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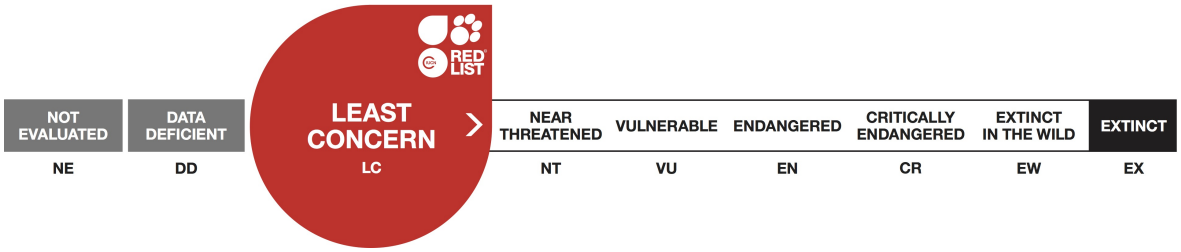
Proteles cristata, Aardwolf

Assessment by: Green, D.S.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Hyaenidae

Taxon Name: *Proteles cristata* (Sparrman, 1783)

Synonym(s):

- *Proteles cristatus*

Regional Assessments:

- Mediterranean

Common Name(s):

- English: Aardwolf
- French: Protèle
- Spanish: Lobo de Tierra

Taxonomic Notes:

Two subspecies are usually recognized: *P. c. cristata* from southern Africa, and *P. c. septentrionalis* from eastern and northeastern Africa. Their validity requires confirmation.

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern ver 3.1

Year Published: 2015

Date Assessed: September 29, 2014

Justification:

The Aardwolf is listed as Least Concern as it is reasonably widespread, present in numerous protected areas, and there are no major threats or evidence of any significant range-wide declines.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC)

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

Geographic Range

Range Description:

The Aardwolf has a disjunct distribution in Africa, occurring in two discrete areas, 1,500 km apart, one in east and northeastern Africa and one in southern Africa. Their distribution is largely determined by the distribution of *Trinervitermes* termites, which constitute their principle food (Anderson 2013).

The northern subspecies extends from central Tanzania to northeastern Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia,

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then narrowly along the coast of Eritrea and Sudan to extreme southeastern Egypt (in the Sudan Government Administration Area) (Yalden *et al.* 1996, Hofer and Mills 1998, Hoath 2003, Anderson 2013). Their presence in Djibouti is unclear (Künzel *et al.* 2000). A road kill from near Mbatwa in the Udzungwa Mountains of Tanzania in 2002 is probably the most southerly record for the northern subspecies (De Luca and Mpunga 2005).

The southern subspecies ranges over most of southern Africa, extending just into southwest Angola, southern Zambia (apparently south of the Kafue River), and south-west Mozambique, but it is entirely absent from Malawi, southern Tanzania, and most of Zambia (Hofer and Mills 1998, Anderson 2013). They are not recorded from Lesotho, but may well occur (Lynch 1994).

Country Occurrence:

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

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Distribution Map

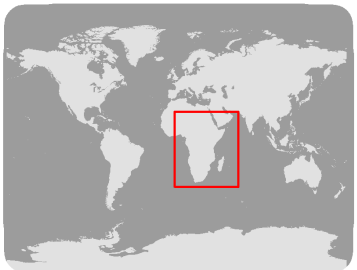
Proteles cristata

NE DD LC LEAST CONCERN NT VU EN CR EW EX

Range

Extant (resident)

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



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

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Population

Although relatively widely distributed, the Aardwolf is not common within its range. In prime habitat (open grassland and scrub regions), densities may reach one adult/km² on farms with good populations of termites and no persecution by farmers (Anderson 2013).

Current Population Trend: Stable

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

Their prime habitat is open, grassy plains, being entirely absent from forests or pure desert (Anderson 2013). In southern Africa the Aardwolf occupies diverse habitats, ranging from the karroid habitats of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, the grasslands and scrub of Botswana, the open savanna woodlands of Zimbabwe, and the inland gravel plains of the Namib Desert in Namibia (Skinner and Chimimba 2005). They have also been recorded at 2,000 m asl in Ethiopia (Yalden *et al.* 1996). Throughout its distribution, the Aardwolf has been recorded to feed primarily on nasute harvester termites (genus *Trinervitermes*) and, in any particular region, mainly on one species. Aardwolves are largely independent of water (except during prolonged cold spells), satisfying their moisture requirements from termites (Anderson 2013). Comprehensive reviews of the species' ecology can be found in Koehler and Richardson (1990) and Anderson (2013).

Systems: Terrestrial

Use and Trade (see Appendix for additional information)

There have been documented accounts of Aardwolves being consumed as food or used in medicinal practices by indigenous tribes in Africa (Richardson 1984, Koehler and Richardson 1990, Mills and Hofer 1998).

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

There are currently no major threats to Aardwolves. In South Africa, the Aardwolf was previously persecuted by some farmers for the mistaken belief that it was a predator on livestock, chickens and eggs (Richardson 1984, Anderson 1988). However, such reports are not substantiated by studies of gut or faecal contents and probably result from mistaken identity with hyaenas or jackals (Anderson 2013). Fortunately, this perception has now changed and most farmers actively conserve Aardwolves. They are, however, the occasional inadvertent victims of problem animal control operations, especially those using gin traps (M.D. Anderson pers. obs. 2014).

Loss of habitat, through urbanization and agricultural expansion, may be having an important negative impact. For example, some farmers in South Africa destroy termitaria, using a plough or poisons, and these areas then become unsuitable for Aardwolves. Poisons used for locust control may also have an adverse effect on Aardwolves (Anderson 2013). Additional mortality factors include predation by other carnivores, and accidental road casualties as Aardwolves fail to move out of the way of oncoming vehicles at night (Anderson 2013).

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

Aardwolves are present in numerous well-managed protected areas across their range. Grassland

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burning and livestock overgrazing result in a gross increase in the population of *Trinervitermes*, so Aardwolves would benefit in areas where management strategies favour these conditions (Anderson 2013). The population in Botswana is listed on CITES Appendix III.

Credits

Assessor(s): Green, D.S.

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External Resources

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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 -> 3.6. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Moist	-	Suitable	Yes
3. Shrubland -> 3.8. Shrubland - Mediterranean-type Shrubby Vegetation	-	Marginal	-
4. Grassland -> 4.4. Grassland - Temperate	-	Marginal	-
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
Food - human	Yes	No	No
Medicine - human & veterinary	Yes	No	No

Threats

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

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
1. Residential & commercial development -> 1.1. Housing & urban areas	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
1. Residential & commercial development -> 1.2. Commercial & industrial areas	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.1. Annual & perennial non-timber crops -> 2.1.4. Scale Unknown/Unrecorded	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

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5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.2. Unintentional effects (species is not the target)	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.3. Persecution/control	Past, unlikely to return	Unknown	Unknown	Past impact
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

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: Yes
In-Place Education
Subject to recent education and awareness programmes: Yes
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management/trade controls: Yes

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 -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
0. Root -> 4. Other

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Lower elevation limit (m): 0
Upper elevation limit (m): 2000

Population
Population severely fragmented: No
Habitats and Ecology
Movement patterns: Not a Migrant

The IUCN Red List Partnership

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