



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



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outside the scope of the *Birdwatchers' Guides*, travellers who like to have more than a superficial knowledge of the zoogeography of the countries which they visit might have preferred a fuller bibliography.

The tourist information is given in considerable detail, some inevitably already (1995) out of date, but the introduction to the country and its river is somewhat brief. The description of the River Gambia is also short and unfortunately inaccurate. In fact, the river is tidal for all of its 475 km within The Gambia; the limit of its tidal reaches at the Barrakunda Falls marks the eastern boundary of the country. The mangrove swamps of the mud flats and bolons of the lower reaches occur because of the salinity, not the tidal nature, of the Lower River.

Each site description has a sketch map, and Rob Hume's delightful line drawings, which accompany the text, give an indication of the type of habitat and of special birds to be found there. A second edition would perhaps benefit from the addition of a simple illustrated guide to the trees which are often used as markers in the site directions, and which may be unfamiliar to the visitor. Apart from the rather poor map of the whole country, the book is nicely produced and, on the whole, will serve its purpose well.

Amberley Moore

**Weißstorchzug. Ökologie, Gefährdung und Schutz des Weißstorchs in Afrika und Nahost.** By Holger Schultz, 1988. Pp. 460, many monochrome photos and maps. Josef Margraf, Weikersheim. ISBN 3-8236-1141-0, paperback.

This is the report, entirely in German, of an investigation by WWF-Germany and ICBP into the threats to the White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* on its migration routes and in winter quarters in the Middle East and Africa. The species in Europe is comparatively well-known; this study was initiated with the aim of gathering data to enable the preparation of a protection and management plan for the non-breeding areas. The study is based partly on a review of literature but mainly on the results of a questionnaire circulated to correspondents in each country, and by three field trips by the author, to Sudan, southern Africa and the Middle East.

The book comprises two sections, "general" and "specific", the latter consisting of a country by country presentation. The general section gives a synopsis of migration routes, breeding and wintering areas, habitat selection and threats. The biggest threat is hunting, throughout the migration and winter range, other important ones are poisoning, often from pesticides used for the control of locusts, army worms etc., and habitat change, especially by desertification and human activities. There is also a section considering whether ringing might interact with the stork's habit of thermoregulation by defaecating on its legs, to cause leg injury and death, and the conclusion is that it can, especially in hot climates.

For West African states, the country accounts vary between two and 13 (Mali) pages, countries where storks are rare being dealt with briefly. Some countries are

grouped, *e.g.* Guinea-Bissau to Liberia, with only three pages between them. Some other parts of Africa receive fuller treatment, especially those which the author visited. Each account includes a discussion of status, movements, habitat use, threats and protection measures. The quality of the information obviously varies hugely between countries, depending on such obvious factors as the existence of resident, active ornithologists and ease of access to outsiders. Similarly, the distribution maps presented for each country vary in detail and style. Some habitat photos are included, as are lists of references and correspondents pertaining to each country. On the whole, the accounts make an excellent summary of knowledge up to 1988 and a sound basis for future work.

Alan Tye

## News & Letters

### The BP Conservation Programme Awards

£34,000 of grant support are available for research. Birdlife International, Fauna and Flora International and the British Petroleum Co. plc. come together in this award scheme to assist and encourage high priority conservation research projects. Successful applications should include undergraduate participants and demonstrate local collaboration. For more information contact: Expeditions Officer, BP Conservation Programme, Birdlife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, U.K.. Telephone +44 (0)1223 277318; facsimile +44 (0)1223 277200; email [birdlife@gn.apc.org](mailto:birdlife@gn.apc.org).