



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



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checklist. It based on a thorough analysis of historical records, supplemented by these recent observations, and it aims to include every species that has been reliably reported from the island, up to May 1996.

The species texts give Spanish, Bubi and scientific names (with English and French names on the plates), identification details (including comparison with similar species), and distribution. For resident and some migrant species, details are also given of population and habitat in Bioko. These sections reveal some interesting biogeography: e.g. many wader species that are common in the more southerly islands of São Tomé and Príncipe appear relatively rarely in Bioko.

The biggest mistake is the omission of any description of vocalizations. There is not a word, not even for such species as *Chrysococcyx* cuckoos or owls, species which are much more frequently encountered by voice rather than sight, and not even when the species text acknowledges this. And there is no discussion of the fact that a large proportion of the local names of the birds are onomatopoeic. Other minor slips occur — Nigel Collar might be pleased with one: the Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris* is given the Spanish name Suimanga de Collar!

The plates are of variable quality: although some are good, others rather let the book down. Some birds, including the hawks, are oddly shaped and some depictions are actually misleading — e.g. the Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and some other waders and flycatchers could scarcely be identified from their pictures, while the Lemon Dove *Aplopelia larvata* is shown as bright purplish blue!

Despite these criticisms, the book is certainly welcome, and I would definitely recommend its purchase by any West African ornithologist able to read Spanish.

Alan Tye

Birds of Eastern Africa. By B. van Perlo. 1995. 310 pp., numerous maps and colour plates. Harper Collins, London. ISBN 0-00-219937-8, paperback, £14.99.

This book illustrates in colour all species known from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Socotra, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It has already been widely reviewed from an East African point of view, but what makes the book interesting to readers of *Malimbus* is that it illustrates most of the species that occur in the sahelian countries of West Africa. For instance, all but 40 of the 523 species reported from Niger are depicted. As far as I know, no other single field guide matches this.

The plates are quite crowded with often smallish paintings, mostly of good or acceptable quality. On the facing pages are descriptions, of 1–3 lines, of the species, habitats or voice. Distribution maps are grouped at the back.

It is a pity that there is no French version of this book, but I will take it with me when next I go anywhere in West Africa.

Joost Brouwer