Barlow's Lark | *Calendulauda barlowi*

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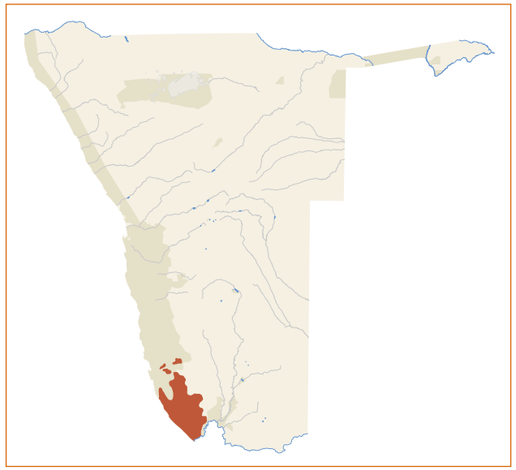
Once considered a subspecies of the Karoo Lark *C. albescens* (*Mirafra albescens*), this taxon was recently given full species status following genetic analysis revealing a 4.9% divergence between it and the Karoo Lark and a 2% difference with the Dune Lark *C. erythrochlamys* (*Mirafra erythrochlamys*) (Ryan *et al.* 1998). The flanks are unstreaked and the bill and neck are heavier than in the Karoo Lark, with which it was lumped before 1998 (Dean & Ryan 1997), but plumage differs little otherwise. Bills are longer and songs are lower pitched than in sister species. It inhabits the Succulent Karoo region north and south of the Orange River, as far north as the Koigab River valley, and as far east as Aus and the sandy plains to the east of the Fish River Canyon. About 92% of its range occurs north of the Orange River, qualifying it as a Namibian near-endemic. With a maximum range of only 18,000 km^2 (Ryan *et al.* 1998), it has the smallest distribution of any near-endemic in Namibia. Neither population size nor density estimates are known, but birds are most commonly found in *Euphorbia* dune hummocks and sandy plain vegetation inland and in coastal dune vegetation elsewhere (Ryan *et al.* 1998). It lays a two-egg clutch in August to November, with a peak in September and October (n=13). This differs from all other larks in Namibia, presumably because of its winter rainfall distribution (Brown *et al*. 2015). It does not qualify for any threatened category because there is little evidence for a decrease in population size, and virtually its entire range in Namibia occurs in the Tsau//Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park. Birds reported from Aus in 1937 were not seen there by Ryan *et al.* (1998) and they attributed this to overgrazing. It requires a complete study of its ecology, life history, population size and habitat needs to understand factors that may limit its population. It is classified as *Near Threatened* in South Africa because of changing land uses and its apparent vulnerability to overgrazing and other activities that reduce vegetation cover (Taylor *et al*. in press).



Dune Lark | *Calendulauda erythrochlamys* *(Mirafra erythrochlamys)*

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This species is Namibia's only truly endemic bird, occurring entirely within the Namib sand sea in the south-central Namib Desert. Its population size is unknown, but its area of occupancy is about 22,500 km^2, of which most (170,940 km^2) is contained within protected areas of the Dorob and Namib-Naukluft national parks (Jarvis *et al.* 2001). It is also protected in the NamibRand and Gondwana Namib Desert private parks. The bird's breeding biology is well studied (Boyer 1988) and indicates that breeding can take place in any month of the year, but with a clear laying peak in January and February (n=44) (Brown *et al*. 2015). Clutches of two eggs are laid in nests built at the base of plants on small hummocks, always on sandy substrate. In a study area near Gobabeb, nest success was reasonably high at 0.38 nestlings per nesting attempt, and pairs did not require rainfall to initiate breeding (Boyer 1988). However, birds further east and outside of the coastal fog belt may be more dependent on rainfall. Birds are known to be long-lived, with two ringed birds recaptured seven years after they were first ringed as adults (M Boorman unpubl. data). The Dune Lark forms a species complex of closely related larks of the genus *Calendulauda,* with the Karoo Lark *C. albescens*, Barlow's Lark *C. barlowi* and Red Lark *C. burra* all adapted to different soil types and with small distributions in the arid regions of south-western Africa (Ryan *et al.* 1998). The Dune Lark is probably the least threatened, given that its dune habitat is devoid of human impact. Although the effects of climate change are unknown, as the species is confined to dune habitat, it is unlikely to be able to shift elsewhere in response to increased aridity (Midgley *et al.* 2001, Simmons *et al.* 2004).