



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



**Join the WAOS and support
the future availability of free
pdfs on this website.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/member.htm>

If this link does not work, please copy it to your browser and try again.
If you want to print this pdf, we suggest you begin on the next page (2) to conserve paper.

**Devenez membre de la
SOOA et soutenez la
disponibilité future des pdfs
gratuits sur ce site.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/adhesion.htm>

Si ce lien ne fonctionne pas, veuillez le copier pour votre navigateur et réessayer.
Si vous souhaitez imprimer ce pdf, nous vous suggérons de commencer par la page suivante
(2) pour économiser du papier.

Columba iriditorques, recorded by Walsh in Guinea, but rather C. malherbi, which is restricted to the Gulf of Guinea islands of Sao Tome, Principe and Pagalu. In an attempt to avoid this confusion, we actually listed the species as the "Gulf of Guinea Bronze-naped Pigeon". We hope that this clarifies the situation.

S. N. Stuart, IUCN, Avenue du Mont-Blanc, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland.
N.J. Collar, ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, England.

WALSH REPLIES - Stuart and Collar's criticism is quite correct. The error arose owing to my use of Serle, W., Morel, G.J. & Hartwig, W. (1977, A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa, Collins, London), who follow White (C.M.N., 1965, Revised Checklist of African Non-Passerine Birds, Lusaka, Gov. Printer.) in considering iriditorques as a subspecies of malherbi. It should be pointed out that Cheke, R.A., Walsh J.F. & Sowah, S.A. (1986, Malimbus 8: 51-72) made the same mistake in their discussion.

J.F. Walsh, OMS/ONCHO, B.P. 36, Kara, Togo.

CORRIGENDUM

Walsh: 1987: Malimbus 9: 105-121.

Page 120, paragraph 1, line 8: after "was regularly" insert "seen in the Sassandra basin. This spectacular species is now rarely"...

BIRDS OF THE UPPER LIMPOPO RIVER VALLEY by D. H Day, 1987, Southern Birds 14, pp 76, 13 figs, ISBN 0-620-10489-9. SA R6.00, from PO Box 650284, Benmore 2010, RSA.

This is the latest in a series of checklists for Africa south of the Cunene and Zambezi rivers. The birds of the Upper Limpopo have not been studied since the last century by Ayres and Erikson and this inventory, made mainly from the author's own observations from 1970-79, details 325 species recorded there. The annotated checklist takes up the bulk of the work, but it is preceded by a detailed description of the study area and is followed by a discussion of the relative importance of the area's habitats for birds. This is a useful work which opens up an understudied area to African ornithology.

H.Q.P. CRICK

THE BIRDS OF AFRICA, VOL. 2. Ed by E.K. Urban, C.H. Fry & S. Keith. 1986. 552pp. Academic Press, London. £71.50 ISBN 0-12-137302-9.

The second volume of this important work will be welcomed by all concerned with African birds, apart from its price! It is much easier to review the first volume of a major work and presumably all subsequent

volumes will see increasing sifficulty. But here the authors have listened to criticisms and suggestions offered in Volume 1 reviews so that one is encouraged to offer more the second time round.

This volume deals with the Orders Galliformes, Gruiformes, Charadriiformes, while (following Voous 1973) Pteroclidiformes have been separated from Columbiformes, regarding sandgrouse as perhaps closer to waders than to pigeons. The treatment of each species carries some references while separate comprehensive references for each family together with "General and Regional" references appear at the end of the Volume. The three Editors, who so admirably fulfilled Leslie Frown's vision of a major Pan-African work with Volume 1, have now come to rely on about a score of experts to organise the data for the various taxa. The standardised pattern of treatment for each species has led to some anomalies; for example each of 4 species of Auks, that have been met on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, receive almost the same treatment as common, and therefore more deserving, Afrotropical species: about one full page for each species.

