

## Family Lacertidae

### *Meroles cuneirostris* (Strauch, 1867)

Wedge-snouted Desert Lizard

■ LC – Least Concern (Regional)

Assessors: Tolley, K.A., Turner, A.A.

#### Previous Red List categories:

2021: Least Concern (Global IUCN assessment).

2014: Least Concern (SARCA).

**Assessment rationale:** This species has a small range in South Africa but occurs in areas that are not significantly impacted by habitat loss, including the Richtersveld National Park.

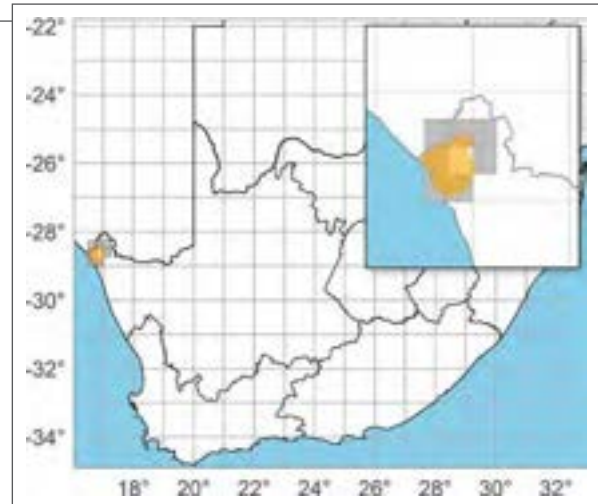
**Taxonomic notes:** No notable issues. *Other important names:* none.

**Distribution:** Occurs throughout most of the southern Namib Desert of Namibia south of Walvis Bay, peripherally entering South Africa in the sandy region south of the Orange River (Branch 1998). *EOO:* 2 440 km<sup>2</sup>; *Distribution:* 2 210 km<sup>2</sup>.

**Countries of occurrence:** Namibia, South Africa.

**Habitat and ecology:** Occurs on sparsely vegetated desert sands and coastal dunes, especially those with loose sand (Branch 1998). *Habitat:* Shrubland, Desert, Coastal sand dunes.

**Threats:** Although there are no substantial threats to this species, there is some habitat transformation due to agriculture, and coastal strip mining is a potential threat in part of the range. However, this constitutes only about 7% of the range and the losses occurred



primarily prior to 1990. This lizard occurs in an area that has been impacted by long-term drought and this, along with the predicted negative effects of climate change in this region (Engelbrecht et al. 2015), may be an emerging threat.

**Population trend:** Because this lizard occurs mainly in an arid region that has not been impacted by habitat transformation, the population size is not thought to have declined overall. There may have been some local declines due to habitat loss in small parts of the range.

**Conservation and research recommendations:** Survey suitable habitat south of the Orange River to improve information regarding this species' distribution in South Africa and to assess whether mining and/or agricultural activities pose a threat.

*Meroles cuneirostris*, Gobabeb, Namibia (© G. Alexander).

*Meroles cuneirostris*, juvenile colouration, Gobabeb, Namibia (© G. Alexander).

