Elephantulus intufi – Bushveld Sengi


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Regional Red List status (2016)	Least Concern
National Red List status (2004)	Data Deficient
Reasons for change	None
Global Red List status (2015)	Least Concern
TOPS listing (NEMBA)	None
CITES listing	None
Endemic	No

Bushveld is used to indicate the type of habitat in which this species lives, as opposed to others which are associated with a rocky habitat.

Taxonomy

Elephantulus intufi (Smith 1836)

ANIMALIA - CHORDATA - MAMMALIA - MACROSCELIDEA - MACROSCELIDIDAE - *Elephantulus* - *intufi*

Common names: Bushveld Sengi, Bushveld Elephant-sengi, Bushveld Elephant-shrew (English), Bosveld Klaasneus (Afrikaans)

Taxonomic status: Species

Taxonomic notes: In the past the single family was included in the order Insectivora, but now the family is in the monophyletic order Macroscelidea and the newly created super-cohort Afrotheria. Currently, there are 19 living species recognized in four genera. The soft-furred sengis or elephant-shrews include three genera: *Petrodromus* is monospecific, *Macroscelides* has three species, and *Elephantulus* contains 11 species. The four species of giant sengis belong to the genus *Rhynchocyon*. The common name "sengi" is being used in place of elephant-shrew by many biologists to try and disassociate the Macroscelidea from the true shrews (family Soricidae) in the order Soricomorpha. See the IUCN SSC Afrotheria Specialist Group web site and www.sengis.org for additional information.

Assessment Rationale

The Bushveld Sengi occurs along the northern reaches of the assessment region. The regions and habitats in which this species occurs are not generally impacted greatly by human activities, except for locally intense grazing, such as the "Bushmanland" area of South Africa. It is not known whether this species is adversely impacted by heavy grazing, but given what is known about sengi life history it probably is less influenced by this land use than many other small mammals. This species occupies quite arid habitats with considerable natural variation in environmental conditions that probably results in frequent changes in population numbers, which are natural. This is an edge of range species within the assessment region, with an extensive habitat throughout the rest of its range. Thus, we retain the Least Concern listing.

Regional population effects: Continuous distribution with rest of African range.

Distribution

The species occurs in southwestern Angola, Namibia (excluding the coastal Namib Desert), Botswana and northern South Africa (Corbet & Hanks 1968; Skinner & Chimimba 2005). Within the assessment region, this species occurs along the northwestern border of South Africa in the Kalahari habitats. In the North West Province, it was only recorded in the northern Kalahari vegetation types Savanna Biome, and was deemed fairly common (Power 2014). The species is also found in the north and northwestern areas of Limpopo.

Population

This species is widespread and can be fairly common (Rathbun & Rathbun 2006), especially on relatively firm sandy soils (but not sand dunes), but no information is available for virtually the entire South African range of the species. However, based on the relatively large specimen collections in museums, it is relatively common where it occurs.

Current population trend: Stable

Continuing decline in mature individuals: Unknown

Number of mature individuals in population: Unknown

Number of mature individuals in largest subpopulation: Unknown

Number of subpopulations: Unknown

Severely fragmented: No

Habitats and Ecology

Said to inhabit more arid terrain than any other *Elephantulus* species, including dry savannah woodlands, bushveld, steppe, and semi-deserts (Corbet & Hanks 1968; Skinner & Chimimba 2005). *Elephantulus intufi*

