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Mustela subpalmata, Egyptian Weasel

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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Mustelidae

Taxon Name: Mustela subpalmata Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833

Synonym(s):

• Mustela nivalis ssp. subpalmata Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833

Common Name(s):

- English: Egyptian Weasel
- French: Belette Ëgyptienne

Taxonomic Notes:

Recognized as a species separate from Least Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) by van Zyll de Jong (1992), Reig (1997), Abramov and Baryshnikov (2000), Baryshnikov *et al.* (2003), Wozencraft (2005), Nyakatura and Bininda-Emonds (2012), and McDonald (2013).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria:	Least Concern ver 3.1		
Year Published:	2016		
Date Assessed:	May 8, 2015		

Justification:

Egyptian Weasel is categorized as Least Concern because although there are only five known localities in the lower Nile Valley of Egypt (with an area of occupancy likely smaller than 500 km²), the species is common where it occurs, there are no obvious threats, and extreme population fluctuations are unlikely. Considering that the species is apparently an obligate synanthrope, it may indeed warrant future listing in a threatened category should a rapid decline occur because of the large suite of potential threats to which such a lifestyle exposes it (e.g., accumulation of new-generation rodenticides, chemicals, diseases, predation by dogs).

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC) – http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T41660A10504103.en

2003 – Not Evaluated (NE)

Geographic Range

Range Description:

Previously considered to be confined to the lower Nile Valley of Egypt, between Beni Suef in the south and Alexandria and the Delta in the north (Handwerk 1993, McDonald 2013). The area of occupancy (AOO) was given by Basuony *et al.* (2010) as 84 km² and the extent of occurrence (EOO) as 16,470 km²

on the basis of the collation of 23 records from four localities. Since 2012, reports of frequent Egyptian Weasel sightings and trapping in the city centre of Aswan (D. Hoek and I. Haitham pers. comm. 2014), *ca* 650 km south of Beni Suef, indicate that the species's range is larger than thought, but to an unknown degree because it is likely to be discontinuous due to separation of settlements by unsuitable habitats (large swathe of desert) and translocations. Based on current knowledge, the AOO, however, is certainly smaller than 500 km², and might well only be 100–150 km² in size. It is unclear whether animals observed in Aswan have been translocated accidentally or deliberately by cargo transportation (or have dispersed naturally) and whether they are restricted to settled and urbanized areas. Hoath (2003), Basuony *et al.* (2010) and Leach *et al.* (2013) considered the species to be amongst the few mammals endemic to Egypt.

Country Occurrence:

Native: Egypt (Egypt (African part))

Distribution Map

Mustela subpalmata



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Population

Common to abundant; densities of 0.5–1.0 individuals/ha have been estimated from trapping (Handwerk 1993). Egyptian Weasels are opportunistic feeders (Osborn and Helmy 1980, Handwerk 1993).

Current Population Trend: Increasing

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

Commensal with humans, and often trapped in human habitations, including underground larders (McDonald 2013).

Systems: Terrestrial

Threats

There are no known major threats to the species. As an apparently obligate synanthrope, it faces a large suite of potential future threats, such as accumulation of new-generation rodenticides, chemicals, diseases, and predation by dogs.

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

The Egyptian Weasel is a human commensal. No conservation measures apparently are currently needed, although the ecology of the species has not yet been thoroughly described. It is listed under Vulnerable (Criterion D2) in the Egyptian Red List for mammals (Basuony *et al.* 2010), although a plausible threat that could drive the taxon to Critically Endangered or Extinct in a very short time—necessary for such categorization—was not suggested.

Credits

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External Resources

For Images and External Links to Additional Information, please see the Red List website.

Appendix

Habitats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.5. Artificial/Terrestrial - Urban Areas	-	Suitable	-
15. Artificial/Aquatic & Marine -> 15.7. Artificial/Aquatic - Irrigated Land (includes irrigation channels)	-	Suitable	-

Conservation Actions in Place

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions in Place	
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management	
Occur in at least one PA: No	

Additional Data Fields

Distribution	
Continuing decline in area of occupancy (AOO): No	
Extreme fluctuations in area of occupancy (AOO): No	
Continuing decline in extent of occurrence (EOO): No	
Extreme fluctuations in extent of occurrence (EOO): No	
Population	
Continuing decline of mature individuals: No	
Extreme fluctuations: No	
Population severely fragmented: No	
Continuing decline in subpopulations: No	
Extreme fluctuations in subpopulations: No	
All individuals in one subpopulation: No	
Habitats and Ecology	
Continuing decline in area, extent and/or quality of habitat: No	
Generation Length (years): 2	

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