



*Golden Nightjar tied first place in the group's top ten with Quail-plover. We had prolonged close up encounters with both species and it certainly is a tough call to say which of these avian gems was best! (Nik Borrow)*

# SENEGAL

**6 – 22 FEBRUARY 2022**

**LEADER: NIK BORROW**

Our sixth 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 then a female which we continued to watch into the darkness and illuminated by the torch beam. The tiny Quail-plover rose up from under our feet after some 30 minutes searching only to be lost almost immediately. Fortunately, we were soon able to relocate it and this time it 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 and despite access being restricted due to an outbreak of avian bird flu we still managed to see the highly desirable Arabian Bustard. We also enjoyed great views of the unassuming River Prinia, Allen's Gallinule and Savile's Bustard whilst in the area. In the south-east of the country, we found several pairs of Mali Firefinch and enjoyed excellent views of Fox Kestrels at a bush fire. A fine supporting cast in the area included Yellow Penduline Tit and Sun Lark. A stay at Wassadou along the Gambie River on the edge of Niokolo Koba National Park allowed for fine views of the sublime Egyptian Plover as well as Adamawa Turtle Dove, 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 Dwarf Bittern 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 (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, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, West African Swallow, Iberian Chiffchaff, Rufous and Dorst's Cisticolas, Fulvous Babbler, Chestnut-bellied and Neumann's Starlings, White-crowned Robin-Chat, Atlas (Seeböhm's) Wheatear, Pygmy Sunbird, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Lavender Waxbill, Red-winged Pytilia, Bar-breasted and Black-faced Firefinches, Sahel Paradise Whydah, White-rumped Seedeater and Gosling's Bunting.



*We left Thiès as the sun was rising and headed north. (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 hoping to see a pair of Greyish Eagle-Owls on the rooftops surrounding our hotel which sadly wasn't to be. 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 really 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, Western Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Abyssinian Roller, Pied Crow, Common Bulbul, Greater Blue-eared, Long-tailed Glossy and Chestnut-bellied Starlings, Northern Grey-headed and House Sparrows and White-billed Buffalo Weaver.



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

We made our first stop at a stake out for Little Grey Woodpecker and were pleased to find that the pair was still present in the area that we had discovered it on the previous tour and we enjoyed some excellent views. 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 we saw our first Lappet-faced Vulture of the tour and were also pleased to find an assortment of dry country birds that included Double-spurred Spurfowl, Blue-naped Mousebird, African Grey Woodpecker, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Western Olivaceous Warbler, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Western Subalpine Warbler, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin of the resident race *minor*, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu and Red-billed Firefinch.

As we passed the historic town of Saint-Louis located on the Senegal River, we noted large numbers of waterbirds that included Black-winged Stilt, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Ringed Plover, Black-headed, Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns, Reed Cormorant, Squacco, Grey and Purple Herons, Great and Little Egrets, Western Reef Heron, Hamerkop, Pink-backed Pelican, and Pied Kingfisher but didn't stop as we would explore this area upon our return. Other species recorded during the journey included African Palm Swift, Black-headed Lapwing, Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Purple Roller, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Crested Lark, Sand Martin and Barn Swallow.

We stopped for a delicious fish lunch at a hotel by the banks of the Senegal River in the historic town of Richard Toll where we saw our first Mourning Collared Dove, Beautiful Sunbirds and Village and Black-headed Weavers. 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.

Immediately after lunch we birded an area on the outskirts of town and soon added another target to the list in the form of the diminutive Sennar Penduline Tit. Large flocks of small birds often proved to be Sudan Golden Sparrows which held many decently plumaged male birds. Colourful Eurasian Hoopoe and African Green Bee-eaters were seen well and in the surrounding area we also found Senegal Coucal, African Collared Dove, African Fish Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, Brubru, Woodchat Shrike, Northern Crombec,

Black Scrub Robin, Northern Wheatear, African Silverbill, Village Indigobird and Western Yellow and White Wagtails.

From here we completed the drive to Podor and arrived at the nightjar site in the late afternoon, before the sun had set. We began a walk 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. A female was also found and when the natural light was insufficient, we illuminated our quarry with the torch beam until we were all quite sated!



