



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



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1. THE CONSERVATION OF INTERNATIONAL FLYWAY POPULATIONS OF WADERS by N.C. Davidson and M.W. Pienkowski (eds) 1987. Wader Study Group Bull. 49 Suppl./IWRB Spec. Publ. 7.
2. RESULTS OF THE IWRB INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL CENSUS 1967-1986 by J.-Y. Monval and J.-Y. Pirot (compilers) 1989. IWRB Publ. 8.
3. FLYWAYS AND RESERVE NETWORKS FOR WATER BIRDS by H. Boyd and J.-Y. Pirot (eds) 1989. Canadian Wildlife Service and IWRB Spec. Publ. 9.

All available at £10 each plus £1.50 postage and packing from: International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Slimbridge, Gloucester, FL2 7BX, England.

To take the last of these three IWRB publications first, the volume edited by Boyd & Pirot results from a workshop on waterfowl and wader flyways held in 1987, under the Ramsar Convention. It consists of six Reports on waterbird migration routes in different parts of the world, together with a section of brief recommendations for conservation of wetland habitats and needs for future research. Only two of the Reports concern Africa, one of which is in fact partly a summary of one of the other publications reviewed here, that by Monval & Pirot. The remaining, and most useful Report, by C.J. Smit & T. Piersma, documents the numbers, winter distributions and migrations of waders (Chadwadii) using the East Atlantic (ie Europe - W Africa) Flyway. In this paper, the authors review studies of wader populations and migrations throughout the E Atlantic Flyway, including studies in Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana, all carried out during the last decade. However, earlier studies of waders in W Africa and overlooked, perhaps because they have appeared in the W African or general ornithological literature rather than in specifically wader-orientated papers or journals. Readers of this journal may not consider that a good excuse.

Coastal waders are very easy birds to census, since their habitat, mainly mudflats, is so open. Fairly accurate counts are now available from the countries listed above. By contrast, wader species wintering in the interior of W Africa are, like 'normal' birds, much more difficult to count and one point which emerges from this report is the much poorer quality of data available for such species, most of whose populations are not at all well known.

The volume edited by Davidson and Pienkowski contains some of the studies on which the review by Smit and Piersma is based, including papers on migration systems in the E Atlantic and wader populations in coastal Ghana and Sierra Leone. Populations of some wader species in both of these countries are of international importance, with totals generally higher in Sierra Leone, which has more extensive mudflats.

The volume compiled by Monval & Pirot examines the populations of selected species of duck, swan and coot in the W Palaearctic and W Africa. Numbers of these birds wintering south of the Sahara are of course small compared with those which spend the winter months in Europe and the Mediterranean region. However, important concentrations occur in the wetlands of the Sahel, and details of population sizes and important areas are discussed for Pintail Anas acuta, Garganey A. querquedula, Shoveler A. clypeata and Ferruginous Duck Aythya nyroca. The continued existence of Sahelian wetlands is vital for the survival of large proportions of the world populations of Pintail (one million birds) and Garganey (two million), but droughts and inappropriate water management have had recent adverse effects on these populations.

Alan Tye



Squacco Heron - Crabier chevelu - *Ardeola ralloides*

Martin Eccles