

***Nucras tessellata* (A. Smith, 1838)**
WESTERN SANDVELD LIZARD

Marius Burger

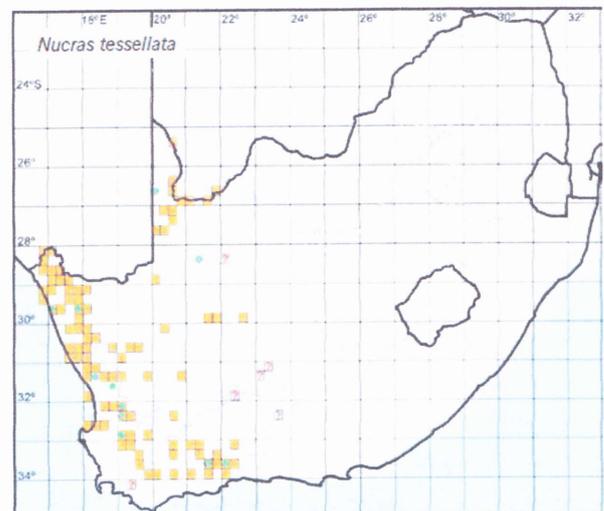
Global: Least Concern

Taxonomy: The *Nucras tessellata* complex was last revised by Broadley (1972), who recognised three subspecies (*N. t. tessellata*, *N. t. livida* and an unnamed subspecies of *N. tessellata*). Apart from typical *N. t. tessellata*, Broadley (1972) also recognised two varieties (*N. t. tessellata* var. *elegans* and *N. t. tessellata* var. 'T'). Although *N. t. livida* was subsequently elevated to species level (Branch & Bauer



Nucras tessellata—Loeriesfontein, NC

W.R. Branch



1995), the taxonomic status of the two varieties and the unnamed subspecies remain unresolved. Although a molecular phylogeny of *Nucras* confirmed the species status of *N. tessellata*, which is the sister species of *N. taeniolata* (Edwards *et al.* 2013b), a detailed molecular investigation of *N. tessellata* is still needed. For the purposes of the SARCA assessment, *N. tessellata* includes the two varieties but excludes the supposed Angolan subspecies which, considering its vast geographical separation from other conspecifics, probably represents a separate species.

Distribution: Endemic to southern Africa. Found in the western regions, extending from central Namibia southwards through southwestern Botswana, and Northern and Western Cape provinces, South Africa. The true distribution limits are still unresolved, as explained above, but the map here includes all of Broadley's (1972) *N. t. tessellata* records as well as new records assignable to this species. A number of questionable records are also indicated.

Habitat: A terrestrial species generally associated with rocky terrain (Branch 1998), but it also frequents open karroid veld and dry river beds.

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

Assessment rationale: Common with a wide distribution spanning three countries.

Conservation measures: None recommended.