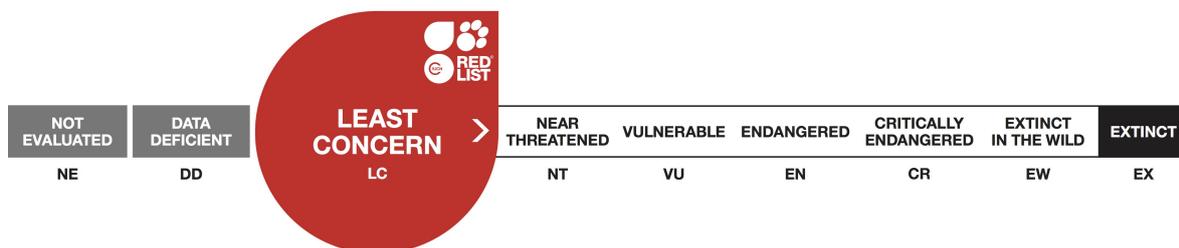


Otocyon megalotis, Bat-eared Fox

Assessment by: Hoffmann, M.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Canidae

Taxon Name: *Otocyon megalotis* (Desmarest, 1822)

Common Name(s):

- English: Bat-eared Fox
- French: L'otocyon, L'Otocyon

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern [ver 3.1](#)

Year Published: 2014

Date Assessed: March 14, 2014

Justification:

The Bat-eared Fox occurs in two discrete subpopulations in eastern and southern Africa. The species is widespread and is common in conservation areas, becoming uncommon in arid areas and on farms in South Africa where they are occasionally persecuted. There are no major threats believed to be resulting in any major range-wide declines.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC)

2004 – Least Concern (LC)

1996 – Lower Risk/least concern (LR/lc)

Geographic Range

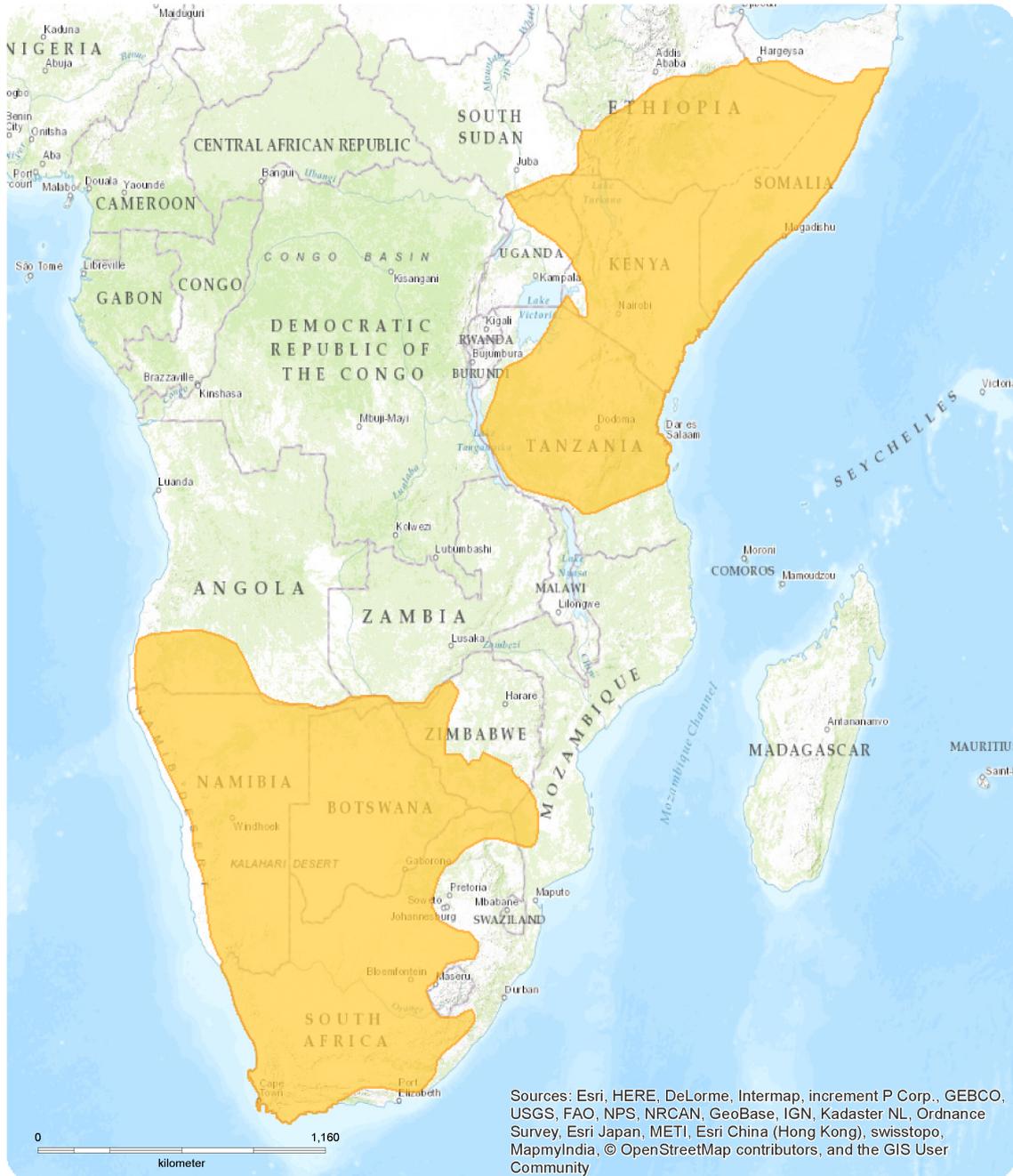
Range Description:

