

***Nucras lalandii* (Milne-Edwards, 1829)**
DELALANDE'S SANDVELD LIZARD

Marius Burger

Global: Least Concern

Endemic

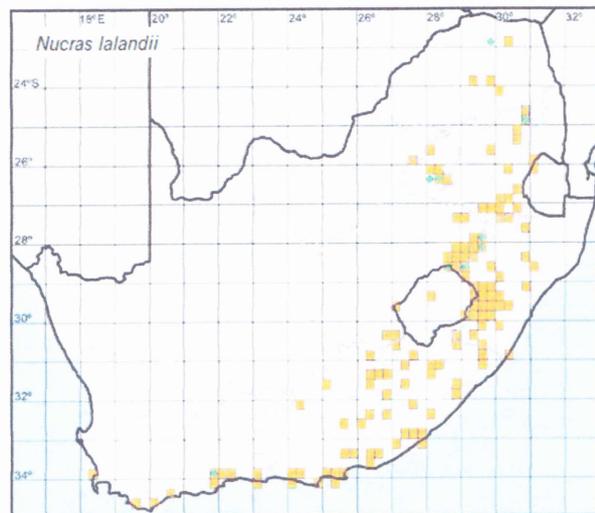
Taxonomy: *Nucras lalandii* is most closely related to *N. livida* and *N. tessellata* + *N. taeniolata* (Edwards et al. 2013b). A molecular investigation covering the large range of this species may reveal the existence of cryptic taxa.

Distribution: Endemic to the *Atlas* region where its range extends over the eastern and southern parts, from northern Limpopo southwards through Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and into the Western Cape along the southern Cape coast to Cape Town (Jacobsen 1989; Branch 1998; Bourquin 2004). A few records are also known from the Free State, Swaziland and Lesotho (De Waal 1978; Boycott 1992a; Bates 1996a; Ambrose 2006).

Habitat: A terrestrial species generally associated with montane and temperate grassland. Also utilises coastal fynbos habitat in the southern Cape. As is typical for most sandveld lizards, it shelters in burrows in the ground or under rocks. Usually frequents high altitudes, e.g. 1 550–2 300 m in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, but occurs at lower elevations in KwaZulu-Natal and near sea level along the southern Cape coast (Jacobsen 1989; Branch 1998).

Biome: Grassland; Savanna; Albany Thicket; Fynbos; Nama-Karoo (marginal).

Assessment rationale: Widely distributed and relatively common throughout most of its range. None of the IUCN Red List Criteria for a threatened listing are met, but the extent of habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation due to afforestation, and increased burning in montane grass-



Nucras lalandii—Bushman's Nek, KZN

W.R. Schmidt

lands, are reasons for concern. These threats are continuing and may ultimately cause this species to become threatened in such areas.

Conservation measures: Protect substantial units of montane grassland habitat where the species occurs. Through legislation, regulate burning at unprotected grassland sites.
