



The trip highlight was certainly our wonderful daytime encounter with the gorgeous Golden Nightjar perfectly camouflaged against the sandy soils. (Nik Borrow)

SENEGAL

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LEADER: NIK BORROW

Our third Senegal only tour (earlier tours combining with either The Gambia or Cape Verde) continued the run of success of previous tours 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. The tiny Quail-plover rose up from under our feet and fortunately found some nearby vegetation to shelter in and consequently froze allowing prolonged views. For the Golden Nightjar we headed up to the northern border of the country with Mauritania where our first views were of at least four birds at night in the torch beam. We

were happy with these looks but a bird found at a daytime roost added a wholly different and unforgettable dimension to our experience! Also, in the far north we hunted out the exquisite little Cricket Warbler as well as Little Grey Woodpecker and Sennar Penduline Tit. 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 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 and the rather more impressive Arabian Bustard whilst near Saint-Louis we found the smaller Savile's Bustard and marvelled at the number of Allen's Gallinules. In the south-east of the country we found the Mali Firefinch fairly easily and also added our own first to the Senegalese bird list in the form of a Willcocks's Honeyguide! A fine supporting cast included Sun Lark, Dorst's Cisticola and Yellow Penduline Tit. 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 plenty of African Finfoot although for most of us the fully-plumaged male Standard-winged Nightjar stole the show! 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 was ultimately the icing on the cake. Other notable or restricted range species seen included; Stone Partridge, Double-spurred Francolin, White-backed Night Heron, 'Mauritanian' Grey Heron, Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, Audouin's Gull, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Violet Turaco, Blue-bellied Roller, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Vieillot's and Bearded Barbets, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Fox Kestrel, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, West African Swallow, Iberian Chiffchaff, Rufous Cisticola, Fulvous Babbler, Chestnut-bellied Starling, White-crowned Robin-Chat, Seebohm's Wheatear, Pygmy Sunbird, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Heuglin's Masked Weaver, Red-winged Pytilia, Black-bellied and Black-faced Firefinches, Lavender Waxbill, Sahel Paradise Whydah, White-rumped Seedeater and Gosling's Bunting.



This female Little Grey Woodpecker (a Sahelian specialty) posed nicely for us in the Richard-Toll area. (Nik Borrow)

Our tour began in Dakar arriving at the new and trouble-free airport in the late afternoon where we met up with Carlos, (our superb local guide) and were transported swiftly along a new highway to a small hotel in Thiès some thirty minutes away. Helmeted Guineafowl, Western Cattle Egret, Montagu's Harrier, Yellow-billed Kite, Laughing Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Pied Crow and House Sparrow were all seen during the short journey but it was late by the time we arrived and so we freshened up and enjoyed a good meal (the Chicken Yassa a specialty!) before bedtime.

After a good night's sleep, we breakfasted at seven (sunrise wasn't until half past!) and were all set to leave until Phil announced that the key to his room had broken in the lock and his stuff was inside! The broken key was successfully removed for us only to discover that there was no spare. In an attempt to find another way into the room, a 'leader only' pair of Greyish Eagle-Owls from the roof did nothing to improve the situation and we impatiently waited for a workman who eventually arrived and jemmied the door open. The time was spent watching Speckled Pigeon, Laughing Dove, Common Bulbul, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Village Weaver, Red-billed Firefinch, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu and African Silverbill but finally no more than an hour behind schedule we boarded our minibuses and set off on a long drive north 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 spotted regularly along the way were Vinaceous and Namaqua Doves, Western Plantain-eater, Abyssinian Roller, Western Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills and Long-tailed Glossy and Chestnut-bellied Starlings. A brief leg-stretch gave us an opportunity to see Hooded, White-backed and Griffon Vultures, Blue-naped Mousebird, Vieillot's Barbet, Woodchat Shrike, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Yellow-bellied Eremomela and Scarlet-chested and Beautiful Sunbirds but time was of the essence and we had to press on.



Yellow-billed Kite (left) was one of the most common species seen during the drive northwards towards Richard-Toll where we encountered the Sennar Penduline Tit, a Sahelian specialty. (Nik Borrow)

As we passed the historic town of Saint-Louis on the Senegal River we spotted large numbers of waterbirds that included Eurasian Spoonbill, Grey Heron, Great Egret, Western Reef Heron, Hamerkop, Pink-backed Pelican, Reed Cormorant, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Sandpiper and Black-headed and Grey-headed Gulls. Other species recorded during the journey included Black-headed Heron, Western Marsh Harrier, Black-headed Lapwing, Mourning Collared Dove, Senegal Coucal, Purple Roller, Malachite Kingfisher, Piapiac, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Crested Lark, Sand Martin Barn Swallow, Common House Martin, Anteater Chat and Northern Wheatear. We stopped for a delicious fish lunch in Richard Toll (named after

gardens laid out by Claude Richard for the Chateau de Baron Roger) in a hotel by the banks of the Senegal River.

The hotel garden held Western Olivaceous Warbler and Black-headed Weavers and after lunch we made our way through the town passing the election campaign of Macky Sall who was seeking a second term as president of Senegal. Large numbers of supporters lined the streets and even larger numbers of police and military but we found our way through and headed to an area which proved to hold some very special Sahelian endemics. First up was a female Little Grey Woodpecker that posed very nicely the sighting only being marred by the fact that it's nesting tree had been cut down sometime in the previous two weeks since Carlos's last visit! Shortly after this success we found a pair of Sennar Penduline Tit nearby and large flocks of small birds often proved to be Sudan Golden Sparrows which held many decently plumaged male birds. Colourful Green Bee-eaters were seen well and we also found Squacco Heron, Eurasian Hoopoe, African Grey Woodpecker, Brubru, Fork-tailed Drongo, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Blue-headed and White Wagtails and Tree Pipit before continuing to the Podor area where at the end of the day we hoped to see Golden Nightjar. Some Collared Pratincoles hawked over the surrounding open land and as dusk fell sure enough the hiccupping cries of the Golden Nightjar reached our ears. We strained our eyes in the gloom not wishing to scare the bird away as it did not sound too distant. Eventually a shadowy shape was seen to lift off the ground and the hunt was now on with our torches and during our search we counted at least four Golden Nightjars in total and several Long-tailed Nightjars. Success was sweet and it had been an absolutely superb day so we headed into Podor where fortunately Macky Sall's entourage had not ousted us from our pleasant hotel on the Senegal River.



