

Chrysochloris visagiei – Visagie’s Golden Mole

Photograph
wanted

Regional Red List status (2016)	Data Deficient*
National Red List status (2004)	Critically Endangered D
Reasons for change	Non-genuine change
Global Red List status (2015)	Data Deficient
TOPS listing (NEMBA)	None
CITES listing	None
Endemic	Yes

*Watch-list Data

This species was named after Mr I.H.J. Visagie, who owned the farm on which the first specimen of this species was found (Skinner & Chimimba 2005).

Taxonomy

Chrysochloris visagiei (Broom 1950)

ANIMALIA - CHORDATA - MAMMALIA - AFROSORICIDA - CHRYSOCHLORIDAE - *Chrysochloris visagiei*

Common names: Visagie’s Golden Mole (English), Visagie se Gouemol (Afrikaans)

Taxonomic status: Species

Taxonomic notes: Meester (1974) suggested that this species may in fact be an aberrant *C. asiatica*. Simonetta (1968) listed it as a subspecies of *C. asiatica*. Its taxonomic status should thus be considered *incertae sedis*.

Assessment Rationale

Agriculture has dramatically transformed habitat at the type locality of this species, but the impact thereof cannot be assessed given the uncertainty about the provenance of the type specimen and/or the habitat requirements of the species. No specimens have been seen or collected since its description, despite two expeditions to the type locality during which not even local farmers ever recalled

having seen a golden mole in the district. Further field surveys and research may show this species to qualify for Critically Endangered if indeed a population still survives at the type location.

Distribution

This species is known from a single specimen collected from the type locality at Gouna, Northern Cape, South Africa (Figure 1). Several field trips to ground-truth the occurrence of this species have yielded no specimens, or even signs of golden moles, suggesting either an error in recording provenance, or that the original specimen was transported there by anthropogenic means (Bronner 2013) or even perhaps by floodwaters of the Renoster River, flowing from the Roggeveld mountains further south where several other species of golden moles occur. The possibility exists that the holotype originated from Gouna Forest near Knysna (Eastern Cape), but was incorrectly assumed (by Broom 1950) to be from Gouna in Northern Cape; surveying at Gouna Forest is needed to assess this possibility.

Population

No signs of this species have been found at the type location during two independent expeditions in the last 20 years.

Current population trend: Unknown

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, known from only one locality.

Severely fragmented: No

Habitats and Ecology

The type locality is situated in Bushmanland Nama-Karoo, with extensive agriculture on the alluvial sand floodplains of the Vis and Renoster Rivers. Adjacent natural habitats are gravel plains and small hills, which appear unsuitable habitats for chrysochlorids. There is currently no information pertaining to the ecology of this species.

Use and Trade

This species is not known to be traded or utilised in any form.

Threats

Extensive agriculture has dramatically transformed habitat at the type locality, but the impact thereof cannot be assessed given the uncertainty about provenance of the type specimen and/or the habitat requirements of the species.

Recommended citation: Bronner GN. 2016. A conservation assessment of *Chrysochloris visagiei*. In Child MF, Roxburgh L, Do Linh San E, Raimondo D, Davies-Mostert HT, editors. The Red List of Mammals of South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. South African National Biodiversity Institute and Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa.

