

## *Nucras holubi* (Steindachner, 1882) HOLUB'S SANDVELD LIZARD

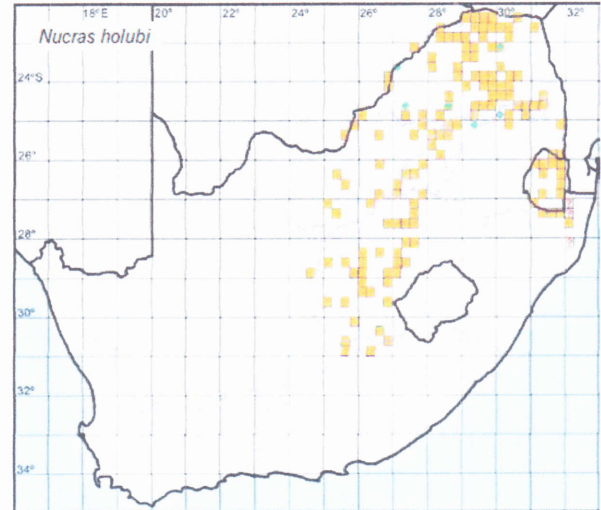
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### Regional: Least Concern

**Taxonomy:** In his assessment of the *Nucras tessellata* complex, Broadley (1972) treated *Nucras* (as *Eremias*) *holubi* as a junior synonym of *N. taeniolata ornata* and considered it a variety or morph of the latter. Jacobsen (1989) presented morphological characters to distinguish between the *holubi* and *ornata* morphs of *N. taeniolata* in the northern parts of South Africa. He treated *N. t. holubi* as a valid taxon and considered the *ornata* morph a full species. Bates (1996a) presented additional diagnostic morphological characters which, together with a pronounced geographical range separation between *N. t. taeniolata* in the Eastern Cape and *N. t. holubi*, he regarded as justification for full species status for the latter. A molecular phylogeny of *Nucras* confirmed the species status of *N. holubi*, which is most closely related to the sister species pairing of *N. intertexta* and *N. ornata* (Edwards *et al.* 2013b). The status of the seemingly disjunct Namibian population of *N. holubi* requires investigation.

**Distribution:** The exact limits of the distribution are uncertain but the species apparently occurs in two disjunct nodes. The first is comprised of the central and northeastern regions of South Africa, i.e. parts of the Northern and Eastern Cape, Free State, North-West Province, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and northern KwaZulu-Natal, as well as Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, southern Malawi and possibly Mozambique, while the second node appears to be restricted to northeastern Namibia (De Waal 1978; Branch 1998; Jacobsen 1989; Bourquin 2004). Some records from Swaziland (e.g. 2631BA, BB, AD, CD) require confirmation (Boycott 1992a,b), and records east of 32°E in KwaZulu-Natal may be referable to *N. ornata*.

**Habitat:** A terrestrial species with a wide habitat tolerance, generally associated with broken rocky terrain in mesic savanna in the north and open sandy flats in the south. As is typical for most sandveld lizards, this species also shelters in burrows in the ground or under rocks. The altitudinal range in the *Atlas* region is 150–1 500 m (De Waal 1978;



*Nucras holubi*—Greater KuduLand Safaris, E of Tshipise, LIMP M. Burger

Jacobsen 1989; Branch 1998; Bourquin 2004). Also found in open grassland in the Free State (Bates 1992).

**Biome:** Savanna; Grassland; Nama-Karoo.

**Assessment rationale:** Widespread and common. Threats in its range are not considered to be significant.

**Conservation measures:** None recommended.