



Perhaps the ultimate trip highlight was our visit to see the Scissor-tailed (African Swallow-tailed) Kite roost on an island in the Saloum River. The birds had arrived early at the roost and we enjoyed a marvellous spectacle as they dropped in coating the bare branches in silver! (Paul Matson)

SENEGAL

20 JANUARY – 5 FEBRUARY 2022

LEADER: NIK BORROW

Our fifth Senegal only tour (earlier tours combining with either The Gambia or Cape Verde) continued the run of success we have previously enjoyed and firmly establishes the country as a premier West African birding destination for those wishing to see some very special Sahelian endemics. Senegal is less than six hours away from Brussels or Paris by plane and a popular destination with Europeans trying to escape the miserable winter weather in search of sun, sea and sand. For the birdwatcher Senegal holds an impressive number of specialties, most of which are relatively easy to see in this comfortable and trouble-free country. The two most-wanted birds for our group were probably the truly enigmatic Quail-plover and the beautiful

Golden Nightjar both of which surrendered to our quest and allowed amazing close up views. For the Golden Nightjar we headed up to the northern border of the country with Mauritania where we found a male just before sunset and continued to watch it into the darkness and illuminated by the torch beam. The tiny Quail-plover rose up from under our feet after some 2 hours searching only to be lost almost immediately. Fortunately, we were able to relocate it and were amazed when it landed in front of us in full view and consequently froze allowing prolonged views. Also, in the far north we hunted out Little Grey Woodpecker and Sennar Penduline Tit as well as the exquisite little Cricket Warbler. Horus Swifts (a recently discovered new bird for the country) were seen at a small colony and a visit to the Djoudj National Park with its numerous waterfowl and flamingos astounded us, whilst a boat trip into the heart of the impressive Great White Pelican breeding colony was a memorable olfactory experience. We also enjoyed great views of the unassuming River Prinia, Allen's Gallinule and several Savile's Bustards whilst a 'British' Pied Wagtail was an apparent first for the country and indeed West Africa! In the south-east of the country, we found a pair of skulking Mali Firefinch and relocated the same Willcocks's Honeyguide that we had found as a first for the country during our 2019 tour! A fine supporting cast in the area included Adamawa Turtle Dove, Fox Kestrel, fully-plumaged male Standard-winged Nightjar and Sun Lark. A stay at Wassadou along the Gambia River on the edge of Niokolo Koba National Park allowed for fine views of the sublime Egyptian Plover as well as the bizarre Oriole Warbler and African Finfoot. Finally, we visited the incredible Scissor-tailed Kite roost on Kousmar Island near Kaolack followed by a stay in the Saloum Delta where a superb White-crested Tiger Heron and an unexpected pair of Bronze-winged Courser were ultimately the icing on the cake. Other notable or restricted range species seen included; Stone Partridge, Double-spurred Spurfowl, Violet Turaco, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Bruce's Green Pigeon, West African Crested Tern, White-backed Night Heron (mostly heard only), Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Blue-bellied Roller, African Green Bee-eater, Vieillot's and Bearded Barbets, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Barbary Falcon, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, West African Swallow, Iberian Chiffchaff, Rufous Cisticola, Chestnut-bellied Starling, White-crowned Robin-Chat, Atlas (Seeböhm's) Wheatear, Pygmy Sunbird, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Lavender Waxbill, Bar-breasted and Black-faced Firefinches, Sahel and Exclamatory Paradise Whydahs, White-rumped Seedeater and Gosling's Bunting.



*The first day ended with a bang and superb views of this gorgeous male Golden Nightjar perfectly camouflaged against the sandy soils.
(Nik Borrow)*

Our tour began in Dakar arriving at the trouble-free airport in the evening and were transported swiftly along a new highway to a small hotel in Thiès some thirty minutes away for a short night's sleep for we were up before dawn watching a pair of Greyish Eagle-Owls on the rooftops surrounding our hotel which was a wonderful way to begin the trip. We breakfasted at seven (sunrise wasn't until half past!) and set off as quickly as we could because we had a long drive ahead of us towards Podor for a three night stay.

The flat Sahelian landscape cannot be described as 'pretty' or 'beautiful' and an increasing layer of plastic detritus seems to be coating the land. However, the street life and culture certainly are fascinating and there is always something to look at although the innumerable shreds of black plastic bags caught on vegetation

are what most often catches the eye whilst in search of roadside birds! The commonplace species regularly spotted along the way were the ubiquitous Yellow-billed Kite, Western Cattle Egret, Speckled Pigeon, Laughing, Vinaceous and Namaqua Doves, Western Plantain-eater, Abyssinian Roller, Western Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Pied Crow, Common Bulbul, Greater Blue-eared, Long-tailed Glossy and Chestnut-bellied Starlings, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, House Sparrow, Sudan Golden Sparrow and White-billed Buffalo Weaver.

As the countryside became even more arid, we started noticing groups of vultures gorging themselves on the frequent roadside casualties along the way. We stopped several times and noted Hooded, White-backed, Rüppell's and Griffon Vultures but never in particularly large numbers. At one such stop where we saw our only Lappet-faced Vulture of the tour we were pleased to find an assortment of dry country birds and were watching these when the cries of a Little Grey Woodpecker reached our ears. Hardly believing our luck the sound was confirmed by a sighting and it wasn't long before we had lured the bird in for some excellent close looks.



Two of the key target species were seen during our first full day of the tour. An obliging male Little Grey Woodpecker (left) and a pair of Sennar Penduline Tit (right) (Nik Borrow)

Also seen at this lucky spot were Blue-naped Mousebird, Green Wood Hoopoe, Vieillot's Barbet, Eurasian Wryneck, African Grey Woodpecker, Northern Crombec, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Western Olivaceous Warbler, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Western Subalpine Warbler, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Beautiful Sunbird, Speckle-fronted and Little Weavers, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Red-billed Firefinch and White-rumped Seedeater.

As we passed the historic town of Saint-Louis located on the Senegal River, we noted large numbers of waterbirds that included Grey Heron, Great Egret, Western Reef Heron, Pink-backed Pelican, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, Black-winged Stilt, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Ringed Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Collared Pratincole, Black-headed, Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Whiskered Tern. Other species recorded during the journey included African Palm Swift, Western Plantain-eater, Black-headed Lapwing, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Purple and Abyssinian Rollers, Striped and Pied Kingfishers, African Green Bee-eater, Red-necked Falcon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Piapiac, African Silverbill, Cut-throat Finch, Village Indigobird and Western Yellow and White Wagtails.

We stopped for a delicious fish lunch at a hotel by the banks of the Senegal River in the historic town of Richard Toll. The word 'Toll' means 'garden' in the Wolof language and is named after gardens laid out by Claude Richard for the Chateau de Baron Roger in the 1820's. We saw our first Iberian Chiffchaff in the garden along with Mourning Collared Dove and Village and Black-headed Weavers.

Immediately after lunch we birded an area on the outskirts of town and quickly added another target to the list in the form of a pair of diminutive Sennar Penduline Tit. Large flocks of small birds often proved to be Sudan Golden Sparrows which held many decently plumaged male birds. Colourful African Green Bee-eaters were seen well and in the surrounding area we also found Purple Heron, African Fish Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Crested Lark, Red-billed Quelea and Northern Red Bishop.

From here we completed the drive to Podor stopping en route to view our first African Collared Doves. We arrived at the nightjar site before the sun had set and walked into the scrub to see if we could find a Golden Nightjar before dark and our success was almost immediate as we flushed a male up from under our feet. It settled nearby and we enjoyed incredible views of it as the sun set. When the natural light was insufficient, we illuminated our quarry with the torch beam until we were all quite sated! As a finale, a male Long-tailed Nightjar also put in an appearance and we then headed to our hotel tired but very happy!



