



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



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Comparison of the checklist of Gore with that of Jensen & Kirkeby reveals a number of discrepancies as to the status and distribution of a number of species. Jensen & Kirkeby was compiled primarily from observations by European visitors to The Gambia and only secondarily by residents there, whereas the reverse was the case for Gore. Gore was the more recent of the two checklists and accepted some records in Jensen & Kirkeby but rejected others.

For all the rarer species in Jensen & Kirkeby's checklist, except records already published in The Gambia Ornithological Society Quarterly Newsletter or in The Gambia Ornithological Society's annual reports, questionnaires were sent to observers for further details about their identifications. The majority of observers provided material as requested in the form of descriptions, photos, tape-recordings etc. As a result of this correspondence some records were accepted and others put in brackets or omitted. Despite this verification procedure, and because of the lack of a West African Rarities Committee, records in Jensen & Kirkeby were based mainly upon the observers' own judgement which may have resulted in a less stringent selection of records in the checklist of Jensen & Kirkeby compared to Gore's.

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GORE REPLIES - It is more than ten years since I began compiling Birds of The Gambia (1981, BOU Checklist No. 3) and I do not have my papers to hand, so I am having to work from memory regarding Jensen & Kirkeby's short communication above.

When BOU Checklist No. 3 was in final proof and about to go for printing, much to my surprise and that of The Gambia Ornithological Society, Jensen & Kirkeby (1980) was published. There was no time to enter into correspondence with the authors about the new records which appeared in their book and I therefore had to make an arbitrary decision as to which of their records to accept, which to place in square brackets and which to reject.

I accepted a number of records, most Palaearctic migrants which were credited to named European ornithologists who were known to me; I placed a few, mostly African, species which I considered to be "probables" in square brackets; and I rejected a number of records which were of doubtful veracity or which had already been rejected by The Gambia Ornithological Society.

Their comment that the Rock Thrush Monticola saxatilis was "a rare Palaearctic passage migrant and winter visitor 13 December-21 March apparently throughout The Gambia" did not tally with the experience of resident ornithologists known to me in The Gambia during the 1970's. In the circumstances I had no option but to reject their statement.

M.E.J. Gore, British High Commission,
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