Sudan Golden Sparrows can be seen in their hundreds (or more!) in northern Senegal. (Nik Borrow)

It was another sunny day as we headed out the next 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. Chestnut-

bellied Sandgrouse were flying to their drinking areas and pretty Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks were much in evidence. Palearctic migrant European Turtle Dove, Western Orphean and Subalpine Warblers and Tawny Pipit showed well and we were pleased to find a family party of Fulvous Babblers. 'Southern' Great Grey Shrikes were dotted around and we obtained good looks at African Collared Dove. Flocks of Red-billed Quelea were moving through but there was no sign of the warbler itself so we moved onwards to another area where the characterful Black Scrub Robin flaunted itself and we also found Dark Chanting Goshawk, Little Ringed Plover, 'Central African' Eurasian Hoopoe, Green Wood Hoopoe, Northern Crombec and Village Indigobird before locking into our ultimate quarry, a fine pair of Cricket Warblers that were busy feeding on the ground and in the low bushes around us.



The beautifully marked little Cricket Warbler was seen on several occasions in the far north. Male left and female right. (Nik Borrow)

After lunch we found a roadside Barbary Falcon and visited a site where some months previously Horus Swifts (a new species for Senegal) had been discovered. We were pleased to find them apparently still breeding in the cliffs overhanging the river where Green Bee-eaters were also nesting. Other birds seen in this area were Little Egret, Senegal Thick-knee, Green Sandpiper, Pied Kingfisher and Little Swift but as the afternoon drew on we returned to the site where we had found the Golden Nightjar the previous day in an attempt to find one at a daytime roost. Some Kittlitz's Plovers greeted us on arrival and we set off in a search that resembled looking for a needle in a haystack but to everyone's surprise we were ultimately successful and after some walking a male Golden Nightjar put up from under our feet and settled close by, fortuitously in the open so amazing views were had by all!

After our stay at Podor we headed back westwards admiring some Seebohm's Wheatears en route. At a roadside pool we found our first White-faced Whistling Ducks, Black Stork, Black-crowned Night Heron, Black-winged Kite, African Jacana, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper and Common Greenshank. A birding stop in the Richard Toll area produced more Cricket Warblers and wide-eyed Spotted Thick-knees, Common Kestrel and an Isabelline Wheatear before we headed on to the Djoudj National Park, arriving in time for lunch.

As we approached the park 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 (very) distant skies along with Greater and Lesser Flamingos, herons, storks, ibises and wildfowl that included vast numbers of White-faced Whistling Duck. However, we delayed our further exploration of the Grand Lac as we wanted to find an Arabian Bustard and we made several stops before a distant pair was spotted and we obtained what we decided were perfectly fine scope views. Some minutes later we came across another one that crossed the road in front of us and immediately put our previous views to shame. Needless to say, that no-one was complaining! With this species comfortably under the belt

we drove further to reach the Grand Lac itself. Sadly, the majority of wildfowl were so far out that even with the aid of a telescope it was not possible to identify some of the black dots that undoubtedly included Northern Pintail a species normally present in their thousands that we never actually managed to knowingly see! We did however manage to tick off Egyptian Goose, Northern Shoveler, Yellow-billed Stork, Glossy Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill and White-breasted Cormorant and there were a number of waders along the shoreline that included Pied Avocet, African Wattled Lapwing, Common Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Little Stint, Marsh Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank. Whiskered Terns flew over the lake and we also found Western Osprey, Short-toed Eagle, Pallid Harrier, Little Bee-eater, Winding Cisticola, Orange-breasted Waxbill and 'British' *flavissima* Yellow and 'Spanish' *iberiae* Wagtails. We decided to try elsewhere for waterfowl and en route found some dapper Cream-coloured Coursers but at Lac de Khar the ducks were absent as the lake was bone dry. Some Black Crowned Cranes were loafing on the arid flats but as it was by now the end of the day we headed back to the hotel where a Western Barn Owl was seen by one of the group.



The Arabian Bustard still finds refuge in the Djoudj National Park. (Gary Howard)

We began the next day by the hotel where we successfully gained some good looks at several Greater Painted-snipe in the muddy margins to the lagoons. We also hunted out the unassuming River Prinia a species that had hidden in plain sight until as recently as 1974 when it was described by Claude Chappuis who had noticed the substantially different song of these water-loving prinias. We also 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.

The Djoudj is an important wetland that lies in the Senegal delta and an important staging post and wintering area for migratory birds, well-known for its huge colony of Great White Pelicans and a boat trip into the heart of the breeding colony was an absolutely unforgettable experience. The young were quite well grown by this time of year and the frenzied flapping and exercising of 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 with Palarctic migrant Garganey alongside resident Spur-winged Goose, Knob-billed Duck and the delightful little African Pygmy Goose. Gull-billed, Caspian and Sandwich Terns dived for fish around us and African Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, Black Heron and African Darters were all seen along the reedy margins of the waterway where majestic African Fish Eagles perched up and Black Crake, African Swampphen and Common Moorhens scuttled for cover. Greater Swamp and Sedge Warblers sought the shelter of the reedbeds and we also encountered Common Snipe, Common Redshank, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and Whinchat.



