



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



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Convention in particular and list all the international conventions which should, if fully implemented, provide most of the protection called for in the book. The problem lies largely with this lack of implementation; those active in NGOs should take note that an important role for them is to promote compliance by their governments. This book presents an excellent summary of the major threats to migrant birds and the action which is being and which should be taken to ameliorate them.

Alan Tye

**Les Recensements Internationaux d'Oiseaux d'Eau en Afrique Tropicale**, by C. Perennou, 1991. 140 pp. Spec. Publ. 15, International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Slimbridge. Paperback, no price given, obtainable from IWRB, Slimbridge, Glos., U.K.

**African Waterfowl Census 1991**, by C. Perennou, 1991. 88 pp. IWRB, Slimbridge. Paperback £6 from IWRB.

The first of these two publications (the "Review") reviews in French the IWRB Africa database of records from 1955-1990, while the second (the "Annual Report") is a completely bilingual (French, English) report of the censuses carried out in January and July 1991. All waterbirds are included, though the data are most complete for Anatidae.

The emphasis in the Review is on West Africa, which has contributed most data, especially from the three major basins of Lake Chad and the rivers Senegal and Niger. It seeks to determine the minimum sizes of certain populations of waterbirds in tropical Africa and to identify species requiring attention in future counts because of their vulnerability or lack of current information about them. It also provides a preliminary list of wetlands of international importance by Ramsar criteria. The data are diverse, having been collected over a long period, with no central coordination; coverage is patchy in both space and time and different observers have concentrated on different groups of species. This Review is therefore a valuable basis for future studies which should, from 1991, be better coordinated through the IWRB. One of its main uses will be in pointing out the big gaps, both geographical and taxonomic, in the data. Many recommendations are made for improving the quality of the counts but all depends on the availability of observers and the means to survey.

The Review includes a brief analysis of what limited data are available on the hydrological state of the Senegal and Niger basins in different years. From this are listed "wet" and "dry" years but the list does not appear to correspond with the graphs from which it was made. This is a minor quibble because correlation analyses which show that dry years probably limit population sizes do seem to use the data correctly. Another minor criticism is that the shadings used on some Figures (*e.g.* Fig. 11) are not readily distinguishable from one another. A more major one is that only data from

IWRB's Africa database are used, thus excluding from consideration most of the careful counts which have been carried out of waterbirds (especially waders) on Africa's west and south coasts, although the existence of such data for West Africa (but not southern Africa) is acknowledged (with a dismissive and inaccurate statement that such studies are only "estimations"). The exception is the Banc d'Arguin, which is included. With this exception, the book deals thoroughly only with inland wetlands. The count analyses are presented both by hydrological basin and by species; the latter make up most of the book and give maximum numbers counted for major sites and for West Africa as a whole, together with lists of the most important sites for each species, with maps where appropriate. The Review will prove useful for conservationists and expedition planners; anyone contemplating waterbird studies or who might contribute count data is recommended to consult it.

The Annual Report deals with some of the recommendations made in the Review, by presenting the first year's data from continent-wide coordinated counts (January for all of sub-Saharan Africa plus July for southern Africa). Although less West Africa biased than the Review, West African areas which provided data include northern Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali (Niger inundation zone), Nigeria (Hadejia-Nguru) and NW Senegal (Djoudj, Ferlo Valley, lakes near Ross-Bethio). A useful section on "how to count waterbirds" is included. Dedicated counters should obtain a copy and join in for 1992-93.

Alan Tye