Pennant-winged Nightjar | Macrodipteryx vexillarius (Macrodipteryx vexillaria)

This extraordinary migratory tropical species breeds in central southern Africa (mainly from October to December) and flies in flocks to equatorial Africa from March (Maclean 1997c, del Hoyo et al. in press). It is associated with riverine habitat and broad-leaved woodlands, where it typically prefers stony hillsides and sandy areas (Maclean 1997c). Birds are occasionally sighted in Etosha National Park and in Windhoek, but these are vagrant. It occupies an area of 7,000 km² in Namibia, of which 20% occurs in the Mahango protected area in the Bwabwata National Park and in Windhoek (Taylor 1997c, Jarvis et al. 2001). No breeding records are known from Namibia. It is not a conservation priority here or elsewhere.

Red-chested Flufftail | Sarothrura rufa

This is one of the commonest of Africa’s flufftails, its distribution spreading westwards in finger-like projections from a predominantly easterly distribution in sub-Saharan Africa, south to Cape Town (Taylor 1997c, Delany & Scott 2002). It just touches the north-east of Namibia, where it is almost certainly under-recorded because it is heard more often than seen in wetlands comprising grasses and reeds. Its area of occupancy is therefore probably greater than 1,600 km² recorded from the Okavango River and Linyanti Swamps (Taylor 1997c, Jarvis et al. 2001). Birds were also recorded in the Bwabwata National Park from the Okavango and Kwando river floodplains (Brown 1990), from the Zambezi eastern floodplain (Koen 1988), and near Windhoek (Taylor 1997c). Like other flufftails, it may respond to local rains, and appear unexpectedly in more arid parts of Namibia. Population size is currently not known, but it is not a conservation priority here or elsewhere.

African Rail | Rallus caerulescens

This small, unobtrusive species is found scattered throughout the wetter areas of East and central Africa (Dean 2005a). In Namibia, it occurs along the margins of the northern rivers (Zambesi, Kwando and Okavango), where it forages on the edge of reed beds and shallow water (Dean 2005a). Its area of occupancy from SABAP1 records was 10,000 km² (Jarvis et al. 2001). The bird is also recorded from the Tsumkwe Pans and northern Etosha. A recent record from SABAP2 is from further north in the north-central regions on the border with Angola. About 20% of the range is within protected areas, so it is unlikely to become a conservation priority. There are no nest records for the species in Namibia.

Corn Crake | Crex crex

This small, secretive and elusive grassland species is threatened by the massive loss of grasslands in its Eurasian breeding grounds (Stattersfield & Capper 2000). Recent conservation efforts focusing on changing the timing and methods of harvesting in the United Kingdom are proving successful; the populations are increasing again (A Balmford pers. comm.) and the species has been reclassified to Least Concern status in 2012 (IUCN 2012). The range in southern Africa where this species migrates to is poorly known, but includes the more mesic grasslands of Zimbabwe and eastern South Africa (Taylor 1997a). It is very rare in Namibia, with only one sighting recorded during the SABAPI atlas period in the Nyae Nyae region (Taylor 1997a). More recent sightings include birds 30 km east of Olavi in black turf grasslands, where three single birds were observed in February 2004, following above average rains (C Nebe pers. obs.). Remains of a bird 70 km north west of Okahandja were found on treed thornveld savannah, also following above average rains there (C Nebe pers. obs.). Understanding its status in Namibia would require a concerted research effort because it is unlikely to be recorded by the casual observer, particularly because male birds do not call. It is doubtful for two reasons whether conservation efforts in Namibia will add to this bird’s overall conservation. Firstly, its peripheral status and lack of evidence that it was ever common in Namibia suggest that conservation efforts would be futile. Secondly, the conservation problems responsible for its rarity occur in Eurasia, where harvesting practices may hold the key to recovery. It therefore seems inappropriate to assign it a threat category in Namibia.

Striped Crake | Aenigmatolimnas marginalis

This uncommon Afrotropical species is a wet-season visitor to southern Africa, and is so secretive and poorly known that only two birds were recorded in Namibia during the 24-year period. This extraordinary migratory tropical species breeds in central southern Africa (mainly from October to December) and flies in flocks to equatorial Africa from March (Maclean 1997c, del Hoyo et al. in press). It is associated with riverine habitat and broad-leaved woodlands, where it typically prefers stony hillsides and sandy areas (Maclean 1997c). Birds are occasionally sighted in Etosha National Park and in Windhoek, but these are vagrant. It occupies an area of 7,000 km² in Namibia, of which 20% occurs in the Mahango protected area in the Bwabwata National Park and in Windhoek (Taylor 1997c, Jarvis et al. 2001). No breeding records are known from Namibia. It is not a conservation priority here or elsewhere.