Sudan Golden Sparrows can be seen in their hundreds (or more!) in northern Senegal and at close quarters in our hotel in Podor where they are fed! (Nik Borrow)

It was another sunny day as we headed out the following morning to an area near Podor where we were greeted by a very fine Barbary Falcon and after good scope views, we set out across the sparsely vegetated sandy wastes to search for our next target, the delightful Cricket Warbler. Pretty Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks were very much in evidence and the characterful Black Scrub Robin flaunted itself. A number of Great Grey Shrikes of the race *elegans* and *senator* Woodchat Shrikes were dotted around whilst Palearctic migrants included *tinnunculus* Common Kestrel, Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, Western Orphean Warbler, Common Redstart, Northern Wheatear and a dapper male Western Black-eared Wheatear. 'Central African' *senegalensis* Eurasian Hoopoes were identified, a pair of Black Scimitarbill showed well and we saw our first Glossy-backed Drongo. Even though fierce little Shikras hunted the area we soon found our main quarry and enjoyed some good close views of at least a dozen Cricket Warblers seen repeatedly during the day. Perhaps our most surprising find was an African Wildcat that bounded across the vegetated dunes.



The charming little Cricket Warbler gave itself up easily this tour and proved to be exceedingly approachable. (Nik Borrow)

Whilst in the area we also visited a site where Horus Swifts (a recently discovered 'new' species for Senegal) have been found breeding. We were pleased to find them apparently still at home alongside Little Swifts in the cliffs overhanging the river. Other birds seen in this area were Senegal Coucal, Common Sandpiper, Little Egret and Hamerkop.

After our stay at Podor we headed back westwards and a birding stop in the Richard Toll area produced a flock of at least 40 Eurasian Stone-curlew as well as a fine male of the much-wanted Atlas (Seeböhm's) Wheatear. An Isabelline Wheatear was found and other species included African Harrier Hawk, Eurasian Hoopoe of the nominate race, Common Chiffchaff, Anteater Chat and Tawny Pipit. A very obliging Temminck's Courser put on a great show at the end of the morning before we headed on to the Djoudj National Park, arriving in time for lunch.

As we drove along the dirt roads Crested Larks scattered everywhere from the open wastes and dry fields that were dissected by waterways and flooded land and our first Kittlitz's Plovers were seen. After our meal, we headed out into the park and found that this fantastic wetland area was absolutely heaving with birds. Whirling flocks of ducks and Great White Pelicans filled the distant skies along with Greater and Lesser Flamingos, herons, storks, ibises and wildfowl that included vast numbers of White-faced Whistling Duck mixed with smaller numbers of Fulvous Whistling Ducks alongside rafts of Palearctic migrant Garganey, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. At the park entrance, we quickly found a trio of Greater Painted-snipe in the muddy margins to the lagoons and also spotted the unassuming River Prinia that is restricted to Sahelian wetlands and is a species that had hidden in plain sight until as recently as 1974 when it was described by Claude Chappuis who noticed the substantially different song of these water-loving prinias. We delayed our further exploration of the Grand Lac as we wanted to find an Arabian Bustard but despite an intensive day and a half of searching this bird unfortunately eluded us. However, during our failed quest we did manage to see a number of delicate Cream-coloured Coursers running over the sandy flats and obtained good looks at stately Black Crowned Crane, plenty of Common Warthogs, African Golden Wolf and to our surprise no less than three Rats!

The Djoudj is an important wetland staging post and wintering area for migratory birds that lies in the Senegal delta. It well-known for its huge breeding colony of Great White Pelicans and a boat trip into the heart of the area was an absolutely unforgettable experience. The young were quite well grown by this time of year and the frenzied flapping and exercising of the wings of birds, eager to fly whipped up the guano and dust into the air so that the stench of fish and ammonia was quite overpowering but the sights and sounds were indeed something to see. Flotillas of fishing adults diving in unison were wondrous to behold and the whole experience was simply awesome! To add to this of course there was a fine selection of other birds to be seen along the reedy margins of the waterway where skulking Greater Swamp, Sedge and Eurasian Reed Warblers sought the shelter of the reedbeds and majestic African Fish Eagles perched up. Close looks were obtained of Common Moorhen, Black Crake, African Darter, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, Black-crowned Night Heron, Squacco Heron, Malachite Kingfisher and Little and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters. A partially melanistic African Jacana was a curiosity but the highlights were probably the great views we obtained of both African Swamphen and an obliging Allen's Gallinule.



This splendid Allen's Gallinule allowed some marvellous views during our boat trip in the Djoudj. (Paul Matson)

We made sure that we had good looks at the interesting *moptanus* race of African Stonechat that frequents the tamarisk bushes along the margins of the lagoons and other species noted during our visits included Knob-billed Duck, Egyptian Goose, Little Grebe, Pied Avocet, African Wattled Lapwing, Common Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Green Sandpiper, Common Redshank, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Gull-billed, Caspian and Sandwich Terns Yellow-billed, Black and White Storks, African Sacred and Glossy Ibises, Eurasian Spoonbill, Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, Black Heron, Western Osprey, Short-toed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Short-toed Lark, Zitting Cisticola, Yellow-crowned Bishop and 'Blue-headed' *'flava'* and 'Spanish' *'iberiae'* Yellow Wagtails.



The sights, sounds and the smells of the Great White Pelican colony in the Djoudj National Park is an overwhelming experience! (Nik Borrow)

Due to the closure of the hotel in Djoudj National Park, we spent three nights at Ranch de Bango on the outskirts of Saint-Louis. Although some distance from the park it was a good base to explore the nearby marigots and coastal lagoons. The prime target here was another Sahelian specialty, the Savile's Bustard and during our visit we succeeded in finding three individuals.



A male Savile's Bustard (Paul Matson) and a 'British' Pied Wagtail (Marc Junio) – apparently a first for Senegal and indeed sub-Saharan West Africa!

Marigots are specifically West African side-streams or tributary rivulets and these water-filled depressions are bird rich and constantly changing with the seasons. The bustards prefer the vegetated dunes and flats where we also found Double-spurred Spurrow, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Black-crowned Tchagra, Yellow-crowned Gonolek and a selection of Palearctic migrants such as Willow Warbler, Common Whitethroat and Common Redstart. Good numbers of Black Storks and an African Spoonbill were attracted

to drying pools where the fish were easier to catch. Brief fly-by views of Orange-breasted Waxbills were obtained at one of the permanent waterways and at the inevitable rubbish tip we watched a large flock of migrant Black Kites and found our first Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird and Scarlet-chested Sunbird in our hotel garden.



The historical town of Saint-Louis which was once not only the capital of Senegal but also of the whole of French West Africa is built on a sandy spit battered by the Atlantic Ocean. It is a bustling fishing town connected to the mainland by the distinctive arches of the Faidherbe Bridge and like most towns in Senegal is coated with a layer of plastic detritus! (Nik Borrow)

During our stay we also combined birds and 'culture' by visiting the historical town of St Louis. The mudflats and lagoons helped us add to our wader list with Eurasian Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling and Dunlin. Slender-billed Gulls were plentiful as they breed in the nearby Langue de Barbarie National Park. We drove across the famous Faidherbe Bridge and onto the island where the decaying colonial buildings hinted at a bygone era of wealth and elegance. Crossing another bridge took us through the fascinating fish market where the colourful boats were hauled up delivering their catch. Our vehicles crawled through the crowds and market places teeming with people coming and going amongst the old colonial buildings and enabled an engrossing fly on the wall look at the bustling life there. Once free of the town where Red-chested Swallows were breeding, we scanned the gulls and terns for something more interesting and found a solitary Parasitic Jaeger and then an apparent first for Senegal and indeed, the whole of sub-Saharan West Africa – a 'British' Pied Wagtail!

