



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



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News & Letters — Nouvelles & Lettres

24th International Ornithological Congress, 13–19 August 2006, Hamburg, Germany

If you wish to receive information about this congress, please use the electronic submission form available on the IOC meeting web site <http://www.i-o-c.org>. If you are unable to use the electronic form, please contact us at the following addresses.

IOC 2006

Inst. of Avian Research, An der Vogelwarte 21, 26386 Wilhelmshaven, Germany
<info@i-o-c.org>

New bibliographic database for ornithologists

The BOU, AOU, and Birds Australia are proud to announce the replacement of Recent Ornithological Literature (ROL) with the new Worldwide Ornithological Literature (OWL). OWL is an indexed bibliographic database of citations from the worldwide scientific literature that pertain to the science of ornithology. OWL deals almost exclusively with serial publications. The new database is accessible at www.birdlit.org at no charge. OWL's scope will be more than just the "recent" literature of ornithology. Eventually, the goal is to have the online database go back 50 or more years for citations to the serial literature.

OWL also asks for citations for all recent doctoral dissertations and those papers published in obscure serials not usually covered in OWL. Anyone interested in helping should contact Jay Sheppard, Managing Editor (JMSheppar@aol.com) or Bob Dowsett, Afrotropical Coordinator (Dowsett@aol.com), for a list of journals needing abstractors and other information. Abstractors should ideally have access to a computer and their assigned journals.

Over 1100 serials have been cited in ROL/OWL since 1990. In a sample, 24% were exclusively ornithological in scope, 73% were not and 3% were undetermined. Bibliographies from forty *Birds of North America* life history accounts were evaluated. Of the 5442 total citations, 66% were serials. A comparison revealed that 59% of the serial citations should have been found in *Biological Abstracts* and approximately 96% should have been found in the ROL. These numbers are only for comparative purposes, as many papers preceded both indexes by decades, if not a century or more. The commercial abstracting services charge a considerable fee for their services, while OWL is free to any Internet user. The database will be expanded

with the addition of the old ROL supplements to the *Ibis*, *Auk*, and *Emu* printed over the past 20 years. By the end of 2004, we expect to have a searchable database of 75,000–100,000 records.

Previously published scientific information that cannot be later found is literature that may be lost to science. One must be able to find all those papers published in one's field of interest regardless of where in the world one is working. Please consider helping to abstract. This is not an exceptionally time-consuming endeavour and you will be helping generations of ornithologists to come.

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