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

It was another sunny day as we headed out the following morning to an area near Podor where 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 but rarely allowed close approach. A number of Great Grey Shrikes of the race *elegans* and *senator* Woodchat Shrikes were dotted around whilst Palearctic migrants included *tinnunculus* Common Kestrel, Western Orphean Warbler, Common Redstart, and a dapper male Western Black-eared Wheatear. It didn't take too long to track down a family of Cricket Warblers which performed beautifully for us allowing some very close views as they foraged in the sparse vegetation wiggling their long tails.

Hot on their heels was another target species which isn't always at all easy to track down. A lone Fulvous Babbler that put in an appearance as it flew low to the ground on stiff, whirring wings and although elusive at first, we eventually obtained some good close views. Quite where the rest of his family were hiding was a mystery but perhaps, they were nesting silently nearby. A surprise sighting was of a pair of Brown-necked Raven here at the edge of their range and a 'write-in' for our list. 'Central African' *senegalensis* Eurasian Hoopoes were identified, Vieillot's Barbet and a pair of Black Scimitarbill showed well and we saw our first Glossy-backed Drongo whilst other more expected birds during the day included Little Ringed Plover, Montagu's Harrier, Green Wood Hoopoe, and Little Weaver.



*Whilst in the Podor area, a lone Fulvous Babbler (left) put in an appearance and a pair of Brown-necked Ravens (right) was a surprise 'write-in'. (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 African Jacana, Common Sandpiper, Black-headed Heron and Red-throated and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters.

In the late afternoon we returned for another look at the Golden Nightjars and quickly found a different male from yesterday's bird that showed equally well and the day was rounded off with some excellent views of Long-tailed Nightjars.



*The second day ended in a similar manner to the first with superb views of this gorgeous male Golden Nightjar perfectly camouflaged against the sandy soils. (Nik Borrow)*

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. Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Anteater Chat and Tawny Pipit were found and an obliging pair of 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. 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 pair 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.

Sadly, our access to the park this visit was restricted due to an outbreak of avian influenza which meant that the park was basically closed to visitors. Through some pleading and bargaining we managed to gain restricted access meaning that we had limited time and had to keep very much to the park boundaries and we hoped that this would be enough to get us the major targets. Our chances of finding the Arabian Bustard did not seem to be good at all particularly as the species has become very elusive in the park recently with numbers of individuals probably numbering no more than six. It was however a great surprise and an enormous relief when during a fortuitous scan this big bird lifted from the scrub in front of us and good flight views were had by all. It landed but at a great distance and some heat-haze scope views were obtained.



*River Prinia (left) is one of the target species in Djoudj National Park but nowhere near as impressive as the huge Arabian Bustard (right) (Nik Borrow)*

As we drove across the barren flats, we saw a number of Common Warthogs and African Golden Wolves but a wind was whipping the dust into the air and there was no sign of any Cream-coloured Coursers or Black Crowned Cranes and unfortunately these were species to be the losses suffered because of the park closure.

The Djoudj National Park that lies in the Senegal delta is an important wetland staging post and wintering area for migratory birds. It well-known for its huge breeding colony of Great White Pelicans and this is where the access problem lay because of the recent die-off of the young birds. From the main road through the park, 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 also successfully hunted out an Allen's Gallinule. Other species noted during our visit included Spur-winged Goose, Knob-billed Duck, Egyptian Goose, African Pygmy Goose, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Common Moorhen, African Swampphen, Black Crake, Little Grebe, Pied Avocet, Common Ringed, Kittlitz's and Kentish Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Little Stint, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Common Redshank, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Spotted Redshank, Common Greenshank, Collared Pratincole, Slender-billed Gull, Caspian, Sandwich and White-winged Terns, Yellow-billed and Black Storks, African Darter, White-breasted Cormorant, African Sacred and Glossy Ibises, Eurasian and African Spoonbills, Black-crowned Night Heron, Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, Black Heron, Malachite Kingfisher, Little Bee-eater, Common and Iberian

Chiffchaffs, Zitting Cisticola, Common Whitethroat, Isabelline Wheatear, Yellow-crowned and Northern Red Bishops, Orange-breasted Waxbills, and 'British' *flavissima*, 'Blue-headed' '*flava*' and 'Spanish' *iberiae* Yellow Wagtails.

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 a very fine male on our first attempt.



Both Temminck's Courser (left) and the prime target Savile's Bustard (right) were seen in the Saint-Louis area. (Nik Borrow)

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 Spurfowl, Black Kite, Senegal Batis and Yellow-crowned Gonolek. At one of the permanent waterways, we saw Winding Cisticola and Greater Swamp Warbler as well as Palearctic migrant Sedge and Eurasian Reed Warblers and 'white-spotted' *cyanecula* Bluethroat. Our hotel garden came up trumps with a very fine Northern White-faced Owl.

