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

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Centres of Plant Diversity. A guide and strategy for their conservation. Vol. 1, Europe, Africa, South West Asia and the Middle East. Ed. by S.D. Davis, V.H. Heywood & A.C. Hamilton, 1994. xiv + 354 pp., *c.* 8 maps. World Wide Fund For Nature, Oxford. ISBN 2-8317-0197-X, hardback £30.

Concern about rapid loss and degradation of ecosystems prompted the compilation of the three-volume work of which this is the first part. It aims to highlight areas of prime botanical importance worldwide, as was done for birds by BirdLife's Endemic Bird Areas (C.J. Bibby *et al.* 1992, *Putting Biodiversity on the Map*, ICBP, Cambridge). The latter are cross-referenced in some accounts, where they coincide geographically; indeed, sites with high diversity and endemism in plants often have the same characteristics in their avifauna.

The general introduction may be of least interest to the ornithologist, but does contain some thought-provoking data; Congo, Gabon and Zaire each have over 1000 species of endemic vascular plants while Benin, Burkino Faso, The Gambia, Nigeria and Togo apparently have none! The long section on Africa includes about 40 West African sites which have been identified as centres of plant diversity and endemism. Fourteen of these are extensively described in "data sheet" format, which includes information on geography, geology, vegetation, flora, useful plants, social and environmental values, threats and conservation. The other 26 sites are outlined briefly within country sections, which also give a summary of the natural vegetation of each country. Centres of regional plant endemism are also discussed.

Overviews such as this are by their nature limited in depth of information but this volume would be a good starting point for more detailed research (being well referenced), or a book to dip into for non-ornithological background information about an area. Threats and conservation priorities seem broadly similar for plants and birds and it is hoped that identifying the most botanically rich areas in Africa will lend weight to the conservation of important bird habitats.

Hilary Tye

The Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands: environment, economy and sustainable development of a Sahelian floodplain wetland. Ed. by G.E. Hollis, W.M. Adams & M. Aminu-Kano, 1993. Pp. xviii + 244. IUCN, Gland. ISBN 2-8317-0107-4.

The Hadejia-Nguru wetlands form part of the floodplain of the Komadugu Yobe river basin in northeast Nigeria, within the Lake Chad Basin catchment. The wetlands are an area of confused drainage, where the Hadejia and Jama'are rivers meet lines of ancient sand dunes to form a complex pattern of permanently and seasonally flooded areas, and dry land. The wetlands have long been recognized for their internationally