



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



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MILLIONS OF TURTLE-DOVES

Sir,

In his paper "La Tourterelle des bois dans l'extreme Ouest-Africain" (*Malimbus* 1: 66-67), Dr Morel states "Enfin, M. Gore, 1978 (G.O.S. Newsletter No 17) l'a aussi observée par millions (!) en mars en Gambie." The reference appeared in the final Chairman's Comment which I wrote for The Gambia Ornithological Society's quarterly Newsletter prior to my departure from West Africa. In this I referred to the pleasure I had derived from watching birds during my 3½ years in The Gambia and listed some of the highlights.

The record of vast numbers of *Streptopelia turtur* appeared in the Annual Bird Report of The Gambia Ornithological Society, 1976, and was submitted by Guy Mountfort and myself. This reads: "Uncountable numbers, certainly more than 1 million birds, passed over the river near Kaur on 6 March (MEJG, GM). Flocks were passing overhead constantly as our boat moved upstream for more than an hour before dusk. Very large numbers were also seen passing over Jakhaly swamp the following evening, flying in the same, westerly, direction." Like Dr Morel, I would always question a general remark referring to "millions" of birds. However, in 25 years' bird watching in five continents I have never seen so many birds streaming overhead for so long a period across a front at least 10 km wide, and I have no doubt that our estimate of one million birds plus was accurate.

14 March 1980

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NOTICES

"OISEAUX DU SENEGAL ET DE LA GAMBIE"

Le Supplément n° 1 à la "Liste commentée des oiseaux du Sénégal et de la Gambie" 1980 par Gérard J. MOREL, Dakar, miméo est disponible gratuitement à:

Supplement No. 1 to the "Liste commentée des oiseaux du Sénégal et de la Gambie", 1980, by G. J. Morel, Dakar, (mimeographed), is available free at:

- Bibliothécaire du Centre O.R.S.T.O.M., Dakar, B.P. 1386. Sénégal

ou/or

- O.R.S.T.O.M., Service Central de Documentation, 70-74, Route d'Aulnay, 93140 BONDY, France.