During our stay we also combined birds and 'culture' by visiting the historical town of Saint-Louis. The mudflats and lagoons helped us add to our wader list with Eurasian Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot and Sanderling. 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. Slender-billed Gulls were plentiful as they breed

in the nearby Langue de Barbarie National Park but we also spotted a Mediterranean Gull, West African Crested Tern, a solitary Parasitic Jaeger and out at sea a few Northern Gannets.



*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)*

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 and came across a few small gatherings. At a stop at a waterhole, we found Black-headed Heron and watched thirsty Mottled Spinetails coming to drink along with Black-billed Wood Dove, a few Palearctic migrant European Turtle Doves and some Cut-throat Finches. Another brief stop gave us our first White-rumped Seedeater.



*It was only a short 30 minute search before we obtained amazing views of the diminutive Quail-plover. (Nik Borrow)*

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 thirty minutes 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 only flew a short distance and landed once again 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 but kept to 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! A few Black Terns were seen roosting on the mud flats and a succession of Lesser Kestrels could be seen heading towards their roost.



*Up to 28,000 Lesser Kestrels are known to roost on an island in the Saloum River. We witnessed at least 500 of them. (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 which was much appreciated. 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 brief looks at Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and our first Purple Starlings. It was also a good drive for raptors and during the course of the day we had added Black-winged Kite, Brown Snake Eagle, Bateleur, African Hawk Eagle and Grasshopper Buzzard to the list. A few other new species for the trip included Helmeted Guineafowl, White-crested Helmetshrike, Piapiac, Senegal Eremomela, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Sahel Bush Sparrow and Vitelline Masked Weaver.

The next day we headed along rough roads down towards the border with Guinea and the area around Dindefelo 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 and although nightbirds were sadly lacking, we managed to spot some cute Northern Lesser Galagos and as the dawn broke the dry bush came alive. A productive stop gave us a Western Banded Snake Eagle, gaudy Violet Turacos, screeching Senegal Parrots, colourful Bruce's Green Pigeons and marvelously grotesque Bearded Barbets. We were lucky to find a pair of Dorst's Cisticola feeding on the ground and other small birds included Eurasian Wryneck, Senegal Batis, Black-crowned Tchagra, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Melodious Warbler, Northern Black Flycatcher, Pygmy Sunbird, Black-rumped Waxbill and Yellow-fronted Canary.



*The Narina Trogon (left) at Dindefelo has greenish facial wattles and are more likely to be the race brachyurum than the listed constantia, which has large, fleshy yellow wattles. The diminutive Yellow Penduline Tit (right) was a great addition to the list as we journeyed back at the end of the day. (Nik Borrow)*

With all of these new birds we were somewhat later arriving at Dindefelo itself than we had hoped but the walk to one of the cascades that tumble down the high, craggy 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 many of the available branches were bedecked with drying laundry! In this place Blackcap and Brown Babblers squabbled from the tangles, we managed to view some spiky-crested Guinea Turacos and watched a male Narina Trogon sitting quietly in the shadows. The change of habitat brought a rush of new birds for the trip and gave us Red-eyed Dove, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Cardinal Woodpecker, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Northern Puffback, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Yellow-billed Shrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, African Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Northern Yellow White-eye, African Thrush, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, European Pied Flycatcher, Familiar Chat, Green-headed Sunbird, Black-necked Weaver and Lavender Waxbill. We stayed until after lunch at a small campment and as we were leaving the area Lesser Blue-eared and Bronze-tailed Starlings were seen.

The day proved rather good for raptors and in particular falcons and during our time here we noted African Harrier Hawk, Lizard Buzzard, *rufescens* Common Kestrel, Grey Kestrel, Red-necked Falcon, Lanner Falcon and ultimately what was to be our first Fox Kestrel. Also, in the late afternoon we found a pair of excitable Red-winged Prinia, some exceedingly colourful Northern Carmine Bee-eaters and at the very end of the day the calls of a Yellow Penduline Tit reached our ears and it wasn't long before we all had this desirable species in view.

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 worked out well as we found several birds sporting a variety of plumages feeding in an area that had been recently burnt and everyone enjoyed excellent views.



