

White-tailed Mongoose *Ichneumia albicauda*



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Namibian conservation status	Least Concern
Global IUCN status	Least Concern (2016)
Namibian range	Restricted to north-eastern Namibia
Global range	Beyond Africa, recorded in parts of the Arabian peninsula. Widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, absent from forest in central Africa
Population estimate	Unknown
Population trend	Unknown, thought to be stable
Habitat	Well-watered savanna, can adapt to areas with high human population density
Threats	No major threats

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

This tall-standing mongoose with a bushy white tail is distinctive. Some individuals have black tails, but even they can be distinguished by their large size – this is the largest mongoose species in Namibia. The body is shaggy and dark grey to black, the legs are long and black and the tail is also shaggy and conspicuous with its white colour. Some Environmental Information Service (2021) records for this species are probably misidentifications of yellow mongoose, which also has white in the tail but only at the very tip, and that is a much smaller animal altogether.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

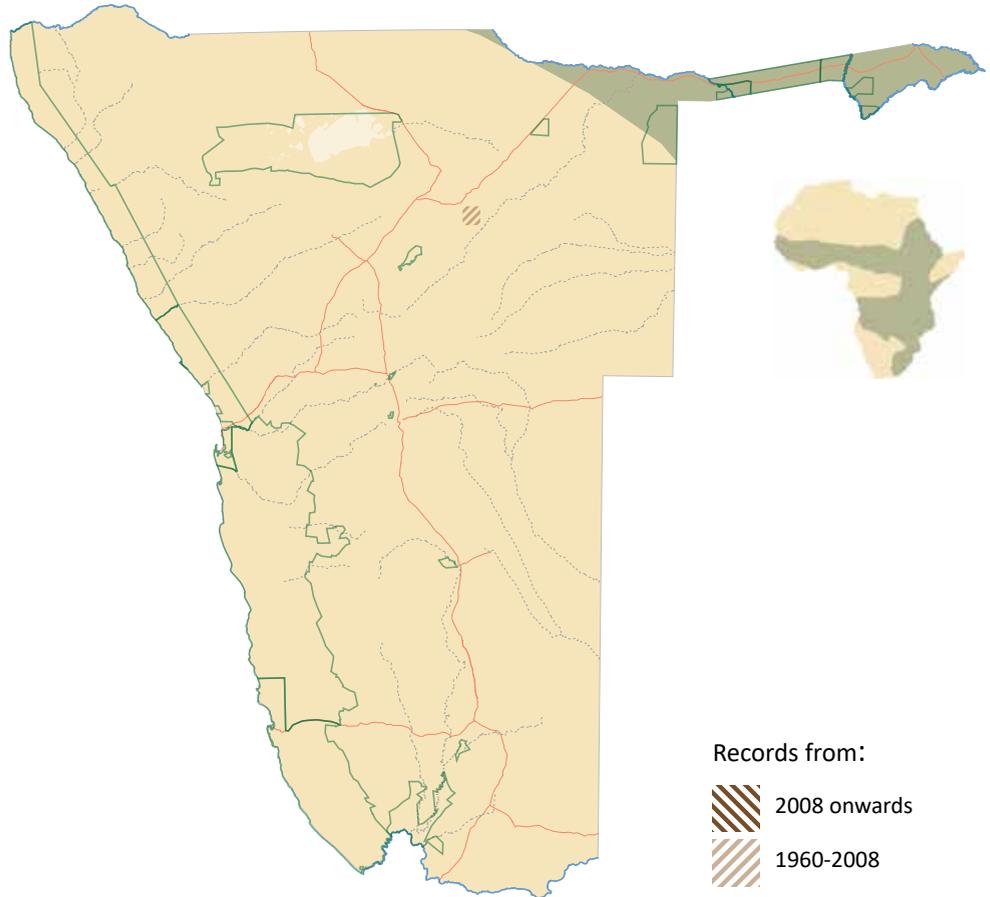
White-tailed mongooses are widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, occurring in well-watered savanna woodland. Known range in Namibia is restricted to the north-eastern woodlands of the Zambezi and Kavango Regions (Do Linh San 2015), although there is also a confirmed record from the Grootfontein area.

Although mainly found in wet savanna this is not always the case as it occurs in fairly arid areas in eastern and north-eastern Africa (C & M Stuart pers. comm. 2020). Confirmed records in Namibia have not extended into such habitat and our current information is that it is only present in north-eastern Namibia.

Distribution records of white-tailed mongoose, and present estimated area of distribution in Namibia.

Inset: African distribution of white-tailed mongoose according to IUCN (Do Linh San 2015).

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



POPULATION ESTIMATE AND TREND

There are insufficient data to establish population estimates for this species, either globally or in Namibia. The population is considered stable globally (Do Linh San 2015).

ECOLOGY

The species is nocturnal and territorial, with minimal overlap between males, while female ranges overlap with males (Admasu *et al.* 2004b). They usually forage singly, but pairs and family groups are occasionally seen together (Skinner & Chimimba 2005).

The white-tailed mongoose is mainly insectivorous, but will also take other invertebrates, small vertebrates and carrion (Apps 2000). It is known to feed on garbage around towns and villages, and thus adapts to increased human presence and disturbance (Taylor 2013b).

THREATS

No major threats are identified. In South Africa, it is occasionally caught in traps set for jackals and caracals (Apps 2000), but this threat has not been recorded in Namibia.

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern in Namibia. This species occurs only marginally in Namibia, and appears not to be hunted or threatened in any way in this country.

ACTIONS

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

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Reviewers: Chris Stuart and Mathilde Stuart

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