

# Dune Lark

## Duinlewerik

*Certhilauda erythrochlamys*

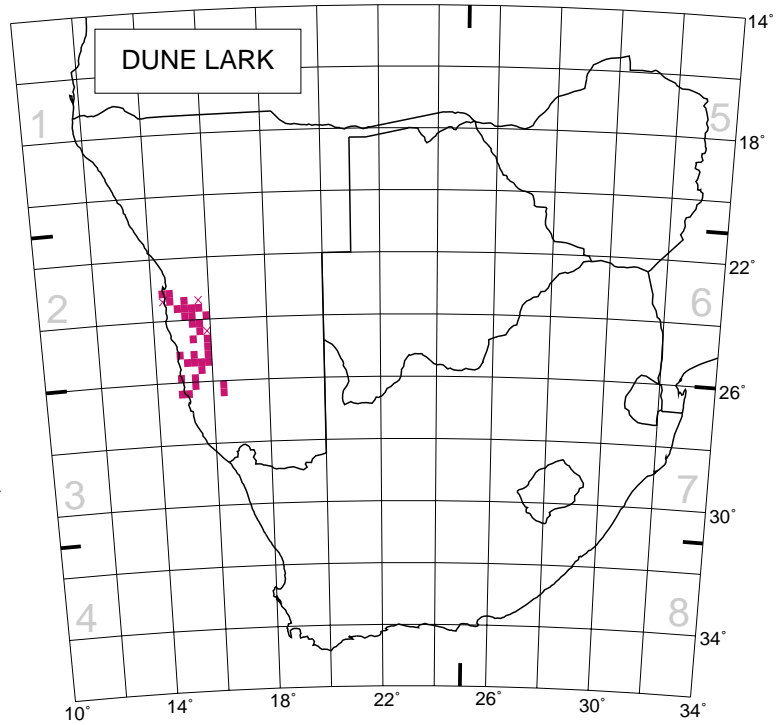
The Dune Lark is endemic to the sand-sea of the Namib Desert. It has a very narrow and restricted distribution along the eastern edge of the desert, from the Kuiseb River (2214DC) to the Koichab River (2615B) northeast of Lüderitz. South of the Koichab River it is replaced by Barlow's Lark *C. barlowi*, whose northern populations closely resemble Dune Larks. Dune Larks lack dark central streaks in their middle tail and tertial feathers, and have less well-defined facial patterns than do most Barlow's Larks.

It occurs on sparsely vegetated Namib dunes and in dune troughs where there are clumps of !Nara *Acanthosicyos horrida* and Spiny Dune Grass *Stipagrostis sabulicola*. It has never been seen drinking, its water requirements being met by insects and seeds (Cox 1983).

Populations, often fragmented by the patchiness of suitable habitat in the dunes, are usually fairly stable (Boyer 1988), but there may be some local movement according to environmental conditions (implied by Safrieli 1990). It is the only passerine that is permanently resident in the sandy parts of the Namib Desert; three individuals were retrapped at their sites of ringing between five and six years later (Williams 1992b).

There was one breeding record for June reported during the atlas period. The breeding season is extended, August–May, but mainly January–February (Boyer 1988; Maclean 1993b).

Although the total population is fragmented and probably small, there is no evidence of any contraction of the range. The distribution lies mainly within the Namib-Naukluft Park, so it appears to be adequately protected. Harvesting of !Nara fruits by local communities in areas of Dune Lark habitat within the park takes place November–May (Van den Eynden *et al.* 1992), a period that encompasses the peak of the breeding season. Harvesting is restricted to a small area along the lower Kuiseb River and is not considered a threat through disturbance to breeding birds (C.J. Brown *in litt*).



Recorded in 35 grid cells, 0.8%  
 Total number of records: 136  
 Mean reporting rate for range: 12.2%

W.R.J. Dean