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

From Djoudj we travelled the short distance to the outskirts of Saint-Louis for two nights stay at Ranch de Bango and in the afternoon we headed out to search for another Sahelian specialty, the Savile's Bustard. We stopped en route for a large flock of migrant Black Kites at a rubbish tip and later to admire some Long-tailed Nightjars at their day roost. Our first Senegal Batis and Double-spurred Francolin were seen and when the day had cooled a little we continued to an area where Carlos had been seeing the bustard only to find that vast areas had been cleared since his last visit a few weeks ago and we wondered how this would affect our chances of seeing the bird. We spent some time cruising up and down and peering hard under bushes and finally our quarry was spotted and fortuitously we all had prolonged views of a fine male.

The late afternoon found us by an attractive marigot that despite being extremely busy with people seemed to be teeming with rallids and was generally very birdy. Very quickly we had our next target in site which was the handsome Allen's Gallinule shining out in colours that seemed to glow in the perfect late afternoon light. At least ten individuals were seen but there were probably more and we enjoyed some excellent scope views of the closest. Some yellow-vented chiffchaffs watched here were presumably Iberian Chiffchaffs but they could not be persuaded to sing to prove their identity 100%! A small flock of Fulvous Whistling Duck put in an appearance and other new birds for the tour included Little Grebe, Striped Kingfisher and Eurasian Reed Warbler thus bringing an immensely varied and action-packed day to a successful end.



River Prinia (left) was commonly heard in the Djoudj and we saw a few there. This male *Savile's Bustard* (right) kept its distance but the views were superb! (Nik Borrow)

It was another fine day so we knew that unusual seabirds were not going to be on the agenda for our visit to the town of Saint-Louis and the Langue de Barbarie. Nonetheless we found a 'Mauritanian' or 'Pallid' Grey Heron of the race *monicae* in the shallows of the lagoon in sight of the historical city itself which was teeming with people coming and going amongst the old colonial buildings and as we drove through the streets we gained a fascinating snapshot glimpse of the culture. Further along the coast there were Northern Gannets out at sea and congregations of gulls and terns on exposed sand bars included Slender-billed Gulls, *gracillii* Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 'West African' *albidorsalis* Royal Terns. Shorebirds were much in evidence and we added Eurasian Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling to the list.



The historical city 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. Somewhere in this picture a 'Mauritanian' or 'Pallid' Grey Heron is fishing! (Nik Borrow)

We returned to Ranch de Bango for lunch and birded the grounds which gave us a few new species including Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Greater Honeyguide, Senegal Parrot, Common Chiffchaff, Common Whitethroat, Common Redstart and after having frequently heard them, finally obtained excellent views of the stunning Yellow-crowned Gonolek. In the afternoon we trudged over the dry rice fields of Ross-Bethio. We saw our first White-rumped Seedeaters on the way and in the dry fields we flushed Common Quail, Singing Bush Lark, Zitting Cisticola, Quailfinch and Red-throated Pipit. The swirling flocks of Yellow-crowned and Northern Red Bishops and Red-billed Queleas were amazing and such a feature of this Sahelian landscape.

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. However, first we traversed many miles through prime territory for vultures and we clocked up a good number of them during the journey enjoying excellent views of Rüppell's and Lappet-faced Vultures as well as previously seen White-backed, Hooded and a number of Griffon Vultures. Yellow-billed Oxpeckers were also seen on what must have been some cattle in serious need of their attention. At another stop we watched thirsty Mottled Spinetails and Red-chested and Mosque Swallows coming to drink at a waterhole and a walkabout here produced Booted Eagle, Black-billed Wood Dove, Black-crowned Tchagra, 'African' Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Cut-throat Finch and a moulting male Sahel Paradise Whydah. 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. The Gods were smiling on us for after no more than ten minutes and to everyone's great surprise (and relief) we flushed a pair of Quail-plover and tracked one down to the clump of vegetation it was seeking refuge under for some astounding views at incredible close range. The bird was frozen to the spot but after a while relaxed and performed its strange chameleon-like walk before flying to more suitable cover but having had our fill with prolonged views we let it be and resumed our journey.



The highly unusual Quail-plover was out to challenge Golden Nightjar for 'bird of the trip'! We enjoyed astonishingly close views of this intricately marked and very beautiful bird. (Nik Borrow)

A little further on a Red-necked Falcon was seen and Desert Cisticola showed well but 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.

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 en route we found Brown Snake Eagle, African Grey Hornbill, Bearded Barbet, Yellow-billed Shrike, Pygmy Sunbird, Vitelline Masked Weaver and a rather special male Sahel Paradise Whydah in full breeding plumage. To top it all, our lunch stop produced three roosting Northern White-faced Owls but the drive through Niokolo Koba National Park was disappointing as eternally long road works meant that we drove for nearly 80 kilometres through a dust storm and the only birds of note were Stone Partridge and Bateleur.

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. As we headed southwards we made a number of stops and turned up new birds at every one. Violet Turacos, Blue-bellied Rollers and intensely coloured Purple Starlings caught the eye, the latter being particularly numerous. A few opportunistic stops turned up other species and we were pleased to find the easily overlooked Rufous Cisticola and a showy Red-winged Warbler that sang its heart out, dramatically flicking its wings and cocking its tail. Bush Petronias were really common and other species seen on the journey included Wahlberg's Eagle, Lizard Buzzard, Shikra, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Red-eyed Dove, Grey Kestrel, Lesser Honeyguide, White-crested Helmetshrike, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Heuglin's Masked Weaver (check the iris colour!), Black-rumped Waxbill, Bronze Mannikin, Pin-tailed Whydah and Yellow-fronted Canary. Carlos also did well to spot a Fox Kestrel circling around in the skies above us.

