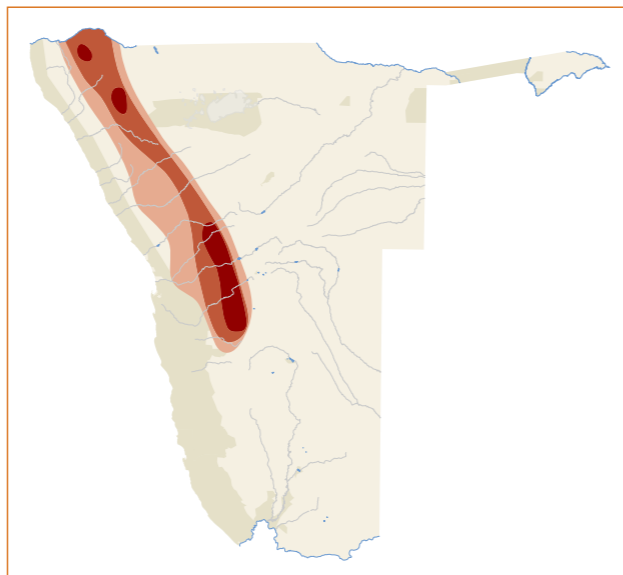




© Dayne Braine, Batis Birding Safaris

Population size in Namibia is much larger than seems probable for an apparently rare species at 108,100 birds (Jarvis & Robertson 1999). However, densities for this elusive Namib escarpment species can reach 15 birds per km² near Sesfontein (Robertson *et al.* 1995). It is found most commonly between 800 m and 1,400 m above sea level (77% of 131 sightings) and rarely above 1,800 m above sea level (A Jarvis, T Robertson, RE Simmons unpubl. data). They occur more commonly on south-facing slopes, where *Commiphora* and *Acacia* trees occur more densely (Simmons 1997). Area of occupancy in Namibia is 90,900 km², with a northern extension into Angola's Iona National Park (Dean 2000). Herero Chats breed in response to high rainfall (February and March), but their tree nests can be subject to predation rates in excess of 90% (Boix-Hinzen & Simmons 2005). They frequently rear two young from two to three eggs (Boix-Hinzen & Simmons 2005). Their remote escarpment slope habitat and lack of human presence generally precludes them from conservation concern; about 10% of their range falls within protected areas on the northern and eastern edge of the Namib-Naukluft National Park and the western edge of Etosha National Park. Their ecology, life history and taxonomy are still poorly understood, and the effects of



future climatic change need to be investigated, as this may impact the frequency and amount of rainfall that triggers breeding (Simmons *et al.* 2004). Studies of colour-ringed birds at Spitzkoppe will allow first estimates of survival of individual birds.



African Pygmy-Goose © Pete Hancock



Olive Bee-eater © Dayne Braine, Batis Birding Safaris



Pink-backed Pelican © Neil Mcleod