*Mali Firefinches gave themselves up relatively easily this tour! (Nik Borrow)*

We spent the rest of the morning exploring the area and although we heard a Neumann's Starling fly by only one of us actually got a brief view of it disappearing fast and sadly, we couldn't relocate it. An impressive Martial Eagle flew over, an angry Pearl-spotted Owlet upset the local birds and we had close views of both Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver and Gosling's Bunting. At a bush fire we were treated to some amazing views of about five Fox Kestrels looking for a hot meal! The afternoon was spent in some other areas nearer to Kedougou where we were successful in finding Sun Lark. Fine-spotted Woodpecker was also new for the list and at dusk we lucked upon an unexpected female Red-necked Nightjar.

Our time in the Kedougou area was drawing to a close but one last early morning visit to some productive bush added a distant Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, White-shouldered Black Tit, Yellow-bellied Hylia and Grey Tit-Flycatcher. 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.



*Blue-breasted Kingfisher (left) and Malachite Kingfisher (right) could be seen easily during the Wassadou boat trips. (Nik Borrow)*

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 get up close to 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.



*Red-throated Bee-eaters (left) breed in the steep banks at Wassadou and White-crowned Lapwings (right) can be seen on the sand banks. (Nik Borrow)*

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 and Giant Kingfishers. Numerous Red-throated Bee-eaters were busy at their nests in the sandy banks of the river and other waterside birds included White-crowned and African Wattled Lapwings, Hadada Ibis, Striated Heron, Swamp Flycatcher and African Pied Wagtail. White-backed Night Heron was heard but we stood no chance of seeing the bird.

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, Gabar Goshawk and Shikra taking advantage of the thirst-quenching waters.

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! Bantam-like Stone Partridges were seen as were Klaas's Cuckoo, Broad-billed Roller, Orange-cheeked Waxbill and for a lucky few, Red-winged Pytilia!

Pearl-spotted Owlet and a Greyish Eagle-Owl in its roost hole were seen by day whilst at night we saw a fantastic little African Scops Owl.

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. Unfortunately, there was a lot of disturbance in the area and the bird was not at home. 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 although we didn't see that many, this is surely one of the great wildlife spectacles in the world! (Nik Borrow)*

We had arrived in good time but it was sometime before the first Scissor-tailed Kites were spotted as tiny specks high in the skies above us. 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 until at a given time, with wings folded back the first ones came hurtling down to land in the trees around us. Now that the first had taken this bold step more and more joined until the trees were bedecked by kites. 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 was waiting and made our way back to the minibus as the sun sank below the horizon. 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 inside 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 Bar-tailed Godwit was added to our wader list. 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 and our time seemed to be fast running out but suddenly there the bird itself was perched inside the vegetation and very difficult to

see. The boatman skillfully manoeuvred the boat but it was almost impossible to make out the bird amongst the arched roots. As fortune would have it, ultimately everyone saw it quite clearly as it flew out right next to us and over the boat to land in the mangroves on the other side of the river. We simply could not believe our luck!

Another attempt to see the bird the following morning was successful as it was more or less in the same place but once again chose to keep inside the mangroves but this time the light was better.



*In the Saloum, we saw the highly desirable White-crested Tiger Heron (left) on two occasions and a superb juvenile Dwarf Bittern (right) (Nik Borrow)*

The rest of our time in the region was mostly spent on land in the surrounding dry bush country. We made a special attempt to see another roosting Verreaux's Eagle-Owl which this time ended in success. Attempts to relocate some Bronze-winged Coursers that were seen on our previous tour drew a blank but instead we found Four-banded Sandgrouse, Purple Roller, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Singing Cisticola and Plain-backed Pipit. Overhead a Short-toed Snake Eagle was spotted and we also saw a juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and another Martial Eagle. At a nearby dam, we picked out both Mosque and West African Swallow as well as Pallid Swift, African Green Pigeon, African Golden Oriole, Variable Sunbird and Tree Pipit. The big surprise and bonus bird here was the discovery of a juvenile Dwarf Bittern that allowed some excellent views.

Greater Honeyguide and another Greyish Eagle-Owl was found in our hotel garden and a walk in a wetland area on the last morning of the tour gave us Pin-tailed Whydah, a good number of Greater Painted-snipe and up to 10 Bluethroats as well as flushed Jack Snipe and Common Quail,

Our West African adventure had finally come to an end and what an experience 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 grace of the Scissor-tailed Kite roost in the Saloum. 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!