The time had come to relocate to a different part of the country but today's travel day was a highly anticipated event for it was going to be our only real chance to find the truly enigmatic Quail-plover. During the course of the morning, we traversed many miles through prime territory for vultures but this time found them sadly lacking and perhaps a sad sign of the times? At a stop at a waterhole, we found some Black-headed Herons and watched thirsty Mottled Spinetails coming to drink along with Black-billed Wood Dove and a few Palearctic migrant European Turtle Doves. In the skies above us a few raptors drifted over and included Black-winged Kite and a juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle.

It wasn't until after lunch that we reached prime habitat for the aforementioned Quail-plover and we set off in a regimented line under the blistering afternoon sun across seemingly never-ending habitat in what felt like a search for the proverbial needle in the haystack. This diminutive bird measures no more than 13 centimetres in length and is cryptically coloured and patterned to the point that it is rarely picked up on the ground before it is flushed. We must have walked in ever increasing circles for two and a half hours before we thankfully flushed our quarry which set up from our feet looking like a cross between a butterfly, a lark and a quail and lazily flapped away settling nearby. We thought we had seen the exact place where it had landed but frustratingly it could not be relocated and our disappointment was immense! Sightings of Singing Bush Lark and Desert Cisticola did little to rectify the loss but noting the exact position we gave the bird space, cleared out from the area and realigned at a distance with military precision for the next assault. The Gods must have been smiling on us for shortly after we once again flushed the same bird or perhaps the other member of the pair and this time it amazingly flew around us and landed at our feet, completely out in the open for some astounding views at incredibly close range. The bird was frozen to the spot but after a while relaxed and performed its strange chameleon-like walk and eventually ran towards cover. We watched this strange little bird for as long as we wished but eventually left it to feed or shelter in peace. Then it was a heads-down

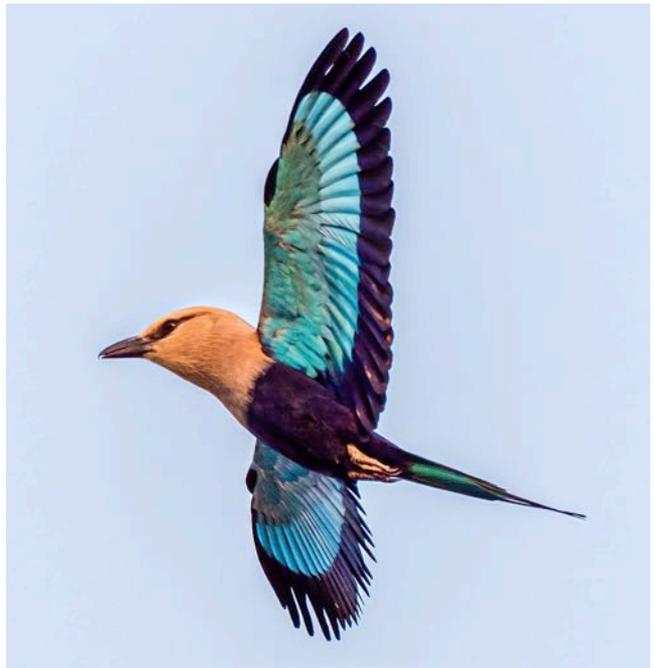
drive to Kaolack for an overnight stop where the lagoon by the hotel held huge numbers of Slender-billed Gulls performing their evening ablutions and a very fine spot for a well-deserved sundowner!



It was a struggle but the battle was worth it as we ultimately obtained amazing views of the diminutive Quail-plover. (Nik Borrow)

The next day the drive was even longer as we headed to Kedougou in the far south-east of the country and it is surprising that we saw any new birds at all but indeed we did and the day started watching a seemingly endless stream of Lesser Kestrels leaving their roost from an island in the Saloum River. Further on our journey we screeched to a halt for a spectacular male Sahel Paradise Whydah in full breeding plumage and found its host species, a pair of Green-winged Pytilia in the same area with a few other new species for the trip that included Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Senegal Batis, Senegal Eremomela, Pygmy Sunbird and Sahel Bush Sparrow. We stopped for lunch in Tambacounda and the afternoon was taken driving through the enormous Niokolo Koba National Park to reach Kedougou. It is not allowed to stop in the park and we only had fleeting looks at Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and our first Red-throated Bee-eaters and Purple Starlings. It was also a good drive for raptors and during the course of the day we had added Wahlberg's and Tawny Eagles, African Hawk Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard and Bateleur to the list.

The next day we headed along rough roads down towards the border with Guinea and the area around Dindéfelo situated in the foothills of the Fouta Djallon mountains. From the open Sahel of the north, we had now arrived in the wooded Sudanian-Guinea savannas and as a result there was quite a difference in the avifauna. We started in the darkness, a female Standard-winged Nightjar flushed from the road and we managed to spotlight a pair of Northern White-faced Owls and some cute Northern Lesser Galagos and as the dawn broke the dry bush came alive. Bantam-like Stone Partridges dashed across the road and a productive stop gave us gaudy Violet Turacos, 'rolling' Blue-bellied Rollers, screeching Senegal Parrot and colourful Bruce's Green Pigeons. Small birds included Brubru, White-shouldered Black Tit, Northern Black Flycatcher, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Vitelline Masked Weaver and Yellow-fronted Canary and raptors included Lizard Buzzard, *rufescens* Common Kestrel and Lanner Falcon.



Colourful Violet Turacos (left) and 'rolling' Blue-bellied Rollers (right) (Marc Junio)

With all of these new birds we were somewhat later arriving at Dindéfelo itself than we had hoped but the walk to one of the cascades that tumble down the high cliffs was mainly undercover and it was cooler in the shade of the lush vegetation. The area was kept moist by a rushing stream that attracted the washerwomen from the village so that most of the available branches were bedecked with drying laundry! First of all, we were delighted to find the Willcocks's Honeyguide which we discovered back in 2019 as a new bird for the country was still in residence in his tree.



The Willcocks's Honeyguide first found by us at Dindéfelo during the 2019 tour was still present in his tree (left, Nik Borrow) and we also enjoyed excellent looks at a singing Adamawa Turtle Dove below the cascades. (right, Paul Matson)

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds hammered away through the heat of the day and a rush of new birds for the trip gave us Klaas's Cuckoo, Red-eyed Dove, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Northern Puffback, African Paradise Flycatcher, African Blue Flycatcher, Melodious Warbler, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Northern Yellow White-eye, African Thrush, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, European Pied Flycatcher and Western Violet-backed and Green-headed Sunbirds. Blackcap and Brown Babblers squabbled from the tangles and we managed to view some spiky-crested Guinea Turacos and watched a male Narina Trogon sitting quietly in the shadows.

Against the rocky escarpments glided numbers of Rock Martin and although the hoped-for Neumann's Starling eluded us, we enjoyed great views of our first Adamawa Turtle Dove and a surprise Magpie Mannikin was spotted. As we were leaving the area Lesser Blue-eared Starling was seen and a distant Fox Kestrel spotted. A breeding male Standard-winged Nightjar flew across in front of the car at dusk but couldn't be relocated so we noted the spot and vowed to return.