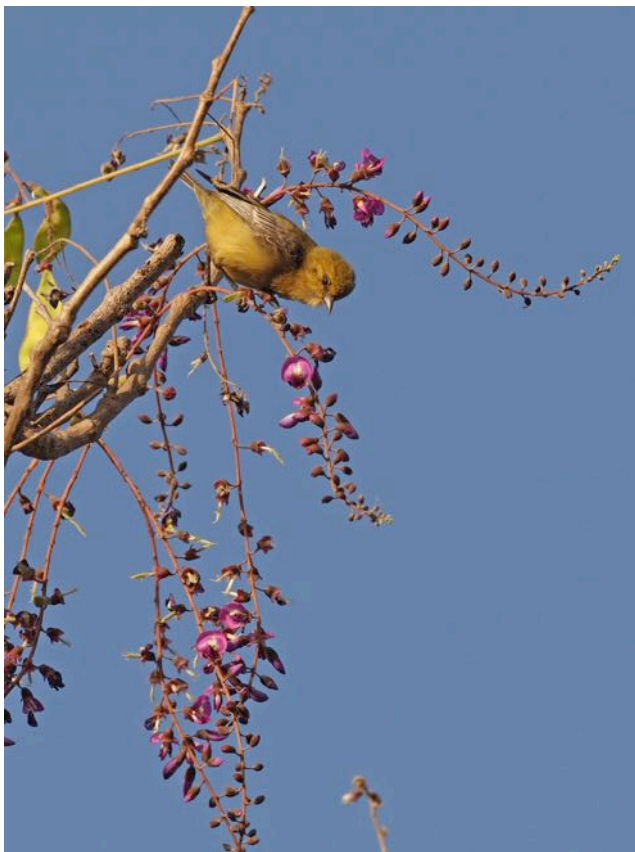


Violet Turaco (left) is one of the more spectacular West African endemics. A Willcock's Honeyguide (right) at Dindéfelo was a first for Senegal and a real surprise bonus! (Nik Borrow)

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! The birds also enjoyed this more comfortable environment and virtually the first species that we encountered turned out to be a new species for Senegal. A singing bird in the canopy of a large tree sounded very familiar but when it was seen the penny well and truly dropped and it was clear that we were watching a Willcock's Honeyguide! The nearest population is further west in Guinea-Bissau so the species isn't totally unexpected but it certainly came as a surprise! Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds hammered away through the heat of the day and further upstream a rich assortment of birds was found and despite the noise and disturbance from the local people we managed to view some spiky-crested Guinea Turacos and watched a male Narina Trogon sitting quietly in the shadows. Blackcap and Brown Babblers squabbled from the tangles and we also

encountered Cardinal Woodpecker, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Northern Puffback, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Yellow-breasted Apalis, African Paradise Flycatcher, African Blue Flycatcher, Senegal Eremomela, African Yellow White-eye, African Thrush, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat (heard only), European Pied Flycatcher, Familiar Chat, Green-headed Sunbird and Black-necked Weaver. Against the rocky escarpments glided numbers of Rock Martin but the hoped-for Neumann's Starling eluded us. After lunch we birded the road out where a Red-necked Buzzard was spotted gliding over the hilltops, some Four-banded Sandgrouse were flushed by the roadside and at the end of the day an angry Pearl-spotted Owlet attracted a number of birds including a Black-faced Firefinch that was sadly missed by most of the group.

The next morning our target was to find Mali Firefinch and rather than face a steep climb at Dindéfelo, 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 and all went according to plan except that our first views of the Mali Firefinches were of little birds disappearing fast! With patience we tracked down a flock of Lavender Waxbills that also held a few firefinches and eventually everyone managed to get some good views of them feeding on the ground amongst the dry leaf litter although the flock was a little skittish and would not allow terribly close approach but nonetheless we watched them for as long as we wished. Also, at the same site were a few Gosling's Buntings and Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Melodious Warbler and Red-headed Weaver. The afternoon was spent in some other areas nearer to Kedougou where we were successful in finding Sun Lark and the localised Dorst's Cisticola.



We were extremely pleased to encounter a party of Yellow Penduline Tits (left) near Kedougou and magnificently grotesque Bearded Barbets (right) were a feature of our stay in the south-east. (Gary Howard)

Our time in the Kedougou area was drawing to a close but one last early morning visit to some productive bush produced Black Scimitarbill and some pretty little Yellow Penduline Tits, a sparsely distributed species and never an easy bird to see anywhere in its range. Near the town we watched some Wire-tailed Swallows and then it was 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. African Finfoot was another species that proved to be astonishingly confiding and an immature bird in particular proved to be remarkably tolerant of the boat and the excited attentions of those on board! The superb Oriole Warbler was another West African specialty that allowed good views here and we also saw good numbers of the localised Adamawa Turtle Dove both from the river and also on land as good numbers favoured feeding in the fruiting trees near the camp.



Egyptian Plovers are astonishingly confiding on the Gambia River at Wassadou. (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, Shining-blue 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 Woolly-necked Stork, Hadada Ibis, Striated Heron, White-crowned Lapwing, Swamp Flycatcher and African Pied Wagtail. Although brief we managed to get looks at an adult and an immature White-backed Night Heron from the watch point but we never did manage to find one from the boat! Continuing in this manner we enjoyed fine views of the handsome White-crowned Robin-Chat and other bush birds included Gabar Goshawk, Klaas's Cuckoo, Pallid Swift, Broad-billed Roller, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Bronze-tailed Starling, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Northern Black Flycatcher, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Red-winged Pytilia, Black-bellied Firefinch and Orange-cheeked Waxbill. 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, Western Banded Snake Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle and Shikra taking advantage of the thirst-quenching waters.

At night we heard African Scops Owl but it was always out of sight on the far side of the river and we never heard or saw one on the camp side. Northern Lesser Galagos were seen on a night drive but the highlight was the discovery of a male Standard-winged Nightjar that was illuminated perfectly by the beam of our torch and we were able to marvel at it as it flew overhead with the standards fluttering behind the bird and also watched it sat on the ground when these strangely modified feathers stuck out from the wing at right angles!



Western Banded Snake Eagle (left) was present one morning and seen by two of the boat trips. However, we all enjoyed some very fine views of the localised Adamawa Turtle Dove during our stay at Wassadou. (Gary Howard)

It was a long drive back to Kaolack which was enlivened by the sighting of our first Scissor-tailed Kite which was just in the nick of time for those who were not taking the extension and although the views were a little distant they were more than acceptable! We all had lunch together at Kaolack and then those heading home went on to Dakar and the rest of us continued on to Toubacouta for a three-night stay.