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

## 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: 359**

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata* Abundant in the Djoudj area and c. 150 at Wassadou.

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

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis* Small numbers in the Djoudj area.

**Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Good numbers in the far north.

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

**African Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus auritus* 2 in the Djoudj NP and c. 16 at Marigot 2.

**Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* This Palearctic migrant was very common in the Djoudj NP.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* Hundreds of this Palearctic migrant in the Djoudj NP.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* 4 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Numerous around Niokolo Koba and Wassadou.

**Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus* Heard more than seen in the south-east and again at Toubacouta.

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* 5 of these Palearctic migrants flushed at Keur Mama Lamine.

**Double-spurred Spurfowl** *Pternistis bicalcaratus* Widespread sightings during the tour

**Red-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruficollis* A female of this Palearctic migrant at dusk near Kedougou on 15/2.

**Golden Nightjar** *Caprimulgus eximius* 2 males and a female seen well at Podor in the late afternoons.

**Long-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus climacurus* First seen at Podor with more widespread sightings during the tour.

**Mottled Spinetail** *Telacanthura ussheri* Widespread sightings and most common around Toubacouta.

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

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* 2 + at Nema Ba.

**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.

**White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Seen by some at Nema Ba.

**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* 2 seen well at Dindefelo.

**Arabian Bustard** *Ardeotis arabs* 1 seen well in Djoudj NP.

**Savile's Bustard** *Lophotis savilei* A male seen well near Marigot 2 and another flushed on Kousmar Island.

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

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

**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* About 20 were seen in flight in Djoudj NP.

**Four-banded Sandgrouse** *Pterocles quadricinctus* A pair at Nema Ba.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia* Domestic birds only.

**Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea* Common and widespread.

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* Only small numbers (c.60) of this Palearctic migrant.

**Adamawa Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia hypopyrrha* Good numbers at Wassadou with up to 45 in a single day.



*The Adamawa Turtle Dove is a localised species that is seemingly common at Wassadou. (Nik Borrow)*

**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* Seen well at Dindefelo.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* Common and widespread.

**Bruce's Green Pigeon** *Treron waalia* Small numbers at Dindefelo 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* Small numbers in Djoudj NP.

**Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni* An immature was seen in the Djoudj NP.

**African Swamphen** *Porphyrio madagascariensis* Small numbers in Djoudj NP and at Marigot 2.

**Black Crake** *Amaurornis flavirostra* Small numbers in suitable habitat during the tour.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 30+ seen in Djoudj NP.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* 100+ in the Djoudj NP.

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

**Common Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus* (NL) Mike flushed 1 at Nema Ba.

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

**Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedichnemus* A flock of c. 40 of these Palearctic migrants at Richard-Toll.

**Senegal Thick-knee** *Burhinus senegalensis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and 6+ 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.



A flock of c.40 Eurasian Stone-curlews (left) was a great sight at Richard Toll. White-crowned Lapwings (right) allowed close approach in the boats at Wassadou. (Nik Borrow)

**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 Saloum.

**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.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* A Palearctic migrant first seen in the semi desert near Podor!

**Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius* Small numbers 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 6 counted.

**Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* A pair in Djoudj NP but more numerous in the Saloum area.

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus* Widespread sightings in suitable habitat during the tour.

**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.



We enjoyed a number of sightings of Greater Painted-snipe (left). The Senegalese wetlands are great places to observe wintering Palearctic waders, Eurasian Whimbrel (right). (Nik Borrow)

- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* A few Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and in the Saloum.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* 6 of these Palearctic migrants in the Saloum.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Palearctic migrants with small numbers in the Djoudj area.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* 3 of these Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* 3 of these Palearctic migrants seen at Saint-Louis.
- Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* Good numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj area.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Good numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the north.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* 2 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.
- Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants flushed at Keur Mama Lamine.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj area and the Saloum.
- 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 a few in the Saint-Louis area.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Palearctic migrants in the far north and at Keur Mama Lamine.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Palearctic migrants at suitable wetlands throughout.
- Temminck's Courser** *Cursorius temminckii* A pair seen well at Richard-Toll and at Marigot 2.
- 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.
- Mediterranean Gull** *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* A 2CY bird at Saint-Louis.
- 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 albididorsalis* Small numbers seen at St-Louis and 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.
- White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* c.100 of this Palearctic migrant in the Djoudj NP.
- Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* 5 of these Palearctic migrants at Kaolack.
- Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)** *Stercorarius parasiticus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis.
- Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* 5 in the Djoudj NP, 2 at Marigot 2 and 1 in the Saloum.