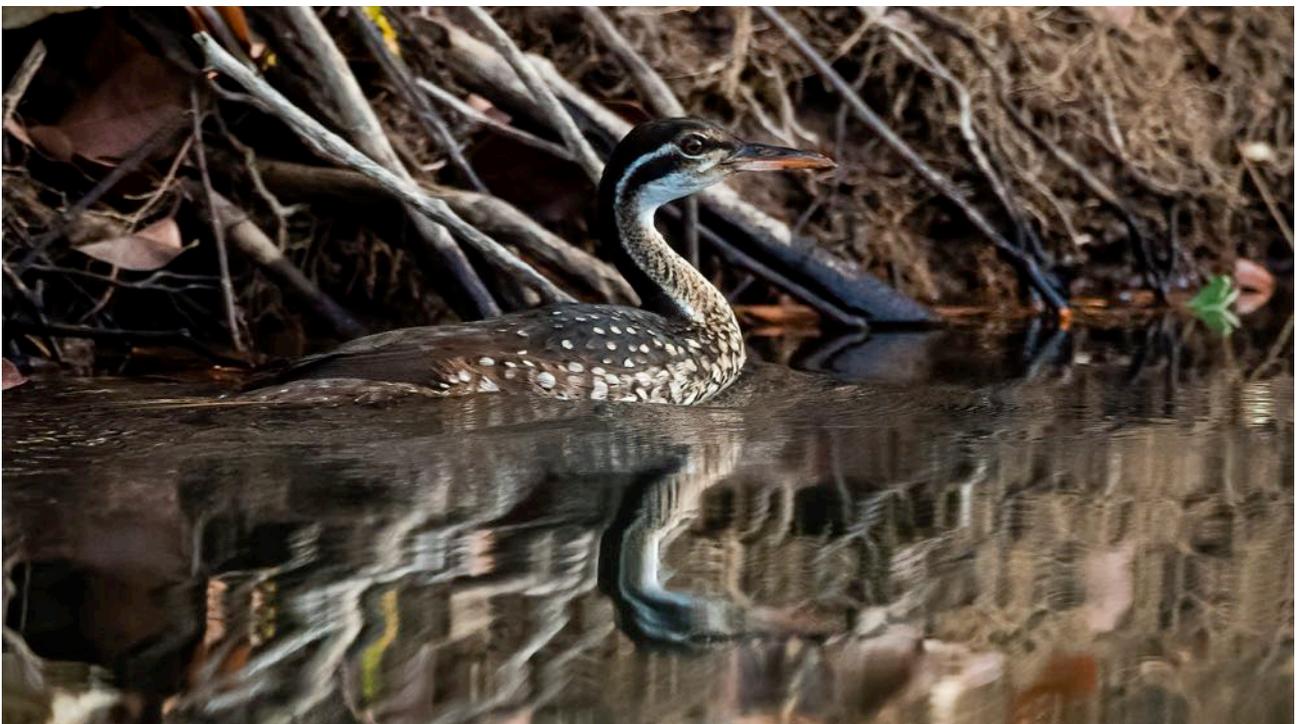
Incredible views of Common Buttonquail (left, Paul Matson) were obtained during our quest to see the restricted range Mali Firefinch and the magnificently grotesque Bearded Barbet also put in an appearance (right, Marc Junio).

The next morning our target was to find Mali Firefinch and rather than face a steep climb at Dindefelo, we headed for another area where the ascent to the top of the escarpment was more manageable. Our aim was to reach the area while it was still cool and the firefinches would still be active. The plan mostly worked but an angry Pearl-spotted Owlet that attracted a number of birds was taking people's attention when a pair of firefinches was found and it took valuable minutes for the stragglers to reach the rest of the group and despite the firefinches being close and stationary and 'in view' they sadly remained invisible to some eyes! Fortunately, the pair was apparently responsive to playback and we stood back on the other side of the road to give them space and sure enough they responded but were still difficult to see in the dark thicket. Then the unthinkable happened when a curious car load of people decided to park in between us and the birds with horns sounding, engine revving and a lot of excited chatter and after that the birds were not seen again which was very sad for those that had not seen them. We spent the rest of the morning searching hard and we checked again and again amongst flocks of other estrildids such as Lavender Waxbills but to no avail. Marvelously grotesque Bearded Barbets and excitable White-crested Helmetshrikes were popular finds and we also saw Yellow-billed Shrike, Rufous Cisticola, Familiar Chat and Gosling's Bunting but the sighting of the morning had to be the astonishing close and extended views of a Common Buttonquail that went a long way to healing the pain of the Mali Firefinch experience.

The afternoon was spent in some other areas nearer to Kedougou where we were successful in finding Sun Lark, an adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, some wide-eyed Spotted Thick-knees and Pale Flycatcher. The ultimate bird of the afternoon turned out to be a stunning male Standard-winged Nightjar in full breeding regalia at a spot not too far from where we had seen it fly across the road the previous evening. This time however it was in daylight and although it was rather skittish and flushed easily, excellent scope views were obtained of it sitting on the open burnt ground.

Our time in the Kedougou area was drawing to a close but one last early morning visit to some productive bush failed to deliver the hoped-for Mali Firefinches but did add Brown-backed Woodpecker, Red-winged Prinia, Bronze Mannikin, Black-rumped Waxbill and two splendid male breeding plumaged Exclamatory Paradise Whydahs sporting their marvellous tail streamers. It was then time to retrace our steps for our next stay at Campement de Wassadou on the edge of Niokolo Koba National Park, a lodge picturesquely placed overlooking the River Gambie. We arrived in time for sundowners and settled in to watch over the river as the day drew to a close.

We had two full days to explore the area around the camp and our activities involved scanning from the watchpoint, walking in the surrounding bush and exploring the river. The small boat only took a few people at a time so we took it in turns to cruise up and down the river over the course of our stay. The birds along the river seemed oblivious of the engine noise which meant that we were able to obtain amazing views of the sublime Egyptian Plover and we gained some intimate views of several pairs of these beautifully marked birds. Several African Finfoot were seen during our mini cruises and the handsome White-crowned Robin-Chat and superb Oriole Warbler were other West African specialties that allowed good views as did good numbers of the localised Adamawa Turtle Dove both from the river and also on land.



Good views were obtained of African Finfoot during the Wassadou boat trips. (Marc Junio)

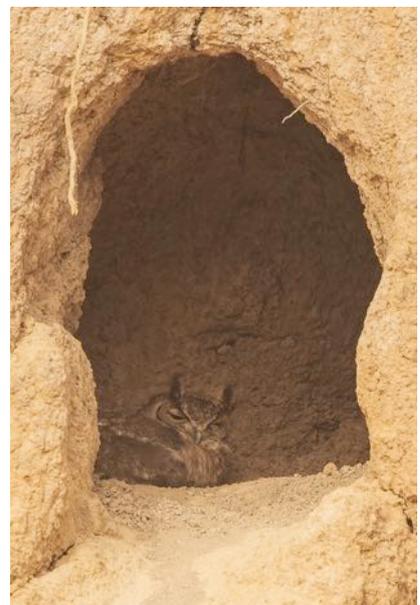
As was to be expected kingfishers were a feature of the waterways and as well as the commonplace Malachite and Pied Kingfishers we noted Grey-headed, Blue-breasted, Woodland and Giant Kingfishers. Numerous Red-throated Bee-eaters were busy at their nests in the sandy banks of the river and many beautiful Northern Carmine Bee-eaters were mixed in with them. Other waterside birds included Hadada Ibis, Striated Heron, White-crowned Lapwing, Swamp Flycatcher and African Pied Wagtail. Nik inadvertently flushed a White-backed Night Heron and although we never saw it again, everyone could hear the bird calling.

During the heat of the day the river proved to be a popular place for raptors to come and drink and besides African Fish Eagle we saw Palm-nut Vulture, Brown and Western Banded Snake Eagles, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle, Lizard Buzzard and Shikra taking advantage of the thirst-quenching waters.



Great looks at the vinacea race of Black-faced Firefinch at Wassadou. (Marc Junio)

Some bush walks produced the desirable Black-faced Firefinch and the somewhat less impressive Bar-breasted Firefinch. A Moustached Grass Warbler showed well and a resident pair of Red-necked Falcon and more Blue-bellied Rollers were always good to see daily! Other species new for the list included Helmeted Guineafowl, Pallid Swift, Greater Honeyguide, Cardinal Woodpecker, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Common House Martin, Bronze-tailed Starling, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Black-necked Weaver and Orange-cheeked Waxbill. A Greyish Eagle-Owl was seen by day in its roost hole whilst at night we saw a fantastic little African Scops Owl and a showy Northern White-faced Owl.



