Thick-billed Cuckoo | Pachyccocyx audeberti

This is an uncommon to rare species of well-developed woodland, including Zambezi teak, miombo and mopane, and lowland forest from West Africa through to eastern parts of South Africa, particularly Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Vernon & Dean 2005a). There are four known records in Namibia from Impalila Island, riparian woodland on the Kwando River near Susuwe and the Kavango east region near Shamvura. It is a brood parasite of Retz’s Helmet-Shrike in Namibia from Impalila Island, riparian woodland on the Kwando River (Jarvis et al. 2003; M Paxton in litt.). Thus, although it can be a relatively common sight in Namibia (reporting rates above 20% are common along rivers), this species requires some monitoring and protection if it is not to enter the Near Threatened category in future years.

Black Coucal | Centropus grilii (Centropus bengalenisis)

It is generally scarce, with a reporting rate averaging 6% for the region. In Namibia, it has only been recorded from the immediate area around Katma Muillo and once from the Kwando River (Jarvis et al. 2003) in riparian forest or dense evergreen forest. It has a reporting rate of 4% in these areas and its population is clearly very small. It is presumed to be a migratory species that arrives in southern Africa in September and October and leaves (or becomes quiet and elusive) by February or March. It is not threatened anywhere.

African Emerald Cuckoo (Emerald Cuckoo) | Chrysococcyx cupreus

This is a widespread species in Afrotropical forests from West Africa to Ethiopia and southwards into eastern parts of South Africa and Zimbabwe (Vernon & Underhill 1997a). Its southern African stronghold is the Mashonalnd Plateau of northern Zimbabwe and the Okavango Swamps, but it is not common anywhere (Vernon & Herremans 1997a). The overall reporting rate for this easily overlooked species is 6% (Jarvis et al. 2003), but population size is unknown. It is a migratory species that occurs in Namibia from October to April (Vernon & Herremans 1997a). It was found in healthy numbers, with a minimum of ten birds, in one locality on the Salambala floodplain of the Chobe River in February and September 1998, where it almost certainly breeds (Robertson et al. 1998a). The high frequency of grassland burning and trampling by the large herds of cattle in Capriv (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1997) may negatively influence this species if fires and livestock spread into the wetlands. It is not threatened in other ways, but was designated Near Threatened in South Africa because of historical range contractions (Allan 2000a).

Grey-headed Parrot | Poicephalus fuscicolli

This parrot is the largest parrot in southern Africa, just touches the Zambezi and Kavango regions in a range that extends north to Tanzania and Uganda (Fry et al. 1988) and south from Zimbabwe to northern South Africa (Wirminghaus 1997). The population south of this distribution in South Africa has recently been given full species status (Symes 2005) as the Cape Parrot P. robustus. The Grey-headed Parrot is found mainly in mature mopane and mopane woodland below 1,000 m (Rowan 1983). It occupies an area of 7,000 km² in the Zambezi and Kavango regions. Its movements are not understood because atlas data indicate records from October to June, but no records from the winter and spring months (Wirminghaus 1997). It breeds in Namibia and lay from February to May (n=6) (Brown et al. 2015). Reporting rates suggest low numbers, representing much less than 5% of the range of the African population. There are some indications that it suffers from local inhabitants taking nestlings for the parrot trade and for food, while in Namibia damage to its forest habitat is evident from elephant and human pressures (CJ Brown pers. obs.). Populations are currently being monitored by members of KOAR (Kavango Open Africa Route), and this initiative should be extended to other tourism facilities and partners across the north-east of Namibia (M Paxton pers. comm.). Cutting of large mature fruiting trees should be discouraged. It has recently been assessed as Near Threatened in South Africa (Taylor et al. in press).

Bohm’s Spinetail | Neafrapus boehmi

This rare species occurs in a highly fragmented distribution from coastal Angola (isolated) east to Tanzania and is probably most common in Mozambique (del Hoyo et al. 1999). It occurs patchily in north-west and south-east Zimbabwe and north-eastern South Africa. In Namibia, it just touches the north-east of the country at the Zambezi River, the Linyanti Swamps and the Okavango River (Brooke 1997a).