



**West African Ornithological Society  
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest  
Africain**



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## Reviews — Revues

**Guide du Parc du W.** By C.M. Jameson & T.E.C. Crisler. No publication details given (1996, Peace Corps, Niamey). 130 pp., numerous line drawings. Paperback, available in English or French versions, from Peace Corps, BP 10537, Niamey, Niger, for FFr 50 + postage & packing.

W is the only national park in Niger, and is located in the extreme southwest, bordering other national parks in Benin and Burkina Faso. Together, these form the largest area of protected savanna in West Africa, protected in some form since 1926. W includes parts of the Soudan and Sahel zones, and contains some of the last viable populations of large savanna mammals in the region.

This book is not so much a guide to the park (although it does contain a trail map), as a guide to its biological contents, with most of it dedicated to species descriptions. Six common tree species are well described, as are the more common large mammals and a few rarer ones of special interest. An appendix gives a full mammal species list. A few reptiles are also described. Mammals take up some 40% of the book, of which only 4 pages are the species list. In contrast, birds occupy about 30%, of which 14 pages are species list (of > 350 spp.), and only 29 large, common, conspicuous species are described.

The species list cannot be used as an authoritative source, but is apparently intended simply as a checklist for visitors. Among the first 50 species in the list, seven are not mentioned for the park by Giraudoux *et al.* (1988, *Avifaune du Niger, état des connaissances en 1986. Malimbus* 10: 1–140), and no other sources are quoted. This limits the book to what its title suggests: a guide for visitors. In this, it seems to do its job well, and I hope that it might encourage knowledgeable visitors to publish their unusual observations from this comparatively poorly known area.

Alan Tye

**Birds of the African Rain Forests.** By S. Keith, no date (1997?). Two audio cassettes. Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Don Mills. Cat. No. SON5 809. Available from Holborne Distrib. Co., PO Box 309X, Mt Albert, Ontario L0G 1M0, Canada.

These two cassettes cover a wide range of African rainforest birds (and other animals in the background, usually identified in the accompanying notes), but all recordings were made in East Africa. Therefore, when using them as an identification aid in West Africa, one has to be aware of possible differences in vocalization within a

species (or between subspecies), but the tapes do include many cuts which will be useful in West Africa. Individual recordings cover 100 bird species (of which almost half should be useful in West Africa), and remaining space on tape 2 is filled by a chorus in Sokoke Forest (Kenya), and four mammals.

The standard of recordings is generally high. Although many include background songs of other species, these do not prevent identification of the focus species, and rather add a sense of place to the cuts. Many certainly conjure up a painful nostalgia in one now isolated from the sounds of Africa. Compared to the well-known recordings of Chappuis, these tapes are, of course, much more limited, but they do form a useful supplement. I would especially recommend them to those visiting East Africa (many very local species are included) and, having bought them, you will continue to find them useful after returning to the west.

Alan Tye

**Endemic Bird Areas of the World: priorities for biodiversity conservation.** By A.J. Stattersfield, M.J. Crosby, J. Long & D.C. Wege, 1998. 846 pp., numerous maps and monochrome illustrations. Birdlife International. ISBN 0 946888 33 7, paperback.

This masterly work is the successor to ICBP's *Putting Biodiversity on the Map* (1992, Bibby, C.J. *et al.*, reviewed *Malimbus* 15: 55–56), but the present book is enlarged beyond recognition, with much more detail of EBAs and of the processes used to identify them. The entire book is an absolute model of clarity of layout and explanation, with an excellent introductory summary defining EBAs and demonstrating why they are important.

A concise chapter on the meaning of biodiversity, its distribution, its loss, and strategies for prioritizing its conservation, sets the backdrop to the book and explains the logic behind its approach. The EBA analysis is based on restricted-range (<50000 km<sup>2</sup>) species, but excluding seabirds and species currently reduced by human pressure to such a small range. Perhaps seabird breeding ranges should have been included; surely the island-breeding petrels, penguins and flightless cormorants are important indicators of centres of endemism. Also, although excluding species reduced by human activity to small ranges, while including extinct species, perhaps leads to a better identification of centres of endemism, it is perhaps less useful for present-day conservation planning. However, these points are addressed to some extent by the texts describing each EBA, which mention restricted-range seabirds and other threatened species. On the whole, the shortcomings of each step in the approach taken are honestly pointed out, and the consequences of different analytical approaches identified; a major shortcoming from a conservation point of view is that widespread threatened species are missed, such as grassland species and their habitats. But again,