

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus*



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Namibian conservation status	Least Concern
Global IUCN status	Least Concern First assessed 1996: Least Concern, unchanged since then
Namibian range	Occurs throughout Namibia except in the Namib Sand Sea and along the coast
Global range	Widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa, absent only from forested areas in central Africa, the Karoo biome in South Africa and the most arid parts of the Namib Desert
Population estimate	Unknown
Population trend	Stable
Habitat	All woodland and savanna habitats, but also extends into sparsely vegetated, arid areas where there is either sufficient vegetation or rocky terrain which offers cover
Threats	No major threats

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

A small- to medium-sized mongoose, short-legged and slenderly built, with a sinuous body and a long tail with a black tip. When alert, the end of the tail is usually curled slightly upwards. Coat colour varies greatly, from charcoal grey (easily confused with black mongoose) to grizzled greyish-brown to reddish brown.

Dark slender mongooses can be distinguished from black mongooses by their brindled colouration – if present, it is a slender mongoose. This confers a more dull appearance to the coat, whereas black mongooses have a distinctive rufous shine (S Rapson pers. comm. 2020).

Slender mongooses are solitary and diurnal, but may be active at night if there is a good food source such as

emerging flying termites (Apps 2000). This is a shy and restless animal, usually seen trotting in haste and darting into cover.

DISTRIBUTION

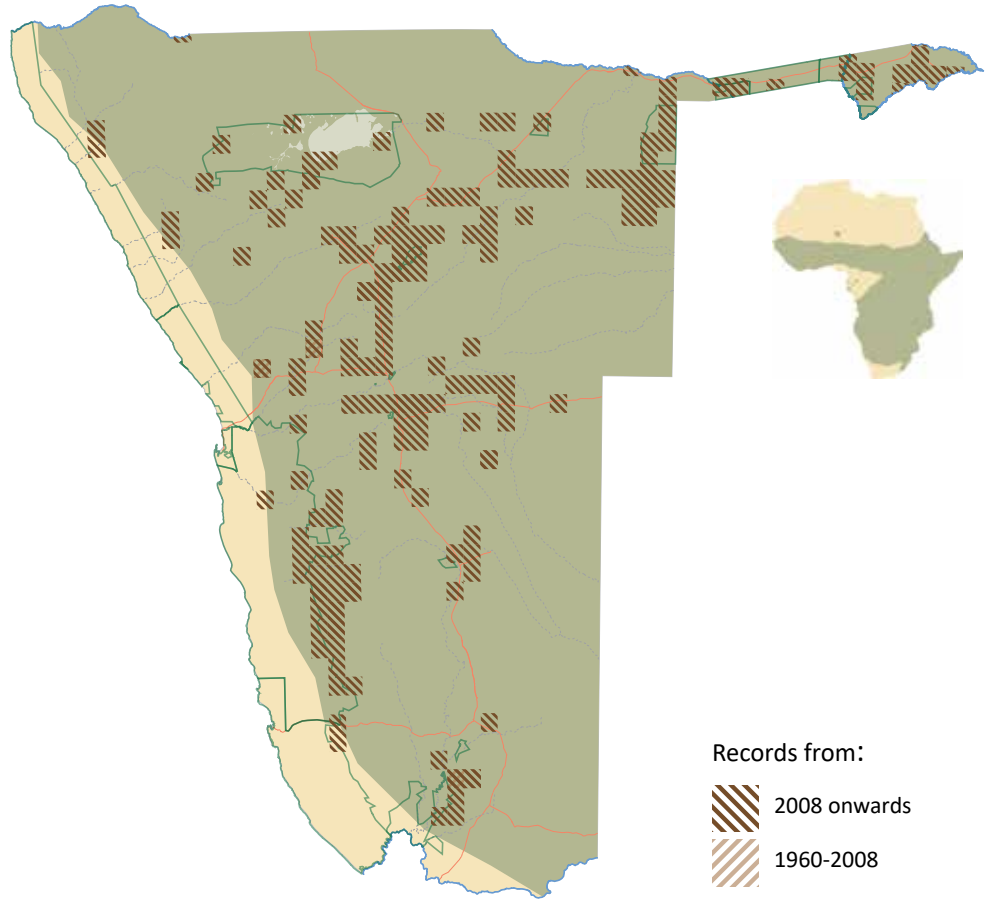
Widespread across sub-Saharan Africa, the slender mongoose occurs on the fringes of tropical forests (sometimes penetrating along roads) in West Africa, and is excluded from true desert (Hoffmann & Taylor 2013). In South Africa it is excluded from the Karoo regions; this may be due to competitive exclusion by the small grey mongoose (Skinner & Chimimba 2005).

In Namibia, it characteristically occurs in woodland and savanna habitats with reasonable vegetation cover, but also extends into the eastern margins of the Namib Desert and

Distribution records of slender mongoose, and present estimated area of distribution in Namibia.

Inset: African distribution of slender mongoose according to IUCN (Do Linh San & Maddock 2016).

The Namibian distribution in the main map is more up to date and does not necessarily agree with the distribution shown in the inset.



southern Namibia where there is either sufficient vegetation or rocky terrain which offers cover.

POPULATION ESTIMATE AND TREND

In the Serengeti National Park (Tanzania), population densities ranged from 3–6 individuals/km² (Waser *et al.* 1995). That is likely to be much higher than anywhere in Namibia, where prey density is probably lower. No population estimates have been attempted in this country. In the latest IUCN global assessment for this species, the population is considered stable (Do Linh San & Maddock 2016).

ECOLOGY

The slender mongoose is a generalist carnivore, eating a range of small vertebrates such as mice, small birds, lizards and snakes, invertebrates such as centipedes and insects, fruit such as *Grewia* berries and carrion when available (Graw & Manser 2016, Apps 2000). Males occupy large overlapping territories of usually related individuals, while adult females occupy ranges that are generally exclusive from one another, but overlap with those of one to a few males (Graw *et al.* 2019). This species is preyed on by raptors (Graw & Manser 2016) and probably other mammal

carnivores. It may hybridise with the closely related black mongoose in areas where their distributions overlap in north-western Namibia (Rapson *et al.* 2012).

THREATS

No major threats are identified. Slender mongoose is listed in South Africa as a species used in traditional medicines (Cunningham & Zondi 1991); this has not been recorded in Namibia.

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern in Namibia as the species is common and widespread. No major threats have been identified for this species globally (Do Linh San & Maddock 2016), and they appear to be largely unaffected by human presence in rural areas (Ramesh & Downs, 2014).

ACTIONS

No specific actions are needed for the conservation of this species.



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 Reviewer: Carolyn Baker

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