



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



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its main biological interest, principal flora and fauna and conservation priorities; there is a map for many sites, particularly in Congo and Zaïre. The rest of each book includes chapters on a countrywide overview of forest resources, relevant legislation, economic matters, biological diversity and existing conservation programmes. While the scope of these books is much wider than purely avifaunal interest, listing only the most notable or threatened species, they would be of interest to anyone requiring background information on forest birds and their habitat, and make useful reading for anyone intending to visit the forests of these countries. Similar books in this series covering other West African countries (Cameroon and Central African Republic) were published in 1989. All are entirely in French, but clearly set out, which will help those whose French is not perfect.

Hilary Tye

La Conservation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale. Compiled by IUCN, 1989. 124 pp. ISBN 2-88032-995-7. £10 from IUCN, 219c Huntingdon Rd, Cambridge, U.K.

This earlier publication, in the same IUCN series as the above, summarises the state of the lowland moist forests of Central Africa, and includes Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé e Príncipe and Zaïre. The first three sections are a regional overview of forest resources, legislation and institutions, and proposals for a regional conservation strategy. These sections include some interesting comparisons and also reveal the lack of data available for some countries. The fourth and longest section comprises recommendations for forest conservation in each of the seven countries separately. It is a pity that very few references are cited (and some cited but not in the bibliography) and the majority of reference material is very general. An obvious example of lack of research is a table giving species numbers for various taxa in a number of African countries; several, for which well-known lists exist (including The Gambia) have no figure for their avifauna and Sierra Leone apparently only has two non-primate mammal species! However, perhaps such omissions are trivial compared with the seriousness of the situation in these forests which this book reveals, and the gloomy prospect that an increase in forest exploitation is planned in five of the seven countries by the year 2000, with reafforestation being almost non-existent.

As would be expected in such an overview of seven countries' forests, there is little specifically about the avifauna but this book does raise a number of issues which ought to be of concern to the ornithologist. Birds (unidentified) do, however, feature strongly in the illustrations; C. Versel's line drawings enliven the text with a number of interesting animal sketches and forest scenes.

Hilary Tye