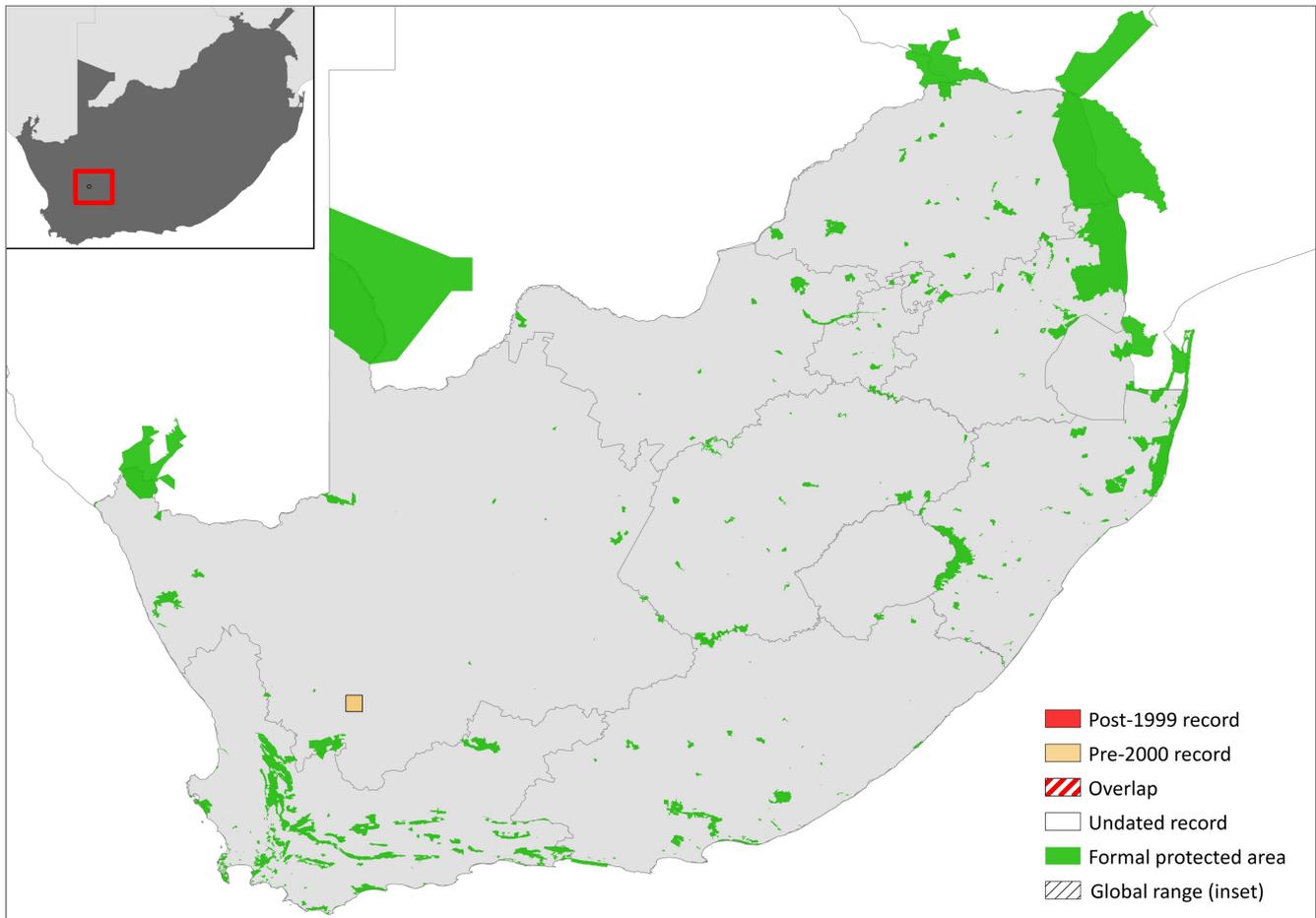


Figure 1. Distribution records for Visagie's Golden Mole (*Chrysochloris visagiei*) within the assessment region

Table 1. Countries of occurrence within southern Africa

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

Current habitat trend: Unknown

Conservation

Research is needed to ground-truth the existence of this species in the Gouna areas of both Northern and Eastern Cape, and/or to trace the locality from which the type specimen was collected. Study of more specimens is required to clarify the systematic status of this taxon. This

species has not been identified in any protected areas within the assessment regions. At present no specific conservation interventions can be identified, without additional research and monitoring into the threats, distribution and habitat of this species.

Recommendations for land managers and practitioners: None

Research priorities:

- Field surveys at Gouna Forest, Northern Cape are necessary to assess the possibility of the existence of this species.

Encouraged citizen actions:

- Report sightings on virtual museum platforms (for example, iSpot and MammalMAP), especially outside protected areas.
- Deposit any dead specimens found in a state or provincial museum, together with information on the date and site where found.
- Create native vegetation gardens.

Table 2. Threats to the Visagie's Golden Mole (*Chrysochloris visagiei*) 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	2.1.4 Annual & Perennial Non-Timber Crops: habitat transformation from extensive agricultural expansion.	-	Anecdotal	-	Unknown

Data Sources and Quality

Table 3. Information and interpretation qualifiers for the Visagie's Golden Mole (*Chrysochloris visagiei*) assessment

Data sources	Museum records
Data quality (max)	Suspected
Data quality (min)	Suspected
Uncertainty resolution	Expert consensus
Risk tolerance	Precautionary

References

Bronner GN. 2013. *Chrysochloris visagiei* Visagie's Golden-mole. Page 246 in Kingdon J, Happold D, Hoffmann M, Butynski T, Happold M, Kalina J, editors. Mammals of Africa, Volume I: Introductory Chapters and Afrotheria. Bloomsbury Publishing, London, UK.

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Skinner JD, Chimimba CT. 2005. *The Mammals of the Southern African Subregion*. Third edition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

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