Owl fest at Wassadou: Northern White-faced Owl (left, Paul Matson) and African Scops Owl at night (centre, Marc Junio), Greyish Eagle-Owl at its daytime roost (right, Nik Borrow)

It was a long, fairly uneventful drive back to Kaolack but after lunch we visited a site in order to search out a roosting Verreaux's Eagle-Owl in the sparse trees dotted over vast open flats of the Saloum Delta. The bird was duly found but did not take too kindly to being discovered and found a more distant hiding place and glared back at us with its heavy pink-lidded eyes. A little further on we arrived at a small village where we

met up with a boatman who was willing to ferry us across to Kousmar Island in the delta which has become famous as the site that hosts up to 28,000 wintering Lesser Kestrels and 36,000 Scissor-tailed Kites. We drove out over the dry mud flats as far as we could until we met the river channel that separated us from the island. The transport across was to be by a rather wobbly, leaky wooden pirogue and the only way of boarding it was to wade through the sticky estuary mud and because of this not everyone opted to come preferring to stay on dry land with the telescope. However, most of us decided to make the effort and we soon found ourselves on the island and hiked the remaining distance to the roosting trees.



Up to 36,000 Scissor-tailed Kites have been counted coming into roost at Kousmar Island and this is surely one of the great wildlife spectacles in the world! (Nik Borrow)

We had arrived in good time but already the first Scissor-tailed Kites were on the trees with more gathering high up in the skies above us, some appearing no more than white specks in the sky. Gradually more and more were seen wheeling in now joined by some Lesser Kestrels and as the temperature dropped so they began to make their descent and more came hurtling down to land in the trees around us. Needless to say, the spectacle was awe-inspiring and really could only be appreciated from the island itself so it seemed totally worthy to have made the crossing. As the light faded, we hiked back to the river where the boat and mud was waiting and made our way back to the minibus as the sun sank into the Atlantic. We were rather late reaching our hotel that night but the experience had been totally worthwhile.

Our last two full days in Senegal were spent in the Saloum Delta exploring the waterways and surrounding country on foot and by boat and minibus. Our first boat trip was timed for the afternoon when a falling tide would be in our favour for finding the elusive White-crested Tiger Heron that spends most of its time in the

dense mangrove swamps that line the convoluted waterways of the Saloum Delta. Wire-tailed Swallows were seen around the jetty as we set off, the enormous Goliath Heron was found and we also found our first West African Crested Terns of the trip. Trickier to see was the tiny, warbler-like Mangrove (or Brown) Sunbird which was successfully searched out as we diligently scanned every mangrove root for the heron but suddenly there the bird itself was perched in front of us, surprisingly not hidden away in the darkness as is often the case but stood right out in the open! A few tense moments passed fearing that the heron might just slip away as the boat manoeuvred into position but these worries were unfounded as it seemed intent on fishing along the water's edge and we enjoyed unbeatable and prolonged views. We simply could not believe our luck!



The superb views that we had of White-crested Tiger Heron during this tour are hopefully encapsulated in this photograph! (Nik Borrow)

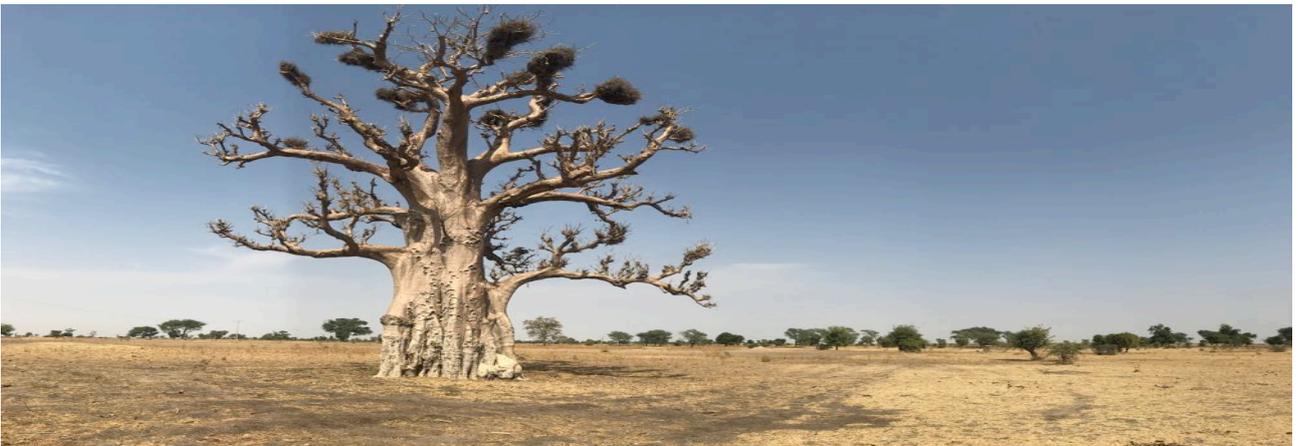
Seeing the bird on the first attempt was really a bonus and the rest of our time in the region was mostly spent in the dry bush country. One evening we waited for Four-banded Sandgrouse to come down to drink but our attempt coincided with an extremely loud party going on in the neighbouring village and our vigil failed miserably. A few new species for the trip were gathered during our remaining time and included African Green Pigeon, African Golden Oriole, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Variable Sunbird and Tree Pipit but nothing had prepared us for what was to become the icing on the cake.

A walk on the last morning of the tour in an area of thornbush savanna was ostensibly in search of Yellow Penduline Tit which had done its utmost to avoid us for the past two weeks and as the day was heating up our chances were getting smaller and smaller by the minute. It was then a big shock when two birds flushed from the path in front of us and flew back past us to land not too far away and freeze and it didn't take too long at all to realise that we were looking at a pair of the highly desirable Bronze-winged Courser. The birds were shy but clearly did not want to flush again and we carefully stalked them, gaining the most amazing views.



A fitting finale to a great tour – Bronze-winged Courser in the Saloum! (Nik Borrow)

Our West African adventure had finally come to an end and what a trip it had been! This long road trip had taken us through the Sahel, down into the Sudanian-Guinea savannahs and finished on the wide open Saloum estuary and everywhere, from the fishing market in St Louis to the crowds around the Grand Mosque at Touba we had been fascinated by the colourful street life. We had tasted some great Senegalese cuisine, particularly some fine fish and of course the Chicken Yassa! A variety of boat trips had brought us close-up and personal with a number of amazing species such as the delightful Egyptian Plover and we had seen some of the most iconic of the Sahelian birds including the highly desirable Golden Nightjar, Quail-plover and Cricket Warbler. We had witnessed some spectacular bird behaviour with the enormous coordinated wheeling flocks of wildfowl, queleas and bishops to the chaos of the Great White Pelican breeding colony on the Djoudj; the grace of the Scissor-tailed Kite roost in the Saloum and the fluttering antics of the Standard-winged Nightjar. Senegal is a West African gem and surely set to become a classic destination. Many thanks to our tireless drivers who kept it all together!



Saloum Baobab. (Nik Borrow)



The sublime Egyptian Plover was an undisputed trip highlight and was ridiculously easy to see during the boat trips at Wassadou. (Paul Matson)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

BIRDS

Total of bird species recorded: 351

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Abundant in the Djoudj NP.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* Smaller numbers in the Djoudj NP.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Just 4 at Kousmar Island.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Just 1 sighting in the Djoudj NP.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Common in the Djoudj NP.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula* Abundant in the Djoudj NP.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* Hundreds in the Djoudj NP.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Numerous around Wassadou.

Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus* Small numbers in the south-east.

