



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



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Book Reviews

An Annotated Ornithological Bibliography of Guinea-Bissau. By C.J. Hazevoet, 1995. 9 pp. *Versl. Tech. Geg.* 55, Inst. voor Systematiek en Populatiebiologie, Universiteit van Amsterdam, P.O. Box 94766, 1090 GT Amsterdam. Available on request from the author.

The lack of ornithological knowledge of this country is made obvious by the brevity of this A4 booklet, which attempts to be a complete bibliography. It lists only a little over 100 references, of which one quarter are by J. Tendeiro, on avian parasites. The author has made a thorough search of the early Portuguese literature and is quite up-to-date. Most references are not annotated but some have a single-sentence guide to content. Some references to neighbouring areas of Guinea or Senegal are also included.

Alan Tye

Coastal Waterbirds in Gabon, Winter 1992. Ed. by F.J. Schepers & E.C.L. Marteijn, 1993. 293 pp. Stichting WIWO, Zeist. ISBN 90-9006776-0. Paperback Dfl 30 from Stichting WIWO, van Stuivenbergweg 4, 6644 AB Ewijk, Netherlands.

The preface to this book explains the extraordinary conservation importance of Gabon, with its largely unspoilt coastline and forests, a point elaborated in the following chapters.

The bulk of the report is in English, with an extended summary in French. The biggest fault, as with some previous WIWO publications, is the odd English; the text was corrected by a Dutchman, whereas it would have been better to have had the draft proof-read by a native English speaker. Occasionally, careful thought is needed to elucidate exactly what is meant, and one or two sentences are incomprehensible.

In two months, some 60% of the coast was surveyed, including all the large mudflats and most of the coastal lagoons. A chapter on habitats presents an excellent descriptive and quantitative picture. The extent of mudflats was determined, from maps and field observations, to be only about half of that previously calculated for the country from marine charts (Tye, A., 1987, *Wader Study Group Bull.* 49: 20-27, 50: 17). The charts are probably out of date for the location of some flats, but most of the observations for the present report were not made at spring tides (on average they would have been based on mean tidal range), whereas the earlier estimate from marine charts gave the fullest extent of flat at tidal extremes. Therefore the real extent of flats probably lies between the two estimates.

The waterbird counts give details of all species, from pelicans to terns, with localities and habitat preferences. Apart from waders (Charadrii), which were mostly of Palaearctic origin, most species were Afrotropical. Unusual records included Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (with photo), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* and Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, but no identification details are given in support of the latter two.

One chapter presents the count results, another a full systematic list for waterbirds, with details of distribution (many maps), ecology and behaviour, and another sets the results in the context of the Ramsar criteria, to assess the international importance of the various sites. Meeting the criteria are: Gabon's largely intact and extensive mangroves; the coast as a whole, for rare species (e.g. Damara Tern *Sterna balaenarum* and Loango Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus subpersonatus*), several waterbirds, marine mammals and turtles; Corisco Bay, the Gabon estuary and Cap Lopez Bay for numbers of waders and/or > 1% of the population of one or more species. A final chapter on other species observed contains useful "checklist-type" information on landbirds and other vertebrates. Notable records include Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster*, south of its known range, and feral Fischer's Lovebirds *Agapornis fischeri*.

In summary, this is another excellent WIWO baseline study, helping to ensure that the West African coast becomes among the best-known in the tropics for birds.

Alan Tye

Guide des Oiseaux de la Réserve de la Lopé. Par P. Christy & W. Clarke, 1994. 191pp., 59 planches en couleur, 1 carte. ECOFAC, Libreville.

Ce guide est le premier des ouvrages consacrés à l'inventaire de la flore et de la faune de la réserve de la Lopé, mené sous l'égide du projet régional gabonais de conservation et d'utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale dont le sigle est ECOFAC. Cette réserve est située au centre du Gabon, juste au sud de l'équateur.

Dans ce guide, l'inventaire couvre la zone touristique ECOFAC qui présente trois types d'habitat: rives du fleuve Ogooué, savanes et forêts bordant celles-ci. Les espèces qu'on pourrait observer soit au centre de la réserve, jusqu'ici peu accessible, soit à la lisière des forêts mais en faible densité, sont dénommées "additives". Nous avons compté 402 espèces (dont 54 "additives") ce qui représente un peu moins des deux tiers des espèces recensées au Gabon (629 d'après Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire, 1993, *A Contribution to the Distribution and Taxonomy of Afrotropical and Malagasy Birds*, Tauraco Press, Liège). C'est dire l'intérêt de cette réserve, en particulier pour les espèces forestières, mais ce guide sera aussi très utile à quiconque s'intéresse à l'avifaune du Gabon.