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*** 10+ of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP and 14 at Marigot 2.



A great mixed flock at Marigot 2 including Black Stork, Eurasian and African Spoonbills and Pink-backed Pelican. (Nik Borrow)

- Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*** 3 juveniles at sea from Saint-Louis.
- 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*** Often abundant 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 1 seen at Marigot 2.
- White-crested Tiger Heron *Tigriornis leucolopha*** 1 seen on 2 occasions in the Saloum.
- Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*** Great looks at a juvenile at Nema Ba.
- White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* (H)** Heard at Wassadou.
- Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*** Small numbers in the Djoudj NP, Marigot 2 and Wassadou.
- Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata*** Small numbers at Wassadou and in the Saloum.
- 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*** 3+ in the Saloum.
- Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*** Small numbers in the far north and Saloum.
- 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.
- Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*** Widespread sightings in wetland areas.
- Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*** Common in the Djoudj NP.
- 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 4 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 and 6 between there and Darou Mousty.



Big birds in the Kebemer region! Eurasian Griffon Vulture (left) and Lappet-faced Vulture (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* 1 sighting of this Palearctic migrant at Nema Ba.

**Beaudouin's Snake Eagle** *Circaetus beaudouini* An adult near Kedougou and a juvenile at Nema Ba.

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

**Western Banded Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens* 6 sightings in the south!

**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* Small numbers in the Niokolo Koba area.

**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* Singletons near Kedougou and Nema Ba.

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* Repeated views of probably the same pair at Wassadou.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* (NL) 1 seen in the Toubacouta area.

**African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster* 4 individuals seen in the south.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* 6 widespread sightings in the south.

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* 8 widespread sightings in the south.

**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* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* A Palearctic migrant, most common 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* 7 sightings en route to Kedougou and 1 as we drove back to Dakar.

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

**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* 4 sightings in the south.

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

**Northern White-faced Owl** *Ptilopsis leucotis* Seen well at Ranch de Bango.

**Greyish Eagle-Owl *Bubo cinerascens*** 1 at a day roost at Wassadou and another in the garden at Toubacouta.  
**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus*** Seen at a daytime roost near Toubacouta.



*Western Banded Snake Eagle at Wassadou (left) and Pearl-spotted Owlet (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus*** Easy to see in the north.  
**Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*** Good views of a male at Dindefelo.  
**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*** 1 seen by all in the Podor area.  
**Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*** 2 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.



*Abyssinian Roller (left) is common and always a favourite! Blue-bellied Roller (right). (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* Singletons near Podor and 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.  
**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* Singletons at Dindefelo and Wassadou.  
**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers in suitable wetland habitat.  
**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* Easily seen at Wassadou and in the Saloum.  
**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.  
**African Green Bee-eater (Little G B-e)** *Merops viridissimus* Easily seen in the far north.



*Little Bee-eater (left) at Wassadou. The recently split African Green Bee-eater (right) was easily seen in the north. (Nik Borrow)*

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP but more in the Saloum Delta.  
**Northern Carmine Bee-eater** *Merops nubicus* Seen between Dindefelo and Kedougou and also at Wassadou.  
**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Widespread sightings during the 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.  
**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* A male at Tambacouta.  
**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* This Palearctic migrant was seen at Dindefelo.  
**Fine-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera punctuligera* Numerous sightings in the south.  
**Little Grey Woodpecker** *Dendropicus elachus* A pair was seen between Thiès and Kebemer.  
**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicus fuscescens* Several sightings in the south-east.  
**African Grey Woodpecker (Grey W)** *Dendropicus goertae* Regularly encountered in the south.  
**Brown-backed Woodpecker** *Dendropicus obsoletus* (NL) Mike saw 1 at Kedougou.  
**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 at Dindefelo and at 5 at a bush fire in the Kedougou area.  
**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaecus* Widespread sightings in the south.  
**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.  
**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.

**Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W-e) *Platysteira cyanea*** Easily seen at Dindefelo and Wassadou.  
**Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*** Singletons at Dindefelo and 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.



*Fox Kestrels proved easy to see in the Kedougou area (left) and the stunning Yellow-crowned Gonolek flaunted itself at Wassadou. (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Brubru *Nilaus afer*** First seen at Richard Toll but mostly encountered in the south-east.  
**White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus*** Several family groups were seen well.  
**Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*** 3 sightings at Dindefelo and Wassadou.  
**Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvina*** Small numbers of this sociable shrike seen in the south.