Double-spurred Spurfowl *Pternistis bicalcaratus*. From Djoudj onwards, widespread sightings during the tour

Golden Nightjar *Caprimulgus eximius* 1 male seen well at Podor at the end of the day.

Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus* A male seen well at Podor.

Standard-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus longipennis* A superb male in full breeding plumage seen well at Kedougou.

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri* A few widespread sightings.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* Small numbers over Wassadou and the Saloum.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Widespread sightings during the tour.

Horus Swift *Apus horus* Recently discovered breeding near Podor. At least 2 were seen at the colony.

Western Plantain-eater (W Grey P-e) *Crinifer piscator* Common with widespread sightings in the south.

Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea* Seen well in the south-east.

Guinea Turaco (Green T) *Tauraco persa* 6 seen well at Dindéfelo.

Savile's Bustard *Lophotis savilei* A pair seen well near Marigot 2 and another flushed whilst looking for Quail-plover.

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* Widespread sightings but never numerous.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* 1 male at Dindéfelo.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* A pair at Marigot 2 and 5 en route to Tambacounda.



Western Plantain-eater (left, Nik Borrow) and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (right, Paul Matson)

Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus* 1 flew over the car near Kedougou and heard at Sandicolu.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Domestic birds only.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common and widespread.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* Only small numbers (c.30) of this Palearctic migrant.

Adamawa Turtle Dove *Streptopelia hypopyrrha* A singing bird at Dindéfelo and more at Wassadou.

African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea* Small numbers in the north and also on Kousmar Island.

Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens*. Commonly encountered except in the south-east.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Only small numbers seen in the south.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea* Common and widespread except in the far north.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Abundant and widespread.

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus* Common and widespread except in the far north.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer* (H) Heard at Dindéfelo.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Common and widespread.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* Small numbers at Dindéfelo and in the Saloum.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* 1 seen at Nema Ba.

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* At least one pair at Wassadou.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Common in Djoudj NP.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni* 3 were seen in the Djoudj NP.

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis* Small numbers in Djoudj NP.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP and at Wassadou.

Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina* 20+ in Djoudj NP.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 1 seen in Djoudj NP.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Hundreds in the Djoudj NP.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* Spectacular! Thousands in the Djoudj NP.

Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus* An amazing close encounter with 1 in the Kedougou area.

Quail-plover *Ortyxelos meiffrenii* Close up views of 1 as we travelled south from Mbacké. A much-wanted bird!

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicanus* A flock of c. 40 of these Palearctic migrants at Richard-Toll.
Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* 2 at Kedougou.
Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* c. 30 Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and 3 in the Saloum.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Numerous in northern Senegal.
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Large numbers in Djoudj NP and also seen in the St Louis area.
Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* Commonly encountered except in the Kedougou area.
Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus* A dry country lapwing and easily seen in suitable habitat.
White-crowned Lapwing (W-headed L) *Vanellus albiceps* 2 pairs of this striking lapwing at Wassadou.
African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* Most numerous at Wassadou with smaller numbers in the Djoudj.



White-crowned Lapwing (left) and African Wattled Lapwing (right) were both seen well at Wassadou. (Nik Borrow)

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants seen at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.
Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A Palearctic migrant seen in the north and again in the Saloum.
Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Not uncommon in the Djoudj NP.
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A few of these Palearctic migrants in the north.
Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius* Extremely approachable birds at Wassadou with at least 10 counted.
Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* 3 scoped in Djoudj NP.
African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Common during the Djoudj boat trip including a partially melanistic bird.
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* A few Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* A few Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Palearctic migrants with small numbers in the Djoudj NP.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis.
Red Knot *Calidris canutus* 2 of these Palearctic migrants seen at Saint-Louis.
Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Good numbers of these Palearctic migrants in Djoudj NP.
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Good numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the north.
Sanderling *Calidris alba* 60+ of these Palearctic migrants in the Saint-Louis area.
Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the Saint-Louis area.
Little Stint *Calidris minuta* These Palearctic migrants were abundant in the north.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant, absent from the south-east.
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Palearctic migrants in the far north, Wassadou and in the Saloum.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Palearctic migrants in the north and in the Saloum.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* 2 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP and 2 in the Saint-Louis area.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Palearctic migrants only in the far north.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Palearctic migrants at suitable wetlands throughout.

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor* At least 6 seen well in the Djoudj NP.

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* Singletons seen well at Richard-Toll and in the Mbacké area.



It was a great trip for coursers! Cream-coloured Courser (left) in Djoudj NP and Temminck's Courser (right) at Richard-Toll. (Nik Borrow)

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* A superb encounter with a pair in the Saloum.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* Small numbers in the Djoudj area.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* Common at coastal sites with huge numbers at Kaolack.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Small numbers in the far north.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Common at coastal sites.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* The Palearctic race *graellsii* was seen in the Saint-Louis area and Saloum.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Good numbers in the north and commonly encountered in the Saloum.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Good numbers in the north and small numbers in the Saloum.

West African Crested Tern (A Royal T) *Thalasseus albidorsalis* Small numbers seen in the Saloum.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Numbers of this Palearctic migrant in the north and a few in the Saloum.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Small numbers in the far north and the Saloum.

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* 2 in the Djoudj NP and 1 in the Saloum.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* 3 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP and 10 at Marigot 2.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* 4 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* Easily seen in the Djoudj NP and Saloum Delta.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* Commonly encountered at suitable wetland areas.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Commonly encountered at suitable wetland areas.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Most numerous in the far north and a few in the Saloum.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Easily seen and heard at Wassadou.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Most numerous in the far north and particularly in the Djoudj NP.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* Just 2 seen at Marigot 2.

White-crested Tiger Heron *Tigriornis leucolopha* 1 seen exceptionally well in the Saloum.

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* An adult flushed by Nik at Wassadou and heard by all.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP and Wassadou.

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* Small numbers at Wassadou.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Common in the Djoudj NP and a few elsewhere in the far north and the Saloum.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Common to abundant throughout the tour.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Present at all wetland sites.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* 2 or 3 in the Saloum.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Small numbers in the far north and 1 at Wassadou.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Widespread sightings at wetlands throughout the tour.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* 1 in the Djoudj NP.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* Small numbers in the Djoudj and Saint-Louis areas.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Seen in the Djoudj. Difficult to assess elsewhere due to confusion with white reef herons.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* Common in coastal areas where dark morph birds occur with white.



The huge Goliath Heron (left) showed well during our boat trips in the Saloum Delta. Western Reef Herons (right) were common in coastal areas. (Nik Borrow)

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Widespread sightings in wetland areas.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* The breeding colony in the Djoudj NP was a trip highlight.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* Commonly encountered at suitable wetland areas.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Good numbers of this Palearctic migrant at suitable wetland areas.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Just 2 widespread sightings.

Scissor-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii* The Kousmar Island roost was a trip highlight.

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* Widespread sightings of small numbers in the south.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* Seen well at Wassadou and in the Saloum Delta.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* The most widespread and numerous of the vultures.

White-backed Vulture (African W-b V) *Gyps africanus* Only seen on journeys to and from the far north.

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli* No more than 30 seen during the tour mainly on journeys to and from the far north.

Griffon Vulture (Eurasian G V) *Gyps fulvus* Maybe as many as 10 seen on journeys to and from the far north.

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* 1 between Thiès and Kebemer.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* 5 sightings of these Palearctic migrants in the north.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* A juvenile near Darou Mousty and an adult near Kedougou.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* Small numbers in the south.

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens* At least 1 was seen at Wassadou.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* Just 1 sighting in Niokolo Koba NP.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraetus wahlbergi* 5 widespread sightings in the south including Wassadou.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* 1 en route to Tambacounda and a pair in Niokolo Koba NP.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* 6 individuals seen in the south.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* 5 widespread sightings in the south.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* 1 seen at Wassadou.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*. Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* Regularly encountered in the south.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A common Palearctic migrant in suitable habitat.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* 3 widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A Palearctic migrant, common at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Abundant and widespread.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* Small numbers of this majestic eagle at suitable wetland sites.

