

## Violet Woodhoopoe

Perskakelaar

*Phoeniculus damarensis*

The Violet Woodhoopoe is restricted to north-central Namibia, extending into Angola. Another race, *P. d. granti*, occurs in arid regions of Kenya, but its taxonomic relationship to race *damarensis* remains uncertain (Davidson 1975).

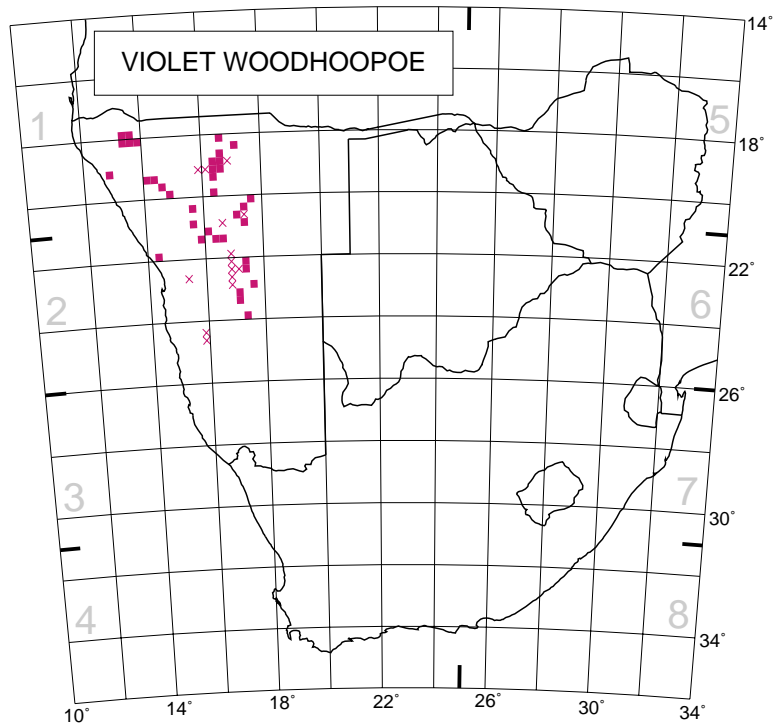
Great care is needed to separate this species from the Redbilled Woodhoopoe *P. purpureus* which shows an iridescent green gloss on its mantle. The taxonomic status of these two taxa needs investigation (C.J. Brown *in litt.*).

It inhabits dry Mopane and arid woodlands along the Namibian escarpment, and replaces the Redbilled Woodhoopoe which occurs mainly in relatively mesic woodlands to the east. These two species occur sympatrically at a few locations; Clancey (1985c) collected four specimens on the same day at Okahandja (2116DD), three showing Violet and one showing Redbilled Woodhoopoe features. Similarly, mixed groups, containing individuals exhibiting features of both species, were observed at the western base of the Waterberg Mountains (2017A) (unpubl. data).

It is group-territorial, having similar behavioural displays to the Redbilled Woodhoopoe. However, in comparison with that species, the Violet Woodhoopoe vigorously defends a smaller core territory (centred on roost-cavity-bearing trees), but forages over a much larger but weakly defended home range (unpubl. data). Group size ranges between 2–10, and the mean group size in two studies was 4.3 birds ( $n = 40$ ) (Robertson *et al.* 1995; unpubl. data).

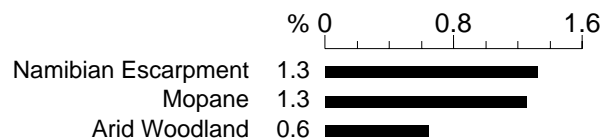
It breeds December–May (Clancey 1985c; unpubl. data), and apparently sometimes undertakes multiple breeding attempts during this period.

Currently there is no reason to believe that the range of the Violet Woodhoopoe has contracted, but the chopping down of trees for firewood may have a negative impact.



Recorded in 50 grid cells, 1.1%  
Total number of records: 259  
Mean reporting rate for range: 8.5%

### Reporting rates for vegetation types



M.A. du Plessis