*White-crested Helmetshrike (left) and Yellow-billed Shrike (right)*

**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 near Nema Ba.  
**Glossy-backed Drongo *Dicrurus divaricatus*** Widespread sightings in small numbers throughout the tour.  
**African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*** Seen well at Dindefelo and Wassadou.  
**Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*** Small family groups encountered at widespread localities throughout.  
**Pied Crow *Corvus albus*** Abundant and often associated with human habitation.  
**Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*** A pair near Podor here at the edge of their range.  
**African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*** 4 of these pretty birds seen well at Dindefelo and a couple at Wassadou.  
**White-shouldered Black Tit *Melaniparus guineensis*** 4 seen near Kedougou.  
**Sennar Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus punctifrons*** 1 seen well near Richard-Toll.

**Yellow Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus parvulus* Seen on 2 occasions in the Kedougou area.  
**Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps* Large numbers in the far north.  
**Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucotis* Small numbers at widespread localities.  
**Singing Bush Lark** *Mirafra cantillans* 1 seen at the Quail-plover site.  
**Sun Lark** *Galerida modesta* 2 pairs in the Kedougou area.



A male Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (left) and Sun Lark (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Very common in the north.  
**Yellow-throated Leaflove** *Atimastillas flavicollis* 3 at Dindefelo.  
**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus* Seen daily, common throughout.  
**Sand Martin (Common S M, Bank Swallow)** *Riparia riparia* A Palearctic migrant abundant in the north.  
**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* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant at widespread localities.  
**Mosque Swallow** *Cecropis senegalensis* Small numbers in the Toubacouta area.  
**West African Swallow** *Cecropis domicella* Small numbers in the Toubacouta area.



West African Swallows were seen in the Toubacouta area (left) Western Olivaceous Warbler (right) (Nik Borrow)

**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* (NL) 1 of these Palearctic migrants in the Saloum.  
**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* 1 of these Palearctic migrants in Djoudj NP.  
**Iberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus ibericus* Yellow-vented birds in the Djoudj and Wassadou presumably this species.  
**Greater Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus rufescens* Sightings at Marigot 2.  
**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* A Palearctic migrant, seen at Marigot 2 and Keur Mama Lamine.  
**Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Marigot 2.

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

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* Sightings of these Palearctic migrants in the Kedougou area.

**Singing Cisticola** *Cisticola cantans* 1 for some at Dindefelo and another for all at Nema Ba.

**Winding Cisticola** *Cisticola marginatus* 2 seen at Marigot 2.

**Dorst's Cisticola** *Cisticola guinea* A pair seen at Dindefelo.

**Rufous Cisticola** *Cisticola rufus* (NL) 1 seen by some in the Kedougou area.

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

**Desert Cisticola** *Cisticola aridulus* 2 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.

**Cricket Warbler** *Spiloptila clamans* Superb encounters in the Podor area.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* Seen at Dindefelo and heard at Wassadou.

**Oriole Warbler** *Hypergerus atriceps* Seen well 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* 3 sightings of these Palearctic migrants.

**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* Easily seen at Dindefelo.

**Fulvous Babbler** *Argya fulva* Just 1 seen near Podor.

**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.

**Yellow-bellied Hyliota** *Hyliota flavigaster* A great sighting of a pair near Kedougou.

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

**Lesser Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chloropterus* 1 seen well at Dindefelo.

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

**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.



*Desert Cisticola at the Quail-plover site (left) and Chestnut-bellied Starling (right). (Nik Borrow)*

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

**Neumann's Starling** *Onychognathus neumanni* Frustratingly heard by Nik and glimpsed by Mike as it whizzed by.

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* Widespread sightings but only small numbers.

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

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



*The colourful Long-tailed Glossy Starling is an absolute looker! (Nik Borrow)*

**Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas [galactotes] minor* 3 sightings of 'African' Scrub Robins.  
**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F)** *Myioparus plumbeus* Just 1 near Kedougou.  
**Northern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edoloides* 1 at Dindéfelo and more at Wassadou.  
**Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* Easily seen along the river at Wassadou.  
**Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla* Heard more than seen at Dindéfelo.  
**White-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha albicapillus* Easily seen at Wassadou and in the Saloum.  
**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* 1 at Marigot 2 and 10 at Keur Mama Lamine were all Palearctic migrant *cyaneola*.  
**European Pied Flycatcher (Pied F)** *Ficedula hypoleuca* 3 sightings of these Palearctic migrants in the south.  
**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 8 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.

