with only this species occurring in the thorn savannahs and edges of broad-leafed woodland in the Zambezi region (Barnard 1997b, 1997c). Here, they are found only in the wetter months, from October to April (M Paxton pers. obs.). Both species have also been recorded in the woodland associated with the Kunene River near Ruacana, and occasionally into the Cuvelai drainage system in northern Namibia (Barnard 1997c). The more common Village Indigobird occupies 8,400 km^2 in Namibia (14% of which is in protected areas), with a reporting rate of 7%, and is a brood parasite of the Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* and the Brown Firefinch *L. nitidula*. True to its name, the Village Indigobird is at home in the mosaic of agriculture and rural villages found in the north-east (Payne 1985, M Paxton pers. obs.). In 1995, Red-billed Firefinches were recorded for the first time in the Windhoek area. This population bred and became established as one of the more common garden birds, spreading up the Okahandja valley and down the Swakop River. In 2009, the first

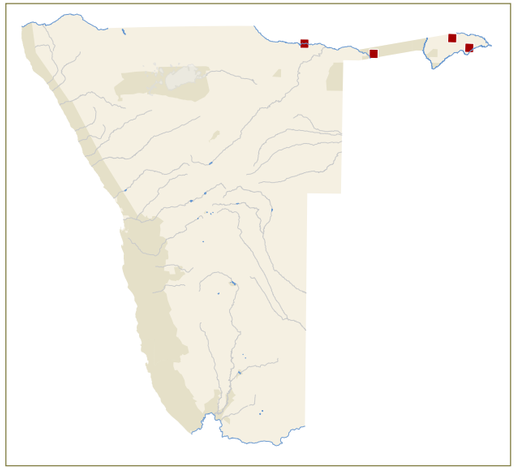


confirmed sighting of a Village Indigobird, the western race *V. c. okavangoensis,* was recorded in Windhoek. Since then, the species has expanded rapidly across the city and northwards along the valley towards Okahandja, with a number of records of brood parasitism of the firefinch. These two populations are isolated from their nearest conspecifics by about 700 km (Schubert *et al*. 2012, Brown 2015). The Village Indigobird is common elsewhere and does not warrant conservation attention in Namibia.

Purple Indigobird (Purple Widowfinch) | *Vidua purpurascens*

This species occupies a small area of 1,300 km^2 (38% of which is in protected areas) in the broad-leafed woodland savannahs associated with the Okavango



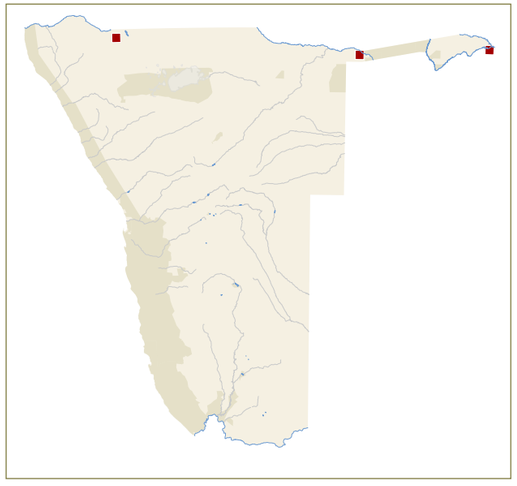


River in Namibia, and the Kunene River near Ruacana (Barnard 1997b). It is seasonal in its appearance, occurring there only in the wetter months (M Paxton pers. obs.). Elsewhere in southern Africa, it is found in northern Botswana, Zimbabwe and northern South Africa, with a reporting rate in Namibia of less than 4% (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). It is much rarer than the similar Village Indigobird (Steelblue Widowfinch) *V. chalybeata*. Purple Indigobirds parasitise Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia.* Both species of indigobird are probably under-recorded because females and non-breeding birds are difficult to identify (Barnard 1997b, 1997c). The two species only differ in their response to human habitat alteration, with riverine forest degradation probably affecting numbers of the Purple Indigobird more than the Village Indigobird. These species occur throughout large parts of Africa and as such do not warrant special conservation attention in Namibia.

Cuckoo Finch | *Anomalospiza imberbis*

Common in suitable habitat throughout sub-Saharan Africa, this brood parasitic species is confined to Zimbabwe, northern South Africa and the north-eastern region of Namibia; it is rarely seen on the Okavango River (Tree 1997j, Paxton 2010). It appears to be irruptive, appearing in some areas in large flocks after rains, where its favoured habitat is open grassland and well-vegetated wetlands (Tree 1997j). In Namibia, it has only been recorded in December, March, May and September, and occupies an area of 1,700 km^2, none of which occurs in protected areas. However, birds have also been recorded in the Mahango area of the Bwabwata National Park and appear in the Omurambas in wet years (P Lane pers. obs). It parasitises cisticolas and prinias, and lays its eggs between September and April (Tarboton 2001). It is not a conservation priority in Namibia.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow | *Passer griseus*



This species can be distinguished from the ubiquitous Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *P. diffusus* by its larger size and more robust appearance with longer tail and larger bill. The plumage is darker and has a less distinct white wing bar (Dean 2005g). This species is common from the Sahel region south to Angola and northern Mozambique. Very few records occur in Namibia because it is below the southern limit of its normal range (which may change with climate warming), and because of probable confusion with the Southern Grey-headed Sparrow. It is found in a wide range of habitats, from desert oases to forest clearings. Two records from Namibia are from Ruacana and from the Zambezi region (Dean 2005g). It has also been recently recorded from Impalila Island on the eastern tip of the Caprivi Strip and from the Kavango. Its abundance elsewhere precludes it from entering any threat category.