We stopped en route firstly 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 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 telescopes. However, four of us decided to make the effort and we soon found ourselves on the island and hiked the remaining distance to the roosting trees.

We had arrived in good time but already the first Scissor-tailed Kites were gathering high up in the skies above us and at this time were 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 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 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.



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)

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. Surprisingly we found more Yellow Penduline Tits and we also added Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Temminck's Courser, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, African Pygmy Kingfisher and Swallow-tailed and White-throated Bee-eaters to the list. One evening we hid behind trees and watched Four-banded Sandgrouse coming down to drink but the real highlight came along the waterways where the enormous Goliath Heron was found, the warbler-like Mangrove Sunbird was searched

out and we enjoyed unbeatable views of the elusive White-crested Tiger Heron. surprisingly the bird was wandering around in the open along the mangroves at low tide and we simply could not believe our luck!



A fitting finale to a great tour – White-crested Tiger Heron in the Saloum! (Nik Borrow)

Watching the Reed Cormorants and egrets coming into roost as the hot African sun sank in the west was a fitting climax to this superb tour. All that remained was the journey back to Dakar and one last boat trip at Somone near Dakar where we finally caught up with some Audouin's Gulls which was a much-wanted bird for one of our group.

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 Macky Sall's election campaign 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 behavior 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 and local guide Carlos who kept it all together!



Saloum Baobab. (Nik Borrow)



African Finfoot 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: 361

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

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* Just 22 seen at Marigot 2.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* 3 in the Djoudj NP and 1 at Wassadou.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* 10+ in the Djoudj NP.

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

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus* 20+ in the Djoudj NP.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula* 40+ in the Djoudj NP. Most ducks were too far out to identify during our visit.

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

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Most numerous around Wassadou.

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

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

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* A Palearctic migrant, flushed at Ross-Bethio.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (H) Only heard at Marigot 2.

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

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* At least 6 in the Djoudj NP.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* At least 6 in the Djoudj NP.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*. 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Podor and 3 in the Djoudj NP.

Woolly-necked Stork (African Woollyneck) *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* At least 4 at Wassadou.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* 10 in the Djoudj NP and 1 in the Saloum.

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

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Hundreds in the Djoudj NP.

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

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* 5 in the Djoudj NP.

White-crested Tiger Heron *Tigriornis leucolopha* 2 heard pre-dawn and 1 seen exceptionally well in the Saloum.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* A female seen in the Djoudj NP.

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* An adult and an immature seen at Wassadou.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP and 40+ at Wassadou.

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

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Amazingly common in the Djoudj NP and a few elsewhere.

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

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

Grey Heron (Mauritanian G H, Pallid H) *Ardea [cinerea] monicae* 1 of this distinctive taxon at Saint-Louis.

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

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

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* 12+ in the Djoudj NP and 1 in the Saloum.

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

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* 2 in the Djoudj NP.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* A poor showing, singletons in in the Djoudj NP and Saloum Delta.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* 20+ in the Djoudj. Difficult to assess elsewhere due to confusion with white reef herons.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* Common in coastal areas. Only dark phase birds identified with certainty.



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.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* 10+ at sea past Saint-Louis.

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

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* 1 en route back to Kaolack and the Kousmar Island roost was a trip highlight.

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* Small numbers seen 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 vulture.

White-backed Vulture (African W-b V) *Gyps africanus* Another widespread vulture but never common.

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli* 65+ between Kebemer and Touba.

Griffon Vulture (Eurasian G V) *Gyps fulvus* Maybe as many as 20 seen mostly between Kebemer and Touba.



Western Ospreys (left) were numerous along the coastal and major waterways. We encountered a number of Rüppell's and Griffon Vultures (right) as we drove to and from the far north. (Nik Borrow)

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* 2 between Kebemer and Touba.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* After a search 1 was seen near Toubacouta.

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

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*. 1 was seen by some on two morning boat trips at Wassadou.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* Small numbers in the south-east.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* 4 widespread sightings in the south.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants was seen near Darou-Mousty.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* 1 was seen at Sandicoloy.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*. A pair and a juvenile were seen at Wassadou.

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

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* 3 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 and widespread Palearctic migrant.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Just 1 of these Palearctic migrants in Djoudj NP.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*. Small numbers and widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

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

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

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

Grasshopper Buzzard *Butastur rufipennis* 2 sightings in the south-east.

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis* 2 sightings in the south-east.

Arabian Bustard *Ardeotis arabs* 3 seen well in the Djoudj NP.

Savile's Bustard *Lophotis savilei* A male seen well near Marigot 2.

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* Seemingly impossible to miss at Wassadou and another in the Saloum Delta.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Common at Marigot 2 with a few in the Djoudj NP and at Wassadou.

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

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni* Surprisingly numerous with at least 10 at Marigot 2.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Common in Djoudj NP and at Marigot 2.

Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina* 27+ in Djoudj NP.

Quail-plover *Ortyxelos meiffrenii* Close up views of 2 birds as we travelled south from Mbacké. A much-wanted bird!

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

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* 4 at Richard-Toll and 1 near Marigot 2.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Small numbers seen at Saint-Louis, in the Saloum and at Somone.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Most numerous in northern Senegal.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Small numbers in Djoudj NP.

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.



The striking Black-headed Lapwing (left) was seen on numerous occasions but we only found the lovely Temminck's Courser (right) during the extension. (Nik Borrow)

White-crowned Lapwing (W-headed L) *Vanellus albiceps* Small numbers of this striking lapwing at Wassadou.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* Most numerous at Wassadou with smaller numbers in the Djoudj.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Small numbers seen at Saint-Louis, in the Saloum and at Somone.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A Palearctic migrant seen in the north and again at Somone.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* 4 of these Palearctic migrants seen in the Podor area.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Most numerous in the Djoudj NP with smaller numbers elsewhere in the north.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A few of these Palearctic migrants in the north and more at Somone.

Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius* Extremely approachable birds at Wassadou with at least 8 counted.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* At least 6 in Djoudj NP and another at Sandicolu.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Common during the Djoudj boat trip and a few elsewhere in the north.

Whimbrel *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis, the Saloum and Somone.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis, the Saloum and Somone.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis, the Saloum and Somone.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Palearctic migrants most common in the Djoudj NP.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrants at Saint-Louis and 1 at Somone.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Palearctic migrants in the north.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Palearctic migrants in the north.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Palearctic migrants at Langue de Barberie and at Somone.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj NP.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Palearctic migrants in the north.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* (H) Heard only in the Djoudj NP.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant, absent from the south-east.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Palearctic migrants at Podor, Wassadou and in the Saloum.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Palearctic migrants in the north, the Saloum and Somone.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Just 1 of these Palearctic migrants in the Djoudj.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Palearctic migrants mainly in the north.
Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Palearctic migrants in the north.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Palearctic migrants at suitable wetlands throughout.
Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor* 3 seen well in the Djoudj NP.
Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* 3 seen well in the Tambacouta area.
Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* Small numbers at Podor and Ross-Bethio.
Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* Common at coastal sites with huge numbers at Kaolack.
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Small numbers in the north.
Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Common at coastal sites.
Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii* At least 10 at Somone.



Slender-billed Gulls(left) were in nice pink breeding plumage during the trip. At the last minute we scooped up some Audouin's Gulls (right) at Somone near Dakar. (Nik Borrow)

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* The race *graellsii* was common in the Saint-Louis area and Somone.
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Small numbers in the north but more numerous in the Saloum.
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Small numbers in the north but more numerous in the Saloum.
Royal Tern *Thalasseus [maximus] albididorsalis* Easily seen in the Saint-Louis area, the Saloum and Somone.
Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Small numbers in the north, the Saloum and Somone.
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* 2 at Somone.
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP, the Saloum and Somone.
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* Small numbers in the Podor and Richard-Toll areas.
Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus* 3 near Kedougou and more coming to drink at Sandicoly.
Rock Dove *Columba livia* Domestic birds only.
Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common and widespread.
European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* This Palearctic migrant was most common at Wassadou with 80+ daily.
Adamawa Turtle Dove *Streptopelia hypopyrrha* 20+ seen well at Wassadou and probably more!
African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea* Small numbers in the north and also seen on Kousmar Island.
Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens*. Commonly encountered except in the south-east.
Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Only 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* 2 seen well at Sandicoly.
Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Common and widespread.
Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* Small numbers in the Kedougou area.
Guinea Turaco (Green T) *Tauraco persa* 4 seen well at Dindéfelo.
Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea* Seen well in the south-east.
Western Plantain-eater (W Grey P-e) *Crinifer piscator*. Widespread sightings in the south.

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* Widespread sightings but never numerous.
Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Singletons at Wassadou.
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (LO) A 'grey' cuckoo seen in flight near Toubacouta was probably this species.
Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (NL) Seen by Gary at night in the Djoudj NP.
African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* (H) Heard each evening at Wassadou but on the wrong side of the river!
Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis* 3 at a daytime roost at Tambacounda.



One of a trio of Northern White-faced Owls at a daytime roost. (Nik Borrow)

Greyish Eagle-Owl *Bubo cinerascens* (LO). Nik saw a pair before dawn from the hotel in Thiès.
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* Heard at Wassadou and seen at a daytime roost near Kaolack.
Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*. Seen near Kedougou and Toubacouta.
Golden Nightjar *Caprimulgus eximius* At least 4 at Podor plus 1 at a daytime roost.
Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus* Seen well during both night and day.
Standard-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus longipennis* A superb male in full breeding plumage seen well at Wassadou.
Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri* A few widespread sightings.
African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (LO) At least 2 over Wassadou.
Little Swift *Apus affinis* Widespread sightings during the main tour.
Horus Swift *Apus horus* Recently discovered breeding near Podor and an addition to the Senegalese list.
Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus* Easy to see in the north.
Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* Good views of a male at Dindéfelo.
Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) *Coracias naevius* Widespread sightings but in very small numbers.
Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus* Mostly common throughout the tour but scarce in the far north.
Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster* Small numbers seen well in the south-east.
Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* Just 1 at Wassadou.

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.
African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta* 1 at Sandicolu.
Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers in suitable wetland habitat.
Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribrachys* 2 seen at Wassadou.
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 Delta.
Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Widespread sightings.
Red-throated Bee-eater *Merops bulocki* Common in the south-east with breeding colonies at Wassadou.



Blue-breasted Kingfisher (left) and Red-throated Bee-eater (right) were two of the colourful species encountered during our intimate boat trips along the Gambie River at Wassadou. (Nik Borrow)

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* At least 3 at Sandicolu.
Green Bee-eater (African G B-e) *Merops [orientalis] viridissimus* Easily seen in the far north.
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* 2 in the Djoudj NP and 3 in the Saloum Delta.
European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* Small numbers in the Toubacouta area.
Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus* Small numbers in the south-east.
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa [epops] epops* Small numbers positively identified mainly in the north.
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa [epops] senegalensis* Small numbers positively identified mainly in the north.
Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Widespread sightings.
Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* 2 sightings in the south-east.
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 far north.
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* 4 at Dindéfelo.
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* A new addition to the Senegalese list, A singing bird seen at Dindéfelo.
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* Singletons near Kedougou and Sandicolu.
Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* First seen at Ranch de Bango with more at Wassadou and Sandicolu.
Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera* Pairs at Wassadou and Sandicolu.
Little Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicus elachus* A female seen well near Richard-Toll.
Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicus fuscescens* Small numbers in the south-east.
African Grey Woodpecker (Grey W) *Dendropicus goertae* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Seen well at the roost on Kousmar Island.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Widespread sightings in small numbers throughout the tour.

Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex* 2 seen at Dindefelo.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus* Small numbers encountered in the south.