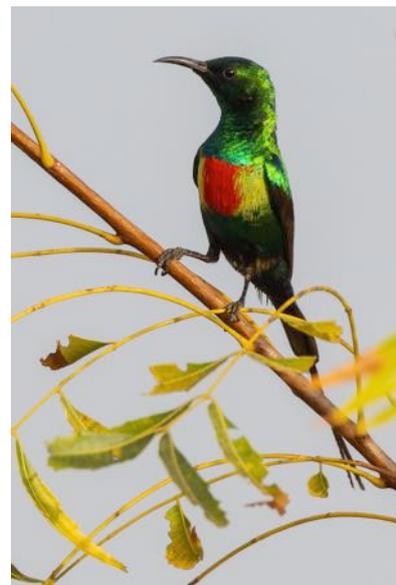


*Atlas or 'Seeböhm's' Wheatear at Richard Toll (left) and Mangrove Sunbird (right) in the Saloum. (Nik Borrow)*

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* 2 of these Palearctic migrants in Djoudj NP.  
**Western Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica* 2 of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Podor area.  
**Familiar Chat** *Oenanthe familiaris* Small numbers in the Kedougou area.  
**Mangrove Sunbird (Brown S)** *Anthreptes gabonicus* Small numbers seen well in the Saloum Delta.  
**Pygmy Sunbird** *Hedydipna platyura* Plenty seen well, mainly in the south.  
**Green-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra verticalis* A pair was seen at Dindéfelo.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*** Regularly encountered in the south.

**Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*** Common and widespread throughout the tour.



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

**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*** 2 seen in the Kedougou area.



Sudan Golden Sparrows are abundant in the north (left) A pair of Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver in the Kedougou area (right) (Nik Borrow)

**Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*** Seen en route to the north.

**Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*** Small numbers at widespread localities.

**Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*** Seen well at Dindéfelo.

**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.

**Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*** Common throughout with huge swirling flocks in the north.

**Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer*** 1 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 Saloum.

**African Silverbill (Warbling S)** *Euodice cantans* Common in the north.

**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 around Kedougou but easily seen at Wassadou.

**Cut-throat Finch** *Amadina fasciata* Small numbers in the north.

**Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W)** *Amandava subflava* Good looks in the Djoudj area and again at Marigot 2.

**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus* Widespread and particularly common in the south-east.

**Red-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia phoenicoptera* (NL) A pair for Nick and Mike at Wassadou.

**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala* The common and widespread firefinch.

**Mali Firefinch** *Lagonosticta virata* At least 6 seen well in the Cheioune area.

**Bar-breasted Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rufopicta* 2 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.

**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua orientalis* 1 at Keur Mama Lamine.

**Sahel Paradise Whydah** *Vidua orientalis* Males in breeding plumage en route to Tambacounda.

**Western Yellow Wagtail (Y W)** *Motacilla [flava] flavissima* 2 sightings of this Palearctic migrant in the far north.

**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.

**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.

**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* A pair at Nema Ba.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Nema Ba and 3 at Keur Mama Lamine.

**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 (left) Gosling's Bunting was easily seen in the Kedougou area. (Nik Borrow)

## MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 19

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

**Marsh Mongoose** *Atilax paludinosus* Seen at Wassadou and in the Saloum.

**Egyptian Mongoose** *Herpestes ichneumon* (NL) 1 seen by Steve at Wassadou.

**African Golden Wolf** *Canis anthus* At least 5 seen well in Djoudj NP and 1 at Kousmar Island.

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

**Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus scriptus* 1 seen at Wassadou.

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



*African Golden Wolf in Djoudj NP. (Nik Borrow)*

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

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

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

**Green Monkey (Callithrix M)** *Chlorocebus sabaues*. 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 couple seen at Wassadou.

**Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus gambianus* Small numbers in the south-east.

**Striped Ground Squirrel (Geoffrey's G S)** *Xerus erythropus* Widespread sightings.

**Gambian Rat** *Cricetomys gambianus* (NL) ! for Steve at Ranch de Bango.

**African Grass Rat (Unstriped G R)** *Arvicanthis niloticus* (NL) 1 near Darou Mousty.



*Saloum Baobab. (Nik Borrow)*