Starling (Lamprotornis acuticaudus)

This species differs from the other glossy starlings by its orange or red eyes and wedge-shaped tail (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Its southern African range only encompasses the Kavango and Caprivi sandveld region of Namibia and adjacent areas of Botswana (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Elsewhere it is found in Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is rarely reported, with an average reporting rate of 12% and a maximum reporting rate of 36% at Khaudum camp. It occupies an area of 9,400 km², of which 48% occurs in the protected area of Mahango in the Bwabwata National Park and in the Khaudum National Park (Jarvis et al. 2001). There, it is resident in the mature deciduous broad-leaved woodland, especially the Burkea-Pterocarpus habitat (Brown 1990). A small population was found in 2011 in Mopane woodlands some 40 km south-west of Katima Mulilo at a density of about 20 birds per 10 km² (Brown 2012b). Another population has been found in the vicinity of Shamvura in the Kavango East region (Paxton 2014). Population size could be gleaned from flocks that form after breeding, which takes place from November to March (Underhill & Brown 1997b). Little is known about its breeding biology (Craig 2005). Seven breeding records for Namibia have egg-laying in October (one) and November (three) and December (three) (Brown et al. 2015). One nest containing chicks was monitored during December 2011 (Paxton 2014). The nest was located in a sheltered nest hole in the dead branch of a Guibourtia coloospermo tree growing in a mahangu field. There were sub-adult cooperative helpers at the nest and the birds were not disturbed by nearby plowing activities. Brood size and breeding success could not be ascertained.

Red-billed Oxpecker (Buphagus erythrorhynchus)

Accurate population figures for this species were derived from two sets of counts undertaken on the two oxpecker species found in the Caprivi Strip, the only area of Namibia in which they both occur (Mundy 1997). An increase in numbers was recorded over a 15-year period, with an estimated 3,627 to 4,902 birds recorded in 1997 and 1998 (Robertson & Jarvis 2000), compared with 2,285 to 3,780 birds recorded in 1983 and 1984 (Sturtevant & Pongasi 1985, Brown & Brown 1987). They are most numerous around the Okavango River and the river systems of the Zambezi region, where their main modern-day host, domestic cattle, increased at least three-fold in the same time period (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1997, Robertson & Jarvis 2000). They appear to be unaffected by reduced rainfall and increasing frequency of fire, factors that may have caused the decline in the red-listed Yellow-billed Oxpecker B. africanus populations in the same areas (Robertson & Jarvis 2000). Red-billed Oxpeckers occupy an area of 18,000 km² in Namibia, of which 65% falls into conservation areas. Many locations are well away from the riverine systems favoured by the Yellow-billed Oxpecker (Robertson & Jarvis 2000). The species was listed as Near Threatened in South Africa due to the historical decline in range size induced by arsenic-based cattle dips that killed ticks as well as oxpeckers (Barnes 2000a). This may have occurred in Namibia, but the more traditional farming methods in the rural north-east make this less likely. Populations have rebounded in South Africa and the species was recently downgraded there to Least Concern (Taylor et al. in press). Red-billed Oxpeckers are not threatened in Namibia, but any population assessment of the Endangered Yellow-billed Oxpecker should include this species.

Malachite Sunbird (Nectarinia famosa)

This common species is found from the Ethiopian highlands southwards to South Africa, where reporting rates are above 35% over much of its large range (Fraser 1997a). It just touches the Namibian border along the Orange River from the mouth (where it is common in gardens in Oranjemund) east to about 20°E. It occupies an area of 1,800 km², of which 25% occurs within the...