Grasshopper Buzzard *Butastur rufipennis* 3 sightings en route to Kedougou.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (H) Heard at Podor.

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* A number of sightings in the south.

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* Seen well at night at Wassadou.

Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis* 2 spotlighted en route to Dindéfelo and another at Wassadou.

Greyish Eagle-Owl *Bubo cinerascens* A pair pre-dawn in Thiès and another at a day roost at Wassadou.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* Seen at a daytime roost near Kaolack.



Daytime owls: Pearl-spotted Owlet (left) and Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (right). (Nik Borrow)

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus* Easy to see in the north.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* Good views of a male at Dindéfelo.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa [epops] epops* Small numbers positively identified only in the north.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa [epops] senegalensis* Larger numbers positively identified in the north.

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Commonly encountered with widespread sightings.

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* 4 seen in the Podor area.

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus* A male seen in Niokolo Koba NP.

Western Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus kempfi* Common and widespread throughout the tour.

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* Most numerous in the south and absent from the very far north.

Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) *Coracias naevius* 3 widespread sightings.

Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus* Mostly common throughout the tour but scarce in the far north.



Western Red-billed Hornbill (left) is an easy regional endemic. Abyssinian Roller (right) is common and always a favourite! (Nik Borrow)

- Blue-bellied Roller** *Coracias cyanogaster* Small numbers seen well in the south-east.
- Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* Small numbers at Wassadou and in the Saloum.
- Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* A few seen daily at Wassadou.
- Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* Heard more frequently than it was seen.
- Blue-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon malimbica* Extremely approachable and easily seen at Wassadou.



Wassadou is great for kingfishers: Blue-breasted Kingfisher (left) and Grey-headed Kingfisher (right) (Nik Borrow)

- Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* 1 seen at Wassadou.
- Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers in suitable wetland habitat.
- Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* Easily seen at Wassadou.
- Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Easily seen in suitable wetland habitat.
- Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* Small numbers in the Saloum area.
- Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Widespread sightings.
- Red-throated Bee-eater** *Merops bulocki* Common in the south-east with breeding colonies at Wassadou.



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater in the Saloum (left, Nik Borrow) Red-throated Bee-eater at Wassadou (right, Paul Matson)

African Green Bee-eater (Little G B-e) *Merops viridissimus* Easily seen in the far north.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP and in the Saloum Delta.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus* Good numbers at Wassadou.



The recently split African Green Bee-eater (left) is commonly encountered in the far north. Northern Carmine Bee-eaters (right) put on a fine show at Wassadou (Nik Borrow)

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* 1 at Dindefelo.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Widespread sightings during the main tour, more often heard.

Vieillot's Barbet *Lybius vieilloti* Widespread sightings but more often heard than seen.

Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius* A number of chances to see this fantastic barbet well in the south.

Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii* First found in Senegal during our 2019 tour still present at Dindefelo.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* Present at Wassadou, Tambacouta and Sandicoly.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* This Palearctic migrant was seen at Richard-Toll and Kedougou.

Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera* Numerous sightings in the south.

Little Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos elachus* Three pairs were seen during this tour.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* 1 male at Wassadou.

African Grey Woodpecker (Grey W) *Dendropicos goertae* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

Brown-backed Woodpecker *Dendropicos obsoletus* A male seen well at Kedougou.



Little Grey Woodpecker (left, Marc Junio) Brown-backed Woodpecker (right, Nik Borrow)

- Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*** This Palearctic migrant was seen well around the roost on Kousmar Island.
- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*** Widespread sightings of migrant *tinnunculus* and resident *rufescens* at Dindefelo.
- Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex*** 1 seen at Dindefelo.
- Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*** Best views were obtained in the Saloum area.
- Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*** Best views were of the resident pair at Wassadou.
- Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*** Seen at Dindefelo and in the Saloum.
- Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*** A juvenile (presumably migrant *calidus*) in Djoudj NP.
- Barbary Falcon *Falco [peregrinus] pelegrinoides*** Repeated excellent looks at a perched bird near Podor.
- Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*** Numerous chances to see this parrot well in the south.
- Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P) *Psittacula krameri*** Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
- Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*** Regularly seen in the south-east.



A male Senegal Batis at Dindefelo (left) and the stunning Yellow-crowned Gonolek in the Saloum. (right, Nik Borrow)

- Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W-e) *Platysteira cyanea*** Easiest to see at Dindefelo.
- Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*** Singletons at Wassadou.
- Orange-breasted Bushshrike (Sulphur-b B) *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* (H)** Heard at Wassadou.
- Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*** Widespread sightings of small numbers .
- Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*** Regularly encountered in the south.
- Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus*** Stunning views but heard more often than seen throughout the tour.
- Brubru *Nilaus afer*** Mostly encountered in the south-east.

White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus* A family group seen well in the Kedougou area.

Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvina* Small numbers of this sociable shrike seen in the south.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* Small numbers of the race *elegans* in the Podor and Richard-Toll areas.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* Regular sightings of the race *senator* of this Palearctic migrant during the tour

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus* Seen well in Sangako Forest.

Glossy-backed Drongo *Dicrurus divaricatus* Widespread sightings in small numbers throughout the tour.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Seen well at Dindefelo, Wassadou and Sandicoly.

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* Small family groups encountered at widespread localities throughout.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Abundant and often associated with human habitation.

African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda* 4 of these pretty birds seen well at Dindefelo.

White-shouldered Black Tit *Melaniparus guineensis* Small numbers seen in the south-east.

Sennar Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus punctifrons* A pair seen well near Richard-Toll.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps* Large numbers in the far north.



Yellow-billed Shrike (left) and a male Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (right, Nik Borrow)

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis* Small numbers at widespread localities.

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans* 3 seen at the Quail-plover site.

Sun Lark *Galerida modesta* A pair in the Kedougou area.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* Very common in the north.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* 1 flying high overhead calling in Djoudj NP.

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Atimastillas flavicollis* Heard at Dindefelo and seen in the Saloum.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* Seen daily, common throughout.

Sand Martin (Common S M, Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia* A Palearctic migrant abundant in the north.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Small numbers at Dindefelo.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Small numbers in the Saloum.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant most numerous in the north.

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida* Regularly encountered from the Saint-Louis area southwards.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Good numbers of this Palearctic migrant in the Saloum.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* 1 at Nema Ba.

West African Swallow *Cecropis domicella* 1 at Nema Ba.

Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis* Great looks at 1 at Wassadou.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura* Scattered widespread sightings.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* This Palearctic migrant seemed to be quite numerous in the north.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* 3 widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* Yellow-vented birds in the Djoudj and Wassadou presumably this species.

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens* Sightings in the Djoudj and Marigot 2.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Singletons of this Palearctic migrant in the Djoudj and at Wassadou.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 2 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP.

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca* Widespread sightings in ones and twos throughout the tour.

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta* Sightings of these Palearctic migrants at Dindefelo and Sangako Forest.

Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus* 1 seen well in the Kedougou area.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Small numbers in the Djoudj area and Saloum.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* 4 seen well near Mbacké.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Common in the south.

River Prinia *Prinia fluviatilis* Common but more often heard than seen in the Djoudj and Marigot 2 areas.

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythropterus* Seen well in the Kedougou area and at Wassadou.

Cricket Warbler *Spiloptila clamans* Superb encounters in the Podor and Mbacké areas.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* Seen at Dindefelo.

Oriole Warbler *Hypergerus atriceps* Excellent views at Wassadou.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Commonly encountered in the south.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* Small numbers in the far north.

Senegal Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla* Commonly encountered in the south.

Western Orphean Warbler *Curruca hortensis* Just 2 of these Palearctic migrants seen in the Podor area.

