



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



**Join the WAOS and support
the future availability of free
pdfs on this website.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/member.htm>

If this link does not work, please copy it to your browser and try again.
If you want to print this pdf, we suggest you begin on the next page (2) to conserve paper.

**Devenez membre de la
SOOA et soutenez la
disponibilité future des pdfs
gratuits sur ce site.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/adhesion.htm>

Si ce lien ne fonctionne pas, veuillez le copier pour votre navigateur et réessayer.
Si vous souhaitez imprimer ce pdf, nous vous suggérons de commencer par la page suivante
(2) pour économiser du papier.

Book Reviews

World Checklist of Threatened Birds. Compiled by J. Norton, S. Stuart and T. Johnson, 1990. 274 pp. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough. ISBN 0-86139-601-4. Paperback, no price given.

This is a technical publication, produced for the purposes of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) regulations as they apply to the United Kingdom. It provides a list of bird species appearing in Appendices 1-3 of CITES (unfortunately, no explanation is given of what these appendices are) as well as additional species included in ICBP's *Birds to Watch* (Collar & Andrew 1988). Some groups (e.g. all Falconiformes, Strigiformes and Otididae and most Psittaciformes) are treated comprehensively, even non-threatened species, because of the possibility of confusion with threatened species.

The bulk of the book is a systematic list. Each species' entry includes its CITES category, degree of threat, major kinds of exploitation, world breeding and non-breeding ranges and references. Readers interested in West Africa will find the book a useful, if brief, source of data on the status (legal and otherwise) of many birds of the region, particularly because Ghana has chosen to include on Appendix 3 a huge proportion of its common birds!

Alan Tye

The Zoological Exploration of Southern Africa 1650-1790, by L.C. Rookmaaker, 1989. 368 + XII pages, 16 colour plates, many monochrome illustrations. A.A. Balkema, P.O. Box 1675, Rotterdam. Df 185 (£59.50), ISBN 90-6191-867-7

This book's main focus lies outside our area of interest but it includes much of relevance to West African ornithology. It covers a period from the first Dutch settlement at the Cape (c. 1650) to the early period of serious zoology, which commenced in the second half of the 18th century. Most of the subject matter is birds and mammals.

The book is organised into four parts. Part 1 reviews all known sources, commencing with Hondius (1652) while Part 2 deals in greater detail with seven of the most important explorers. These sections include brief biographies which often throw new light on the importance of some otherwise little-known naturalists (e.g. R.J. Gordon). Throughout the book, animals are listed and cross-referenced by source works, locality (identified with coordinates where possible) and species names. Species are identified by their modern names, the names used in the explorers' original works, page references and often with brief notes clarifying identifications or other points. Extant specimens collected or mentioned by the original authors are listed by collection and

cross-referenced in species and author accounts. Part 3 consists of a complete systematic list of species, cross-referenced back to source works. The amount of cross-referencing throughout the book is impressive, enabling one to trace references to an animal from starting points based on any one of species name (modern, or name used by explorer) author/explorer or locality. One quibble from an ornithologist's point of view is that some of the obvious vernacular bird names are not satisfactorily identified. For example "Apodes" is unidentified, as is "more-hen", while "*Grasmücke*" is not even referenced to the Sylviidae, some of the names applied to *Coturnix* probably refer to *Fringilla*. This is perhaps explained by the author's mammalogical background, but is in any case true of only a tiny minority of names. The book is profusely illustrated with reproductions of early drawings and plates. Some of the early animal paintings are surprisingly accurate (e.g. those of Georg Forster and the Gordon "Atlas").

Of the explorers who are dealt with in the book, only three have important West African connections. Dapper, who compiled accounts of Africa while sitting at home in Amsterdam, is briefly discussed in Part 2, while two of the major accounts in Part 3 concern Anders Sparrman, (who, after visiting South Africa, later accompanied Arrhenius and Wadström to Senegal) and LeVaillant. These accounts include no discussion of Sparrman's West African trip, but the section on LeVaillant is extremely valuable for its detailed discussion of every bird in the latter's *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux d'Afrique* (1796-1812). Unfortunately Rookmaaker's review of this consistently includes current scientific names only for birds known to occur in southern Africa, not for those from other parts of Africa. However, many named species are widespread and occur in West Africa while most of the other West African species are identifiable from the information presented. Rookmaaker presents a detailed analysis of the much-criticised accuracy of LeVaillant's work, notably the dubiety of some localities and descriptions. He also includes discussion of some hitherto unknown publications by LeVaillant, and of six collections of watercolours connected with LeVaillant's explorations, for five of which the present book is the only printed source of information. Every bird on these watercolours is listed in the book and identified if possible (including many West African species). With its exhaustive bibliography, the book is an excellent starting point for researches on LeVaillant's birds (and for those of the other explorers discussed). Rookmaaker has tracked down many original sources, both manuscripts and published (but often little-known) material. Finally, the book generates some intriguing (or irritating, depending on one's point of view) nomenclatorial consequences. Rookmaaker has discovered several valid scientific names which pre-date those currently in accepted use. Such issues will no doubt occupy the minds of the Editors of *The Birds of Africa* and others in the near future.

Alan Tye