

Genus *Nucras* Gray, 1838—sandveld lizards

The genus *Nucras* contains 10 species primarily restricted to southern Africa but extending into central and eastern Africa (Branch 1998; Spawls *et al.* 2002). Eight species occur in the *Atlas* region and three of these (*N. lalandii*, *N. livida*, *N. taeniolata*) are endemic. Another potential undescribed species, also endemic to the *Atlas* region, is currently being investigated (A.M. Bauer in prep.). *Nucras* appears to be the sister taxon to *Heliobolus* (Makokha *et al.* 2007). Members of this genus are found in savanna

and grassland where they are diurnal, terrestrial, active hunters that feed primarily on invertebrates (Van der Meer *et al.* 2010). Females lay 2–9 eggs in summer (Branch 1998). *Nucras caesicaudata* was previously listed as 'Peripheral' (Branch 1988a) but is here considered Not Applicable as there are too few records in the region to allow for a proper assessment. *Nucras taeniolata* is now classified as Near Threatened as a result of its restricted range in combination with habitat destruction and degradation.

Nucras caesicaudata Broadley, 1972

BLUE-TAILED SANDVELD LIZARD

Marius Burger

Not Applicable

Taxonomy: There are no alpha-level taxonomic issues, but the phylogenetic position of the species within *Nucras* requires investigation.

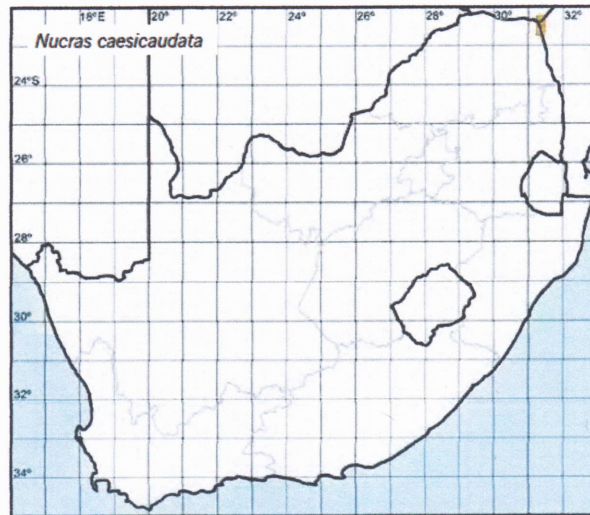
Distribution: This species occurs peripherally in South Africa, where it is confined to the extreme northeastern limits of the Kruger National Park in Limpopo Province. Elsewhere it occurs in the plains of southern Mozambique and in southeastern Zimbabwe (Broadley 1972; Jacobsen 1988d, 1989; Branch 1998). Recently recorded as far east as the San Sebastian Peninsula in southern Mozambique (Jacobsen *et al.* 2010). The global distribution suggests four disjunct populations, but this may be an artefact of under-sampling.

Habitat: A terrestrial species recorded amongst clumps of *Hyphaene* palms on the edge of pans where these merge into *Terminalia* savanna (Broadley 1972). Found below 100 m in Miombo woodland in the San Sebastian Peninsula (Jacobsen *et al.* 2010). Limited ecological information is currently available but the species appears to be associated with deep sands. The altitude of the South African records is around 300 m and the type locality in Zimbabwe is at 425 m (Broadley 1972; Pienaar *et al.* 1983; Jacobsen 1989).

Bioregion: Mopane.

Assessment rationale: The range within the *Atlas* region (where it is known from only two QDGCs) is less than 5% of the global range, and therefore this species was not assessed.

Conservation measures: Conduct surveys of known localities and areas of potential occurrence in order to gain insight into basic ecology and population dynamics, and especially to assess the types and extent of threats. Determine the current status of the Kruger National Park population and assess the impacts of environmental management regimes there.



Nucras caesicaudata—Wambia Sandveld, Kruger NP, LIMP W.D. Haacke