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Waterbird Ecology and the Management of Coastal Wetlands in Ghana. By T. Piersma & Y. Ntiamoa-Baidu, 1995. Pp. 105, numerous monochrome plates and diagrams. Report 1995-6, Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, Den Burg. ISSN 0923-3210, paperback. No price given.

The Ghana Coastal Wetlands Management Project aims to preserve the ecological integrity of Ghana's coastal wetlands while at the same time enhancing the benefits of those wetlands to local people. The objective of the 7-week study described in this report was to provide data on the use of the Keta and Songor lagoons (which are proposed Ramsar sites) by waterbirds.

The report includes a comprehensive count, on 14 October 1994, which revealed 38000 waterbirds at Songor (84% terns, 24% waders) and another 38000 at Keta (92% waders, 7% herons). The commonest individual species were Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (21500 birds) and Black Tern *Chlidonias nigra* (21600). Ghana was already known to hold internationally impoprtant populations of waterbirds, but there was little information on the role of individual species in the ecosystem. In this report, there is much useful information on habitat use, feeding behaviour and diet of each species, and on the food resources available in the lagoon waters and sediments. The amount of fish caught in Keta per day, by birds (0.23 t) and humans (11 t) is estimated, but the effect of bird predation on the human fishery is not clear, although probably insignificant. Key areas of the lagoons which are crucial to birds and which require protection or regulation of use are identified.

The data contained in the report will assist in some aspects of management planning for the lagoons, but leave other questions open. In particular, the assumption that conservation of the natural inhabitants of the lagoons can be assured while "enhancing" their benefits for humans is accepted unquestioningly. It may genuinely be possible to manage the production of the lagoons for humans at current levels while ensuring the continuity of their value for wildlife, but the issue of whether increased production be compatible with conservation is not addressed.

Alan Tye