Western Subalpine Warbler *Curruca iberiae* Small numbers in the north and Saloum.

Common Whitethroat *Curruca communis* Widespread sightings of these Palearctic migrants during the tour.

Northern Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis* Most easily seen at Dindefelo.

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus* The more widespread babbler in the south.

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii* Easily seen in the south-east and linked to watercourses.

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Most numerous in the north.

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus* 2 seen well at Dindefelo.

Bronze-tailed Starling (B-t Glossy S) *Lamprotornis chalcurus* A few at Wassadou.



The colourful Purple Starling (left) and Long-tailed Glossy Starling (right) are absolute lookers! (Nik Borrow)

Purple Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus* Extremely common in the south-east and some in the Saloum.

Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus* A conspicuous and widespread species.

Chestnut-bellied Starling *Lamprotornis pulcher* Common and conspicuous in the north.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* Seen well in the Saloum.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios* A few sightings in the south.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* Common and characterful in the north.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas [galactotes] minor* 3 sightings of 'African' Scrub Robins.

Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) *Myioparus plumbeus* Several at Wassadou.

Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides* 1 at Dindefelo and more at Wassadou.

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus* 3 sightings in the south-east.

Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica* Easily seen along the river at Wassadou.

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla* Heard more than seen at Dindefelo.

White-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha albicapillus* Easily seen at Wassadou.

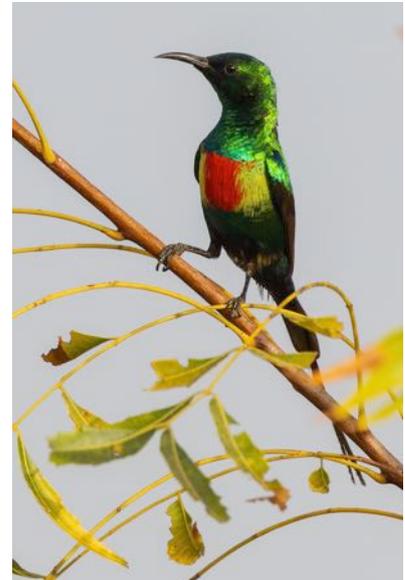
European Pied Flycatcher (Pied F) *Ficedula hypoleuca* 8 sightings of these Palearctic migrants in the south.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 5 widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.
African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* The interesting *moptanus* race was seen well in the Djoudj NP.
Anteater Chat (Northern A C) *Myrmecocichla aethiops* Widespread sightings in the north and the Saloum.
Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* A common Palearctic migrant mainly in the north.
Atlas Wheatear (Seeböhm's W) *Oenanthe seebohmi* 1 seen at Richard-Toll.



Black Scrub Robin (left) and Atlas or 'Seeböhm's' Wheatear (right) were both target species in the far north. (Nik Borrow)

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* 1 of these Palearctic migrants was seen well at Richard-Toll.
Western Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* 5 of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Podor area.
Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris* Just 1 near Kedougou.
Mangrove Sunbird (Brown S) *Anthreptes gabonicus* At least 2 seen well in the Saloum Delta.
Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei* 2 pairs at Dindefelo and a male near Kedougou.
Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura* Plenty seen well in the south.



Male Pygmy Sunbird (left) and male Beautiful Sunbird (right) (Nik Borrow)

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis* 1 was seen at Dindefelo.
Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Regularly encountered from Bango to the south.
Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus* Common and widespread throughout the tour.
Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* Small numbers were seen near Toubacouta.
Sahel Bush Sparrow (Bush Petronia) *Gymnoris dentata* Very common in the south-east.
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Particularly common in the north associated with human habitation.
Sudan Golden Sparrow *Passer luteus* Hundreds upon hundreds in the north.
White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris* Their stick nests are a feature of the Sahel.

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus* 6 seen at Dindefelo.
Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis* Seen en route to the north and in the Podor area.
Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus* Small numbers mainly in the north and Saloum.
Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* A pair at Wassadou.
Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus* Most numerous in the south-east.
Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* Most common in Thiès and Toubacouta but also in the south-east.
Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus* Abundant in the Djoudj and the north and common at Wassadou.
Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Common throughout with huge swirling flocks in some places.
Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* 10+ in the Djoudj NP.
Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus* Abundant in the Djoudj and in the south.
Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata* Small numbers in the south-east.
Magpie Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides* 1 skulking bird for some at Dindefelo.
African Silverbill (Warbling S) *Euodice cantans* Common in the north.



Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver at Dindefelo (left) African Silverbill (right) (Nik Borrow)

Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens* Seen well in the south-east and Saloum.
Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda* Easy to see at Wassadou.
Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes* Small numbers near Kedougou but easily seen at Wassadou.
Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* (H) Heard only in Djoudj NP.
Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata* Widespread sightings in the north.
Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W) *Amandava subflava* Brief fly-by views at Marigot 2.
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus* Widespread and particularly common in the south-east.
Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* A pair en route to Tambacounda.
Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* The common and widespread firefinch.
Mali Firefinch *Lagonosticta virata* A pair seen well (for those that could see them!) in the Cheioune area.
Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta* Small numbers seen at Wassadou.
Black-faced Firefinch (Vinaceous F) *Lagonosticta [larvata] vinacea* Great looks at Wassadou.
Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata* Widespread sightings throughout the tour and linked with Red-billed Firefinch.
Sahel Paradise Whydah *Vidua orientalis* Males in breeding plumage en route to Tambacounda.
Exclamatory Paradise Whydah *Vidua interjecta* 2 males in breeding plumage near Kedougou.
Western Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] flava* Widespread encounters.
Western Yellow Wagtail (Spanish W) *Motacilla [flava] iberiae* Exceedingly common in the Djoudj area.
White Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] alba* Common in the north.
Pied Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] yarrellii* 1 male at Saint-Louis on 25/1 appears to be the first record for Senegal.
African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Small numbers on the river at Wassadou.
Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the far north.
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Nema Ba.
White-rumped Seedeater *Crithagra leucopygia* Widespread sightings and quite common in places.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* Easily seen in the south-east.

Gosling's Bunting *Emberiza gosling* Small numbers in the south-east.



We were fortunate to find a Sahel Paradise Whydah still in breeding plumage (Paul Matson).

MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 19

Four-toed Hedgehog *Atelerix albiventris* 1 seen at Ranch de Bango.

African Wildcat *Felis lybica* A great daytime sighting near Podor.

African Golden Wolf *Canis anthus* At least 8 seen well in Djoudj NP.



Four-toed Hedgehog at Ranch de Bango (left) and African Golden Wolf in Djoudj NP (right) (Nik Borrow)

Ratel *Mellivora capensis* 3 seen in Djoudj NP.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Easy to see in the Djoudj NP.

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus* Seen at Wassadou.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* 3 in the river at Wassadou.

Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons* At least 1 by the river at Wassadou.

African Straw-coloured Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum* At Thiès and Kaolack.

Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus gambianus* Seen at Toubacouta.

Northern Lesser Galago (Lesser Bushbaby) *Galago senegalensis* A few seen at night at Kedougou.

Green Monkey (Callithrix M) *Chlorocebus sabaeus*. Commonly encountered in the south-east.

Patas Monkey *Erythrocebus patas* Mainly seen in the far north and Saloum.

Guinea Baboon *Papio papio* Very common at Wassadou.

West African Red Colobus *Procolobus badius* Small numbers seen at Wassadou.

African Savanna Hare *Lepus microtis* A few seen in the north.

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus* Small numbers in the south-east.
Striped Ground Squirrel (Geoffrey's G S) *Xerus erythropus* Widespread sightings.
African Grass Rat (Unstriped G R) *Arvicanthis niloticus* (NL) 1 near Darou Mousty.



Ratel in the Djoudj (left, Nik Borrow) and Northern Lesser Galago near Kedougou and sunset in the Saloum (Right & below, Marc Junio)