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera* Several noted from Mbacké to the Kaolack region.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* Singles at Richard-Toll and Wassadou.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* 1 seen in flight at the Saloum Delta.

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* An excellent look at a perched bird near Podor.

Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus* Numerous chances to see this parrot in the south.

Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P) *Psittacula krameri* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis* 6 individuals on 4 dates during the main tour.

Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W-e) *Platysteira cyanea* A few sightings in the south-east.

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* 1 seen well at Dindefelo.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* Small numbers noted in the south.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis* Small numbers noted in the south-east.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus* Stunning views but heard more often than seen throughout the tour.



A female Senegal Batis near Saint-Louis (Gary Howard) and the stunning Yellow-crowned Gonolek at Wassadou. (right, Nik Borrow)

Brubru *Nilus afer* Singletons at Richard-Toll and near Kedougou.

White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus* Several family groups seen in the Kedougou area.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea* A male seen at Dindefelo.

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

Great Grey Shrike (Southern G S) *Lanius excubitor* Small numbers of *elegans* in the Podor and Richard-Toll areas.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* Regular sightings of this Palearctic migrant in the north.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Widespread sightings in small numbers throughout the tour.

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

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

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Often associated with human habitation.

African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda* 4 at Dindefelo and another at Wassadou.

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

Yellow Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus parvulus* 4 near Kedougou and a pair at Sipo.

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

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis* The most numerous sparrow-lark at widespread localities.

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans* Small numbers in the Djoudj area and again near Touba.

Sun Lark *Galerida modesta* 6 in the Kedougou area.

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

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

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Atimastillas flavicollis* (LO) 1 could only be seen by Nik near Dindefelo.

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

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

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida* Regularly encountered in the south.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* 4 at Kedougou and 1 in the Saloum.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Small numbers at Dindefelo.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Small numbers at Sandicoly.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* Pairs near Touba and Sandicoly.

West African Swallow *Cecropis domicella* Small numbers at Sandicoly.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura* Scattered widespread sightings.

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

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Singletons at Saint-Louis and Wassadou.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* Yellow-vented/bellied birds in the Djoudj area presumably this species.

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens* Small numbers in the Djoudj NP but heard more than seen.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant in the Djoudj area.

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* Carlos saw 1 of these Palearctic migrants with some at Wassadou.

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus* Small numbers seen in the Djoudj area.

Dorst's Cisticola *Cisticola guinea* 3 seen well near Kedougou.



Sun Lark (left) and Dorst's Cisticola (right) are somewhat localised west African specialties that were seen well in the Kedougou area.
(Nik Borrow)

Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus* 2 seen in the Kedougou area.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Small numbers in the Ross-Bethio rice fields.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* A pair 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 Richard-Toll 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.

Fulvous Babbler *Turdoides fulva* A family group of 7 in the Podor area.
Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii* Easily seen in the south-east and linked to watercourses.
Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus* The more widespread babbler in the south.
Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* Just 2 of these Palearctic migrants seen in the Podor area.
Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*. Singletons of these Palearctic migrants at Ranch de Banco and near Touba.
Subalpine Warbler (Western S W) *Sylvia [cantillans] inornata* Small numbers in the north and Saloum.
African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis* Most easily seen at Dindéfelo.
Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Most numerous in the north.
Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus* None in the south-east (!) but possibly 2 near Toubacouta.
Bronze-tailed Starling (B-t Glossy S) *Lamprotornis chalcurus* A few in the Wassadou area.
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.



Red-winged Warbler in full song (left). The colourful Purple Starling (right) is an absolute looker! (Nik Borrow)

Chestnut-bellied Starling *Lamprotornis pulcher* Common and conspicuous in the north.
Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* Seen well near Kebemer and 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* 'African' Scrub Robins near Mbacké and Kaolack.
Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) *Myioparus plumbeus* 1 at Wassadou.
Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides* 1 at Wassadou.
Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus* 1 near Kedougou.
Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica* Easily seen along the river at Wassadou.
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla* (H) Heard at Dindéfelo but would not show.
White-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha albicapillus* Easily seen at Wassadou and again at Sandicoloy.
European Pied Flycatcher (Pied F) *Ficedula hypoleuca* 2 of these Palearctic migrants at Dindéfelo.
Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 3 sightings of this Palearctic migrant.
Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 1 of these Palearctic migrants for some in the Djoudj NP.
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 in the north.
Northern Wheatear (Seebohm's W) *Oenanthe [oenanthe] seebohmi* 3 seen between Podor and Richard-Toll.
Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* 1 seen well near Richard-Toll.
Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris* 2 at Dindéfelo and another near Kedougou.
Mangrove Sunbird (Brown S) *Anthreptes gabonicus* At least 4 seen well in the Saloum Delta.
Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei* A male was seen at Wassadou.

Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura* Plenty seen well in the south-east.

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis* A pair was seen well at Dindéfelo.

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



In the far north we found three Seebohm's Wheatears (left) The breeding plumaged Scarlet-chested Sunbird (right) was easy to see in the south. (Nik Borrow)

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

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* A pair was seen near Toubacouta.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus* A moulting male was seen near Toubacouta.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Particularly common in the north associated with human habitation.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Sudan Golden Sparrow *Passer luteus* Hundreds upon hundreds in the north.

Bush Petronia *Gymnoris dentata* Very common in the south-east.

White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris* Their stick nests are a feature of the Sahel.

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis* Everybody saw the birds in the Touba area.

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus* Small numbers mainly in the north.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* Pairs at Dindéfelo and Sandicoly.

Heuglin's Masked Weaver *Ploceus heuglini* Small numbers in the Kedougou area and 2 at Wassadou.

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus* Most numerous in the south-east.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* Most common in Thiès and Toubacouta. Smaller numbers in the south-east.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus* Abundant in the Djoudj and the north and common at Wassadou.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* 1 at Cheioune.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Common throughout and huge swirling flocks in the Ross-Bethio area.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* Huge numbers in the Ross-Bethio area with 1 male in near breeding plumage!

