

Meroles knoxii (Milne-Edwards, 1829)

KNOX'S DESERT LIZARD

Andrew A. Turner

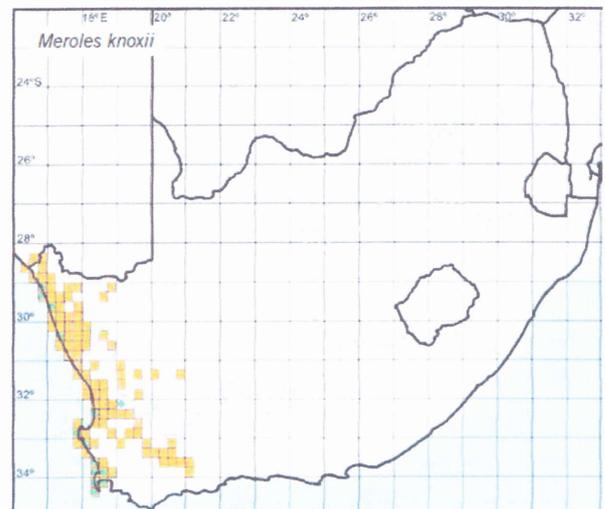
Global: Least Concern

Taxonomy: Previously, two subspecies were recognised, namely *Meroles knoxii knoxii* from south of the Orange River in the Northern Cape, and *M. k. pequensis* from north of the Orange River in Namibia. Although no longer regarded as valid, the status of *M. k. pequensis* should be re-assessed because of notable differences in body size and egg clutch size across the north–south extent of the



Meroles knoxii—Port Nolloth, NC

G.J. Alexander



species' range (Branch 1998). A review of the taxonomic status of the latter subspecies is currently being conducted by A.M. Bauer & T. Jackman (in prep.). In addition, Little Karoo populations may have diverged from western populations (Branch *et al.* 2006a).

Distribution: Occurs from southwestern Namibia in the north, southwards along the West Coast of the Northern and Western Cape to the Cape Peninsula, and inland through the Cederberg Mountains and Tankwa Karoo to the western Little Karoo (Branch 1998).

Habitat: Found in dry areas with sparse vegetation, mostly on sandy soils (Branch 1998).

Biome: Succulent Karoo; Fynbos; Nama-Karoo; Desert.

Assessment rationale: Widely distributed and often very abundant, particularly near the coast. Tolerates grazing her-

bivores and is not known to be threatened by human activities. The conservation assessment presented here is likely to be appropriate even if the species is separated into two or three taxa as mentioned above, because limited ranges, small populations and serious threats are unlikely to apply.

Conservation measures: None recommended.
