



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



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PROCEEDINGS OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON BIRDS AND MAN, JOHANNESBURG 1983.

Ed. by L.J. Bunning, pp 361. Witwatersrand Bird Club, Johannesburg. 1985
ISBN 0-620-07632-1. SA R32.00, or US\$32.00 from PO Box 72091, Parkview
2122, Johannesburg, RSA.

This is a wide-ranging and interesting proceedings, containing 24 full papers and 17 summaries of papers or posters. The majority of contributions (29) are about S. Africa or Zimbabwe, but a few are about Africa in general (3), UK (3), USA (2) and Australia (2). Of these, 4 papers and 3 summaries concern birds which are found in West Africa including the following: Hilary Fry reviews the food of 17 species of bee-eater (Merops), reporting that although a number of species are regarded as pests at honeybee hives, they also take a relatively large number of bee-predators (e.g. Philanthus) and may therefore be beneficial to apiculturalists. W.R.J. Dean dispels the myth that Greater Honeyguides lead rats to bee-hives: no eye-witness accounts exist, their activity patterns are incompatible, and his observations on behaviour and distribution leads him to believe that the honeyguide's behaviour evolved to guide man. D.G. Allen & W.R. Tarboton describe how some accipiters in South Africa are increasing their ranges by taking advantage of man's tree plantations. I.A.W. & S.A. MacDonald consider that the decline of large scavenging birds in southern Africa is not due to decreased food, poisoning or persecution, but due to competition for small carrion items from artificially abundant corvids: "the early rising crow hypothesis". In general I can recommend this proceedings: there is a lot of interest here, the production is very good, and it provides good value for money.

H.Q.P. Crick

GABAR, Volume 1, Part 1, pp 32, May 1986. "A raptor file for raptorophiles".

Ed. by R. Simmons. 2 issues per year. Subscription SA R5, UK £5, or US \$5, whichever is easier. Obtainable from P. Barnard, Dept. of Zoology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, RSA.

Although I thought "Not another journal!" when this arrived on my desk, I must confess that I enjoyed reading this first issue: it has a relatively light tone, being more of a newsletter than Malimbus, although it has taken the same format for its production. The aim of Gabar (Growth and Biology of African Raptors) is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, facts and news for people interested in, and working on, African raptors. To this end, it includes a "forum" for new ideas and opinions; "reports and updates" of preliminary research findings; a "science review" of current and continuing problems in raptor research; and a short notes section. Although Gabar has a South African basis, articles of interest to West African ornithologists in the first issue included two which suggested that gabar goshawks show closer affinities to the chanting goshawks, and indeed to harrier hawk, lizard buzzard and long-tailed hawk, than is appropriate for species in separate genera; as well as short articles on martial eagles, ospreys, river eagles and migratory raptors. All-in-all, it is an attractive production, which should complement and not compete with journals such as Malimbus and Scopus.

H.Q.P. Crick