



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



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Erratum

Birds of the Korup National Park, Cameroon

In my paper with the above title (1991, *Malimbus* 13: 11-23) there was an error in the identification of the Pale-breasted Akalat *Trichastoma rufipennis*. The species actually observed and photographed was the Brown Akalat *T. rufescens*. An S should be added at the end of this species account to indicate that it was also recorded by Stuart (ed., 1986, *Conservation of Cameroon Montane Forests*, ICBP, Cambridge).

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Book Reviews

The Rainforests of West Africa. By Claude Martin, 1991. 235 pp. + numerous colour plates. Birkhäuser, Basel. ISBN 3-7643-2380-9. SFr72/DM86 hardback.

This looks rather like a too-small coffee-table book. Its near-landscape format, glossy paper, American spelling, odd punctuation, large print and a font style that makes full stops almost disappear (especially when read by hurricane lamp in a rainforest) gave me the feeling that I was about to be disappointed. First impressions have rarely been so wrong. This is an excellent book which should be read by everyone with any interest in or influence on West African forests. It is packed with evocative photographs that, for those who know the rainforest, will recall images from their own slide collections. The book is a celebration of rainforest biology and a plea for conservation, and admirably succeeds in conveying the enormity of the destruction of West Africa's forests.

A condemnatory preface and first chapter document the history of forest exploitation in the region, especially destructive logging and failed attempts at protection by Forest Reserves. The figures are unimaginable; even in the past decade some 7200 km² of primary forest have been lost per year. Nigeria's forests were classified into types in the 1970s based on information collected in the 1930s, because there was simply not enough forest left to do it on contemporary data.

The author goes on to a wide-ranging discussion of rainforest biology, beginning with present and Quaternary distribution of forests, through the influence of climate and soils on the forest and *vice versa*, moving from rare animal distributions to competition as illustrated by primates, from plant-animal coevolution to forest elephant biology. The breadth of coverage is phenomenal. It is well-referenced to key works and gives a lead into an enormous range of topics, without burdening the text with long lists of authors.