



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



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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

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