The Bat-eared Fox has a disjunct distribution range, occurring across the arid and semi-arid regions of eastern and southern Africa in two discrete populations (representing each of the known subspecies) separated by about 1,000 km. Subspecies *O. m. virgatus* ranges from southern Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia down through Uganda and Kenya to south-western Tanzania; *O. m. megalotis* occurs from Angola through Namibia and Botswana to Mozambique and South Africa (Coetzee 1977; Kingdon 1977; Nel and Maas 2004, 2013; Skinner and Chimimba 2005). There are no confirmed records from Zambia (Ansell 1978). The two ranges were probably connected during the Pleistocene (Coe and Skinner 1993). This disjunct distribution is similar to that of other endemic, xeric species e.g., Aardwolf *Proteles cristatus* and Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*. Range extensions in southern Africa documented in recent years (e.g., Stuart 1981, Marais and Griffin 1993) have been linked to changing rainfall patterns (MacDonald 1982).

Country Occurrence:

Native: Angola (Angola); Botswana; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mozambique; Namibia; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Tanzania, United Republic of; Uganda; Zimbabwe

Distribution Map

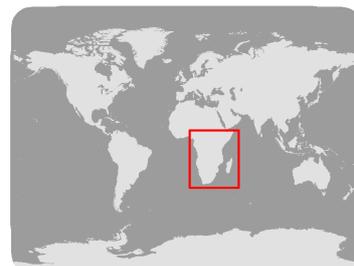


Otocyon megalotis

Range
■ Extant (resident)

Compiled by:
 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

NE DD LC > NT VU EN CR EW EX
LEAST CONCERN



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.



Population

The species is common in conservation areas in southern and eastern Africa, becoming uncommon in arid areas and on farms in South Africa where they are occasionally persecuted. Within a circumscribed habitat, numbers can fluctuate from abundant to rare depending on rainfall, food availability (Waser 1980, Nel *et al.* 1984), breeding stage and disease (Maas 1993a,b; Nel 1993). Recorded densities include 0.7-14/km² in the Kalahari (Nel *et al.* 1984) and 0.3-1.0 / km² in the Serengeti (Hendrichs 1972).

