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## Book Reviews — Revues de Livres

**Zones Humides du Burkina Faso.** Ed. by L. Sally, M. Kouda & N. Beaumont, 1994. Pp. vii + 290. IUCN, Gland. ISBN 2-8317-0233-X, paperback £13.50.

This well-produced volume, no. 18 in IUCN's wetlands programme series, is a report, in French throughout (no summaries in other languages), of a three-day seminar held in Ouagadougou in 1993. The meeting was divided into three sessions: fundamental aspects of the wetlands, socio-economic values and impacts of development, and administration and management.

The first session provides useful background information, of interest to the conservationist and ornithologist, for a country without an extensive ecological literature. Chapter 1 lists the main open water areas, mostly man-made impoundments, though one of the best bird sites in the south of the country, Ligdi Malagam barrage near Koupela, is omitted. The second and third chapters deal with climate and hydrology, covering the importance of the long period of poor rainfall since the late 1960s. The fourth chapter, on ecology and biodiversity, is mainly hydrobiological in nature but provides valuable accounts of the vegetation of the Mare des Hippopotames, near Bobo-Dioulasso, and of L. Oursi, the premier ornithological site in the country. This chapter draws attention to the serious deterioration of Oursi owing to reduced rainfall and an enormous concentration (8000 head) of domestic animals. Chapter 5 covers birds and mammals. Its text is too general to be of much value and is inadequately referenced. It concludes with a nine-page list of mammals and birds recorded at four key sites (Oursi, Ouagadougou, Nazinga, Bala) which might have been of value to conservationists and visiting ornithologists. Unfortunately, the work of Thonnerieux et al. (1989, *Malimbus* 11: 7-40) is not drawn on for the Ouagadougou list, which is highly inaccurate. From limited personal experience it is clear that the Oursi list also contains numerous errors. The sixth chapter deals largely with the economics and politics of fish exploitation and lists the 121 species which have been recorded in Burkina Faso. Chapter 7 discusses the uses of a few species of wild plant.

In the second session, the nearly 1100 man-made impoundments are discussed and mapped, and it is estimated that there are 160,000 ha of irrigable land, only 10% of which are under managed irrigation at present. Some very general details are given of the use of agro-chemicals up to 1988. The report concludes with a list of 18 lakes (mapped), 10 of which are considered to have high biological diversity, where conservation intervention might be appropriate.

This would be a useful volume to consult, for anyone interested in wetland conservation, or intending to spend an extended period bird-watching in Burkina Faso, even though, for the latter, it would be better to use the papers of Thonnerieux and colleagues.

J. Frank Walsh