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

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ne concède que sept petites pages sur 487 à la protection de la nature proprement dite. Décidément, les Parcs Nationaux, auteurs des sept pages, sont bien les parents pauvres de cet atelier.

Marie-Yvonne & Gérard Morel

Forest Birds in Côte d'Ivoire. By M.E. Gartshore, P.D. Taylor & I.S. Francis, 1995. Pp. v + 81. Study Report 58, Birdlife International, Cambridge.

The bulk of this report deals with Taï National Park, where the survey teams spent most of their time, although there are small sections on some other forests. Field work took place 1989-91; the first phase has already been reported by Gartshore (ICBP Study Report 39). Taï is one of the most important remnants of the Upper Guinea forests and is critical for the conservation of most of its endemic birds. This report is a useful addition to our knowledge of the birds of the area, especially of the threatened species.

Besides the usual distributional and status information, this report contains extensive analyses of daily and seasonal species detectability, of biases in detectability and of species' associations with bird parties, the forest canopy, and with forest types subject to differing degrees of disturbance, including some interesting data on forest birds using forestry plantations. The long discussion of seasonal cycles in relation to environmental factors is interesting, but it ignores the substantial body of neotropical work on this subject, which is highly relevant to the authors' conclusions and speculations. Appendices include some useful breeding data, other faunal observations (mainly of mammals and tabanid flies), and instructions on how to set up and operate tree platforms.

Alan Tye

Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan 1995-1999 Partridges, Quails, Francolins, Snowcocks and Guineafowl. Compiled by P.J.K. McGowan, S.D. Dowell, J.P. Carroll & N.J. Aebischer, 1995. Pp. vi + 101. IUCN, Gland. ISBN 2-8317-0269-0, paperback, £13.50.

This working document for conservation planning was produced by the Species Survival Commission's Partridge, Quail and Francolin Specialist Group, based on questionnaires to local experts and a workshop held in 1993. The main threat was predictably found to be habitat loss, with over-exploitation by man, hybridisation, and pesticides destroying the food supply contributing to some declines. Also, Hartlaub's Francolin *Francolinus hartlaubi* is threatened by granite mining and

Cameroon Mountain Francolin *F. camerunensis* by volcanic eruptions! Very few of the worldwide total of about 142 species (and no African ones) were considered "insufficiently known".

Of the 26 W African species, most are assessed as not requiring immediate conservation action (partly because they are fairly well-known, so surveys are not needed), but survey and management are recommended for three francolins and three guineafowl, surveys for two more francolins, and taxonomic clarification for two quail "species" in order to determine whether any taxa are threatened. However, the species texts (given for threatened species only) do not always agree with the same species' entries in the Conservation Assessment Table on action required!

The conservation action plan deals only with threatened species, and not with all of those: the only detailed projects recommended for W Africa are research on the status of Cameroon Mountain Francolin and White-breasted Guineafowl *Agelastes meleagrides*, although from the Conservation Assessment Table, one can discover other work that would be valuable.

This booklet is a useful summary of conservation status and a sound guide to what to do next. It is a bit pricey for its size, but serious field workers might get one free, judging from a statement on p. vi.

Alan Tye

Sahel — Sahel. A controversial vision. By R. Denève, 1995. Pp. viii + 63. IUCN, Gland. ISBN 2-8317-0271-2, paperback, £6.95.

This publication consists of two equal parts. In the first, the author analyses land use in the Sahel, and the main causes of land use problems there. In essence, he concludes that current food supply and land degradation problems have been caused by population increases beyond the land's natural carrying capacity and by unfavourable economic circumstances, and not (or hardly) by recent droughts. More nutrients are being removed in crops and animal products than are being deposited in dust and rainfall. In addition, large scale application of external inputs (in particular fertilizer) is prevented by a lack of funded demand, and thus of a good price, for farmers' products. This makes investing in maintaining land quality unattractive, and yields have fallen.

Farmers' principal responses have been: clearance of increasingly marginal land and a decrease in fallow land; clearance of low-lying land for out-of-season farming; extension of irrigation along rivers and around pools; development of sedentary livestock raising; and emigration. As a result, herders who graze their cattle in the northern Sahel during the wet season, have less dry season grazing available further south. This has led to serious conflicts between herders and farmers over access to land and to watering points at wetlands now used for post-rainy season cropping.