Current Population Trend: Stable

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

In southern Africa, the prime habitat is mainly short-grass plains and areas with bare ground (Mackie and Nel 1989), but they are also found in open scrub vegetation and arid, semi-arid or winter rainfall (fynbos or Cape macchia) shrub lands, and open arid savanna. The range of both subspecies overlaps almost completely with that of *Hodotermes* and *Microhodotermes*, termite genera prevailing in the diet (Mackie and Nel 1989, Maas 1993a). In the Serengeti, they are common in open grassland and woodland boundaries but not short-grass plains (Lamprecht 1979, Malcolm 1986); harvester termite (*H. mossambicus*) foraging holes and dung from migratory ungulates are more abundant in areas occupied by Bat-eared Foxes, while grass is shorter and individual plants are more widely spaced (Maas 1993a).

Systems: Terrestrial

Use and Trade (see Appendix for additional information)

Commercial use is very limited, but winter pelts are valued and sold as blankets. They are also sold as hunting trophies in South Africa.

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

There are no major threats, but they are subject to subsistence hunting for skins or because they are perceived as being predators of small livestock. Populations fluctuate due to disease (especially rabies and canine distemper, which can cause short-term drastic declines in populations) or drought (which depresses insect numbers).

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

The species is not included in the CITES Appendices. It is present in a number of protected areas across its range (see Nel and Maas 2004, 2013).

Bat-eared Foxes are kept in captivity in North America, Europe, South Africa and Asia, although never in large numbers. A Bat-eared Fox European StudBook was established at Banham Zoo in 2011 and an AZA Studbook has been established at Peoria Zoo in Illinois (2012/2013) (M. Woolham pers. comm. 2013). Importations have occurred throughout the history of the captive population despite successful captive breeding since 1970. Bat-eared Foxes can coexist well with other species and are frequently seen in African plains exhibits at zoos.

Little is known about dispersal of young and the formation of new breeding pairs. The causal factors for differences in home range size in different localities, group size and changes in density as a function of

food availability are poorly known. In the Serengeti, behavioural evidence on group and pair formation and the existence of 'super families', consisting of one male and up to three closely related breeding females, raises interesting questions about regular inbreeding between males and their daughters from several generations (see Maas 1993a).

Credits

Assessor(s): Hoffmann, M.

Reviewer(s): Sillero-Zubiri, C.

Contributor(s): Nel, J.A.J., Maas, B. & Woolham, M.

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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?
2. Savanna -> 2.1. Savanna - Dry	-	Suitable	Yes
3. Shrubland -> 3.5. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	Yes
3. Shrubland -> 3.8. Shrubland - Mediterranean-type Shrubby Vegetation	-	Suitable	Yes
4. Grassland -> 4.5. Grassland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	Yes

Use and Trade

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

End Use	Local	National	International
Wearing apparel, accessories	Yes	Yes	No
Sport hunting/specimen collecting	No	Yes	No

Threats

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

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.3. Persecution/control	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
8. Invasive & other problematic species & genes -> 8.2. Problematic native species	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	No decline	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
11. Climate change & severe weather -> 11.2. Droughts	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	No decline	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		

Conservation Actions in Place

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

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Research, Monitoring and Planning
Action Recovery plan: No
Systematic monitoring scheme: No
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management
Conservation sites identified: Yes, over entire range
Occur in at least one PA: Yes
Area based regional management plan: No
Invasive species control or prevention: Not Applicable
In-Place Species Management
Harvest management plan: No
Successfully reintroduced or introduced benignly: No
Subject to ex-situ conservation: Yes
In-Place Education
Subject to recent education and awareness programmes: No
Included in international legislation: No
Subject to any international management/trade controls: No

Conservation Actions Needed

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

Conservation Actions Needed
2. Land/water management -> 2.1. Site/area management

Research Needed

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

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.3. Life history & ecology
0. Root -> 4. Other

Additional Data Fields

Population
Population severely fragmented: No

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