

Gray's Lark

Namiblewerik

Ammomanes grayi

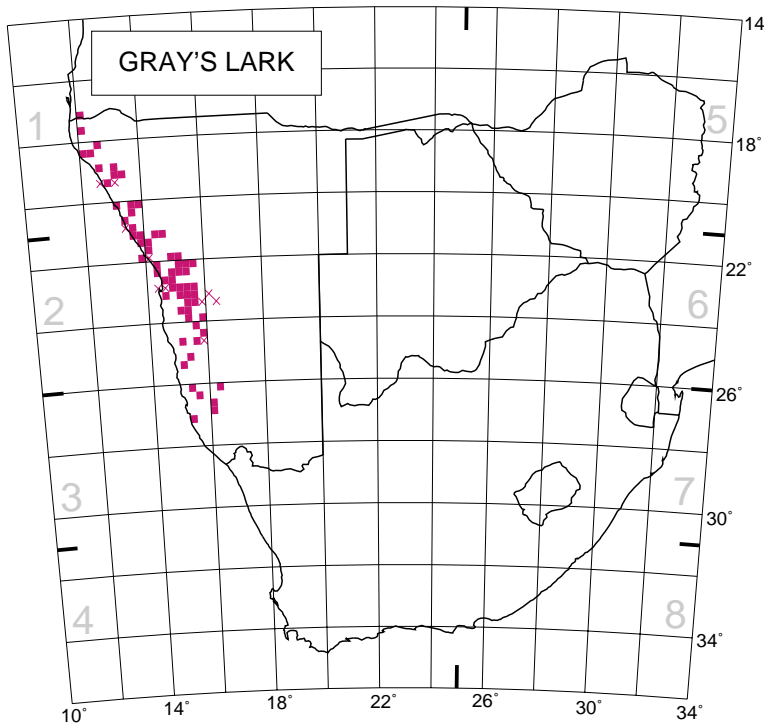
Gray's Lark is a resident endemic of the Namib Desert and the desert edge. It is locally common, occurring from about Aus (2616CB) to Pico do Azevedo in southern Angola. Atlas records suggest that it is commonest in the Namib Desert northeast and east of Swakopmund (2214DA) and southeast of Walvis Bay (2214DC), but this may be due to observers recording it along the Swakopmund–Usakos, Swakopmund–Windhoek and the Walvis Bay–Gamsberg roads. It is unlike any lark within its range but can be mistaken for the Tractrac Chat *Cercomela tractrac*, from which it differs in having a shorter, thicker bill and no white rump.

There are two subspecies: *A. g. grayi* found to the south of Cape Cross (2113DD) and *A. g. hoeschi* found to the north of Cape Cross. Coverage in the southern parts of the range, which include restricted-access diamond areas, was poor.

It is often seen in groups of 3–30 birds. It occurs on barren, whitish, pale pink, grey and brown gravel plains, with or without sparse vegetation and scattered rocks; it avoids sandy desert. It is seldom recorded drinking and apparently obtains much of its water metabolically and from invertebrates (Willoughby 1971). There is no evidence of any regular movements in this species, but it is nomadic within the desert, moving opportunistically to areas where it has recently rained. Willoughby (1971) noted that it wanders over large expanses of the desert. Both Keith *et al.* (1992) and Maclean (1993b) noted that it breeds opportunistically after rain, and that it may breed throughout the winter. It nests in patches of perennial grasses, mainly *Stipagrostis uniplumis*, on the gravel plains (Willoughby 1971).

There is no evidence that the distribution of Gray's Lark has changed. It is currently well protected since a large part of its distribution range lies within the Namib-Naukluft and Skeleton Coast parks.

W.R.J. Dean



Extent of range: 72 grid cells, 1.6%
 Total number of records: 235
 Mean reporting rate for range: 6.5%

Reporting rates for vegetation types

