



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



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The Bird Atlas of Uganda, by M. Carswell, D. Pomeroy, J. Reynolds & H. Tushabe, 2005. 553 + xi pp., numerous maps. British Ornithologists' Club, Oxford. ISBN 0-9522866-4-8, hardback, £55 from <www.bou.org.uk>.

Uganda abuts the W.A.O.S. area of interest and many characteristically W African birds reach their easternmost limit in its western forests, which lie longitudinally between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. These represent the easternmost extent of the W African forest block. This atlas is thus of great interest to W African ornithologists.

Introductory sections cover Uganda's landforms, past and present climate, seasonality, ecological zones and habitats, human impact, ornithological history, an avifaunal review, conservation, and a review of atlas methods and of those used in the present one.

This atlas is based on published and contributed records, with few field trips carried out specifically for the project. Data up to the end of 1999 are included, with an Appendix giving details of additional species accepted since then. An innovation is the use of modelling to predict species distributions: important in a country with such patchy ornithological coverage as Uganda. Quarter-square degrees (of side 0.5°) are used for pre-1990 records and for any post-1990 ones without coordinates; points are used for post-1990 georeferenced records. Breeding records are not mapped (too few), but are included in the species texts. The georeferenced records are used to predict distributions with reference to environmental variables. Of six variables assessed, rainfall and vegetation gave the most successful combination, as tested on a range of species with quite well-known distributions. Maps are given for all species with at least five records, and distributions predicted for all with at least 10 point records, excepting waterbirds.

The predicted distributions seem best for species that have clear habitat preferences (*e.g.* forest or montane birds) or have restricted geographical ranges (*e.g.* only in the NE). They are least convincing (or useful?) for common mobile species such as raptors and swallows. Like all atlases, the main use of this one will be as a baseline for recording new information and for future documentation of change. It will be an essential reference for those working on Uganda's birds for years to come.

Alan Tye