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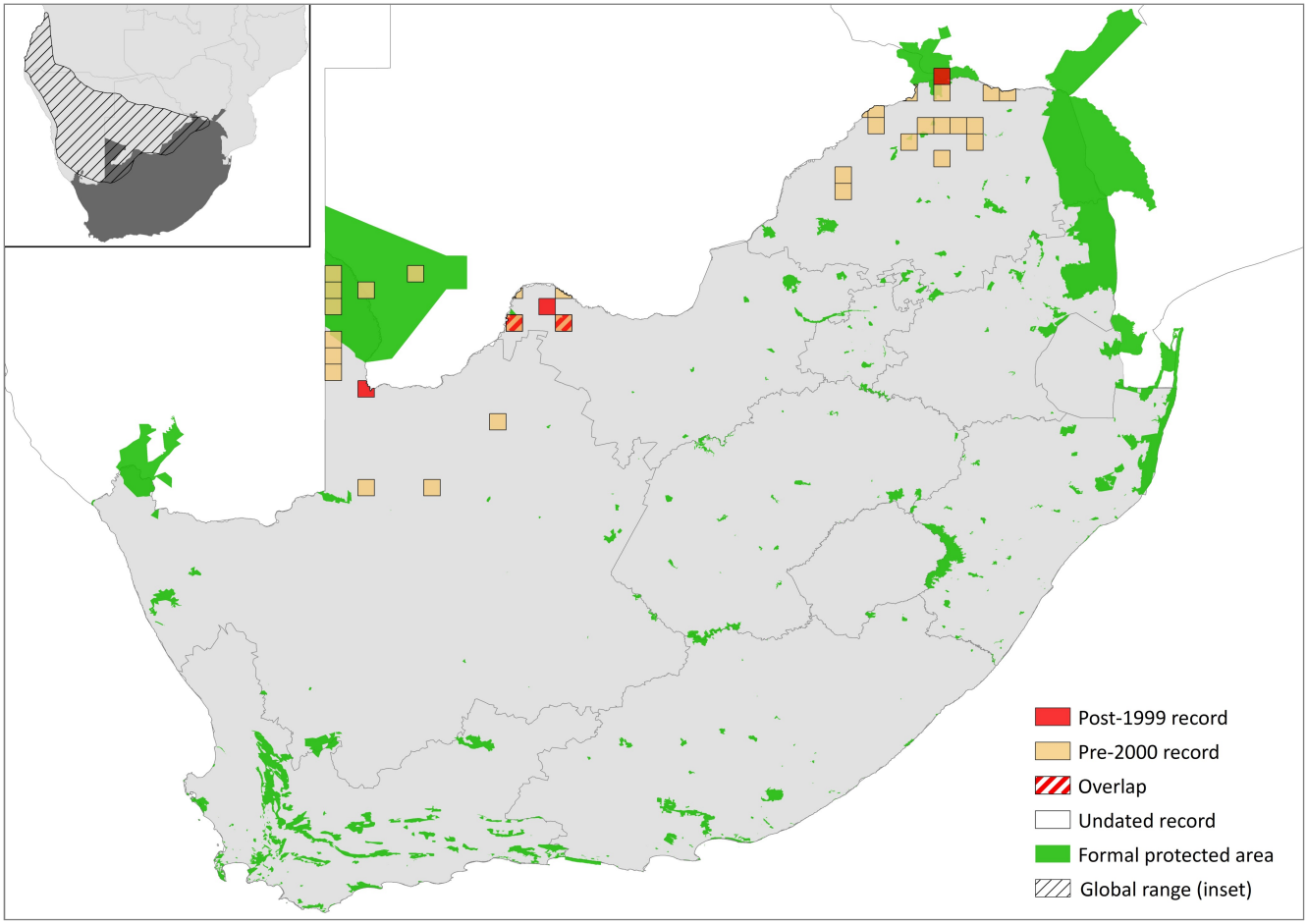

Figure 1. Distribution records for Bushveld Sengi (*Elephantulus intufi*) within the assessment region

Table 1. Countries of occurrence within southern Africa

Country	Presence	Origin
Botswana	Extant	Native
Lesotho	Absent	-
Mozambique	Absent	-
Namibia	Extant	Native
South Africa	Extant	Native
Swaziland	Absent	-
Zimbabwe	Absent	-

usually shelters under rocks during fire, but has also been reported to use burrows (Rathbun & Rathbun 2006), similar to the closely related Short-snouted Sengi *E. brachyrynchus*. It occupies less covered habitats than *E. brachyrhynchus* but is not found in areas which lack cover (for example, areas around pans which have short grass). For this species, cover is an essential habitat requirement and is provided by the low bushes that are scattered in the open grassland. Key vegetation types include the Kalahari vegetation type and the Savanna Biome.

Ecosystem and cultural services: Sengi species are thought to be included in San art and are therefore subject to local folklore.

Use and Trade

There is no evidence that this species is used for local or international trade.

Threats

There are no known major threats that could cause regional extinction in South Africa. However, it is possible that overgrazing could be a threat to the species.

Current habitat trend: Stable

Conservation

The species occurs in protected areas, but these are not documented so protected areas species lists should be

Table 2. Threats to the Bushveld Sengi (*Elephantulus intufi*) ranked in order of severity with corresponding evidence (based on IUCN threat categories, with regional context)

Rank	Threat description	Evidence in the scientific literature	Data quality	Scale of study	Current trend
1	*2.3.2 Small-holder Grazing, Ranching or Farming*. Current stress *1.2 Ecosystem Degradation*: overgrazing leading to loss of ground cover.	-	Anecdotal	-	Unknown

compiled. The most important protected area in which it occurs is Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. There are no direct interventions necessary at present.

Recommendations for land managers and practitioners:

- Expansion of the protected area network.

Research priorities:

- Severity of intensive grazing on local subpopulation.

Encouraged citizen actions:

- Citizens are encouraged to report sightings on virtual museum platforms (for example, iSpot and MammalMAP) with photographic confirmation.

References

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Power RJ. 2014. The Distribution and Status of Mammals in the North West Province. Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation & Tourism, North West Provincial Government, Mahikeng, South Africa.

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Data Sources and Quality

Table 3. Information and interpretation qualifiers for the Bushveld Sengi (*Elephantulus intufi*) assessment

Data sources	Field study (unpublished), indirect information (expert knowledge), museum records
Data quality (max)	Inferred
Data quality (min)	Suspected
Uncertainty resolution	Expert consensus
Risk tolerance	Evidentiary

Assessors and Reviewers

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Details of the methods used to make this assessment can be found in *Mammal Red List 2016: Introduction and Methodology.*