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus* Abundant in the Djoudj and in the south.

Red-winged Pytilia *Pytilia phoenicoptera* 1 for one boat party at Wassadou.

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata* A pair near Touba.

Black-bellied Firefinch *Lagonosticta rara* Carlos saw a pair with his walkers at Wassadou.

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

Mali Firefinch (Kulikoro F) *Lagonosticta virata* At least 5 seen in the Cheioune area.

Black-faced Firefinch (Vinaceous F) *Lagonosticta [larvata] vinacea* Singletons near Kedougou and at Wassadou.

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

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.

Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W) *Amandava subflava* 20+ in the Djoudj NP.

Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* Great looks in the Ross-Bethio rice fields and near Toubacouta.

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

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* Small numbers in the south-east and the Sandicoly area.

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata* Widespread sightings throughout the tour and linked with Red-billed Firefinch.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Just 1 at Dindéfelo.

Sahel Paradise Whydah *Vidua orientalis* Males near Touba and in plumage en route to Tambacounda.

Western Yellow Wagtail (Yellow W) *Motacilla [flava] flavissima* A few seen in the Djoudj area.

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* 4 of these Palearctic migrants in the Podor area and 1 near Touba.

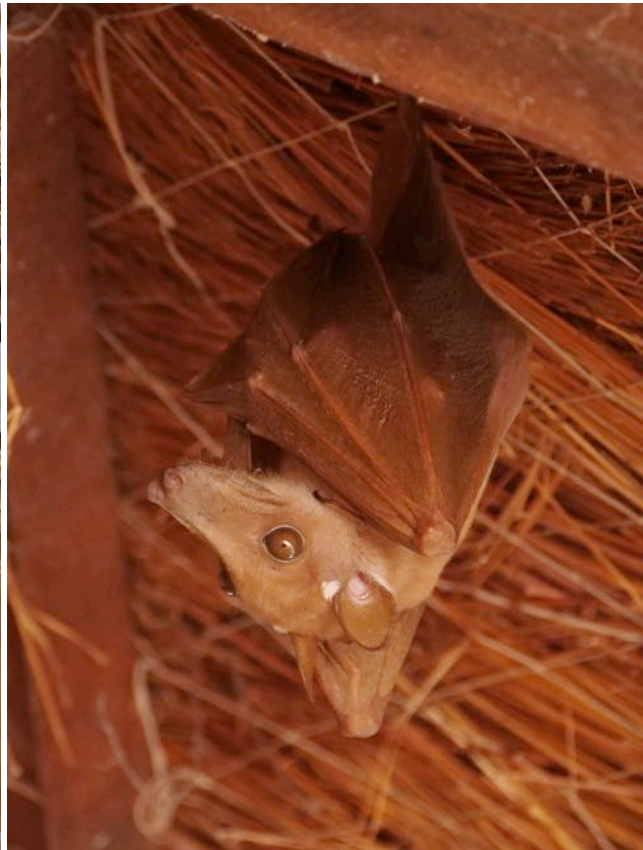
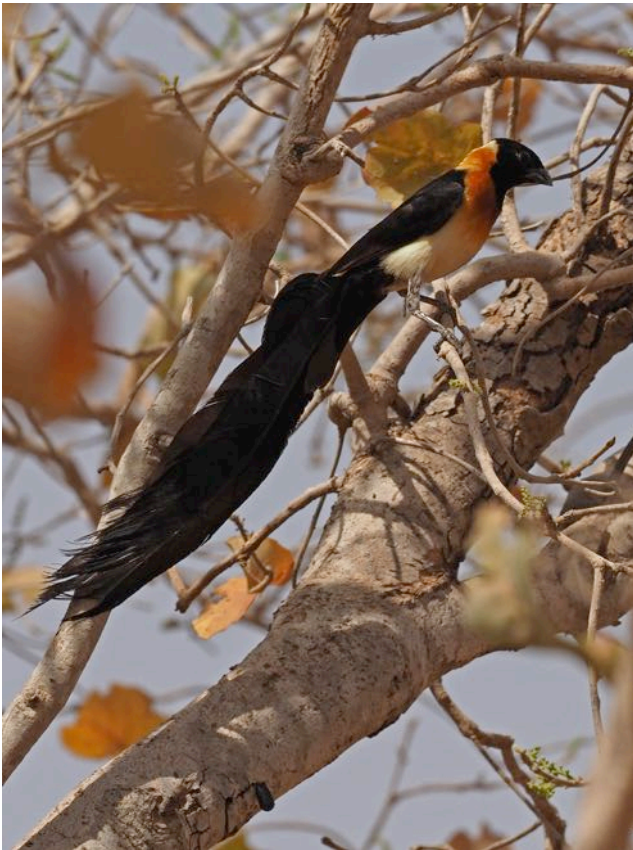
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants at Richard-Toll and Ross-Bethio.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*. 1 of these Palearctic migrants in the Ross-Bethio rice fields.

White-rumped Seedeater *Crithagra leucopygia* First seen well near Ross-Bethio.

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

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, Gary Howard). Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat at Toubacouta (right, Nik Borrow).

MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 18

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

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* Widespread sightings.

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus* Small numbers in the south-east.
Striped Ground Squirrel (Geoffrey's G S) *Xerus erythropus* Widespread sightings.
Marsh Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus* Easily seen in the Saloum Delta.
Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguinea* 1 during one of the Wassadou boat trips.
Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* Several bands in the south-east.
African Golden Wolf *Canis anthus* 4 seen well in Djoudj NP.
Pale Fox (Sand Fox) *Vulpes pallida* 1 at night in the Podor area.
Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Easy to see in the Djoudj NP.
Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* At least 3 in the river at Wassadou.
Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus* 4 at Wassadou.
Straw-coloured Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum* Seen by some in Thiès.
Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus gambianus* Seen at Kedougou and Toubacouta.



Marsh Mongoose (top, Nik Borrow) The Grand Mosque at Touba (bottom, Elaine Cook)