To this reviewer, perhaps the greatest promise held out by the "Birds of Africa" was some stabilisation of African nomenclature. Perhaps more than for any other zoogeographic area, African ornithology has been torn between the 'splitters' (e.g. such authorities as Mackworth-Praed & Grant and Bannerman) and the 'lumpers' (e.g. White). For Malimbus, indexing has been made difficult by the frequent use of two entirely different systematic names (both generic and trivial) for the same bird. But now, the Editors have introduced some extra changes, for example: all the authorities mentioned above have placed the Black Crake in the genus Limnocolax; but in "Birds of Africa" this species is placed in Amaurornis. This is despite the genus having a far from "world-wide" distribution; the other 6 species range from India and Japan to Queensland, and the "almost identical" skeletal reatures mentioned are likely to be convergent. One is not averse to change: but one does look for a stabilising lead in the taxonomic jungle. It is noteworthy that the Introduction carries a paragraph on "Nomenclature & Systematics" but this is really only concerned with the problems of English names. Do not French names present similar difficulties? The Introduction also has a valuable short essay on the concept of "Superspecies" and in view of the excellent study of the genus Francolinus by Hall (1963) it is not surprising that in this volume the numerous species of francolin have received superspecies treatment. Surprisingly, no use has been made of the superspecies concept for avoiding repetition: by drawing attention too differences within a group, rather than putting each species through closely similar descriptions of both morphology and behaviour. Similarly pairs of species of coot, crowned-crane, bustard, lapwing, gull, tern and species groups of 4 genera of pigeon, and triplets of cursor and small plover species have been regarded as superspecies. In no case, has this been used to replace repetition by meaningful comparison. Sometimes the map for a superspecies does not conform with those for individual species e.g. Larus cirrocephalus/hartlaubi. Although, in this volume, few of the species distribution maps employ more than one of the shading patterns explained in the Introduction (Fig. 1) these are so difficult to differentiate one could hope bolder patterns might be employed in future volumes. Presumably, despite modern printing techniques, the cost of employing colour patterns would be prohibitive?

Mention must be made of the black and white textual illustrations, mainly of behaviour, from Ian Willis, which are useful and pleasant adjuncts for several species. The Acoustic references by Claude Chappuis are a valuable feature: he has selected expertly from a growing list of recordings.

Finally one comes to the coloured plates (plus a few in black and white of waders, gulls and terns in flight) which in this volume are all by Martin Woodcock. For the most part these are excellent, though perhaps not uniformly good, with Plate 32 (of the smaller pigeons) the least successful, giving the impression that no one could have trouble in distinguishing the two Treron species where they overlap; and that the body of Oena capensis is about wren size. On the other hand the Charadriiform Plates are quite splendid, although the chick of Rostratula benghalensis is clearly not drawn from a specimen since in fact it has bold longitudinal dark markings. For these plates it is gratifying to note that the very cumbersome system employed in Volume 1 for identifying the numerous individual portraits (involving the Plate, an outline series of numbered "ghosts" and finally a table of identities) has been somewhat simplified in that the "ghosts", now opposite the plates and of the same size, carry the labels directly. Most of the "ghosts" have shaded areas to group illustrations of the same species, sometimes of different races, sometimes of different plumages but some inconsistency in the employment of the shaded areas has not helped. But why cannot the portraits be numbered on the Plates and the space-wasting "ghosts" be eliminated altogether?

Much of what has been said so far has seemed critical rather than laudatory, though the criticism is intended to be helpful to the Editors with more volumes to come. The Editors and Contributors have worked together with the Artists to produce a Second Volume of the Birds of Africa that will be regarded as a worthy successor to Volume 1, a tribute to the memory of Leslie Brown, and a "must" for all interested in, or concerned with, African ornithology.

Since the "Birds of Africa" will inevitably become the authority for African nomenclature, it is hoped that the Editors are regarding this aspect of the work as of primary importance.

J. ELGOOD

THE VALUE OF BIRDS Ed by A.W. Diamond & F.L. Filion, 1986 277pp. ICBP Technical Publication No. 6. ICBP, Cambridge. £18.50, ISBN 0-946888-10-8.

This should be an essential part of the armoury of every bird conservationist. A stimulating and readable collection of papers giving the facts we need to persuade the non-converted to the need for bird conservation. Arranged in two sections, the first part of the book deals with "Birds as socio-economic resources" and the second with "Birds as bio-indicators of environmental conditions". The papers by Filion and Diamond give excellent summaries of the ways in which birds satisfy the basic needs of man at a number of different levels and how these can be sustained or even enhanced in perpetuity. Then follows a series of startling papers showing how previously intangible benefits from