



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



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are missing. It is interesting to see from the distributional maps in Morel & Morel how the records from Senegal and the Gambia complement each other, despite the discrepancy in the number of observers in the two territories. The distribution maps allow pleasant speculation, the Wood Owl *Ciccaba woodfordi* not yet recorded in The Gambia, may perhaps be found in the stretch of woodland on the north bank of the river opposite Basse and Fatoto.

Both check-lists include general maps of the territories and The Birds of The Gambia is enhanced by the author's excellent photographs, some in colour. As in the first editions, records of visitors and of The Gambia Ornithological Society and the summarised data from papers, some not widely circulated, provide much data for both check-lists. The authors give generous acknowledgment to this.

Dr Monk points out in the foreword to the first edition of Gore that zoo-geographical and political boundaries do not as a rule coincide, and the *Check-list of the Birds of The Gambia* should be considered in conjunction with Morel's *Liste Commentée*. This advice still applies and you are recommended to have both new editions on your bookshelves for a more complete view of the avifauna of the region.

Amberley Moore

Ornithological Importance of Coastal Wetlands in Guinea, by W. Altenburg & J. van der Kamp, 1991. 63pp. International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge and WIWO, Zeist. £5 from ICBP, 32 Cambridge Rd, Giron, Cambridge, U.K.

This is the latest in a series of ICBP Study Reports covering wetlands in West Africa. The two authors have already reported a preliminary study in NW Guinea (reviewed in *Malimbus* 12: 56-57) and have now proceeded to survey virtually all of the "coastal wetlands" (i.e. mangroves, mudflats, freshwater swamps and rice-fields) of the country during a further visit in the northern winter and one in the northern summer.

The mudflat data are based on counts of c. 10% of the mudflat area in Guinea. As in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* is the commonest mudflat bird, but one peculiarity of Guinea is the great area of very soft mud, which is rare in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. This probably accounts for the low numbers of Knot *C. canutus* and Little Stint *C. minutus* but higher numbers of Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*. Data on the mangrove zone include estimates of total creek length based on French IGN maps: probably fairly reliable for "wide" creeks but surely impossible for "narrow" ones (how is a narrow creek defined?). As elsewhere in West Africa, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* and Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* are the commonest mangrove waders. Guinean rice-fields and freshwater swamps appear less important for waders than those of Guinea-Bissau, possibly because they hold deeper water.

Over half a million waterbirds were estimated to be present in Guinea's coastal

zone during the northern winter, of which c. 430 000 were Palaearctic waders. In the northern summer numbers fell by 80%, but half of those remaining were Palaearctic species. Besides waders, data on other waterbirds are presented and in Appendix 1, information on all bird species recorded during the surveys includes several species new to Guinea. Despite the title, valuable information is given on the occurrence (or absence) of large aquatic and semi-aquatic mammals and reptiles; interestingly, Manatee *Trichechus senegalensis* might still be fairly common in Guinea.

As usual with ICBP Study Reports, the text appears to be unedited. This shows most in Reports written by authors to whom English is not the mother tongue, like this one. There are also occasional errors and misapprehensions, which editing should eliminate, as in the confusion of Rio (which most Guinean rivers are called, having been named by the Portuguese) with ria (an estuary in a drowned river-valley, which most Guinean estuaries are). More seriously, this criticism also applies to the data presentation; e.g. I could not understand Table 3 until I realised that *parts* of the column headings had been transposed (I think!). There are many more minor errors. Perhaps ICBP should edit its Study Reports and attempt to raise the standards of production and English to match those of the data presented. To be fair to ICBP, the present report is a joint production with the Dutch WIWO waterbird research group, and includes a disclaimer that "large quality differences" between reports are accepted to ensure "regular distribution and availability". This policy surely detracts from the scientific reputation of such reports.

Alan Tye

La Conservation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers du Gabon. Compiled by C. Wilkes, 1990. 215 pp. ISBN 2-88032-988-4.

La Conservation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers du Zaïre. Compiled by C. Doumenge, 1990. 242 pp. ISBN 2-88032-989-2.

La Conservation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers du Congo. Compiled by P. Hecketsweiler, 1990. 187 pp. ISBN 2-88032-991-4.

All published by IUCN, Gland & Cambridge. £10 (\$20) each from IUCN, 219c Huntingdon Rd, Cambridge, U.K.

These reports, produced as part of IUCN's Tropical Forest Programme, cover the three countries containing the largest remaining areas of the vast equatorial rainforest of the Congo Basin, including over a million square kilometres in Zaïre alone. Well over half of each volume is devoted to descriptions of "critical sites" which include national parks, reserves, areas proposed as reserves and other sites of natural value for their forest resources. The location, area, boundaries etc. of each site are given together with