

SENEGAL TOUR REPORT 2025

29 January - 14 February 2025

Diedert Koppenol

Our ninth Senegal 'only' tour (earlier tours combining with either The Gambia or Cape Verde) continued the run of success we have previously enjoyed and even further establishes the country as perhaps the 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 closeup views. For the Golden Nightjar we headed up to the northern border of the country with Mauritania where we found up to two birds at dusk illuminated by the torch beam. The tiny Quail-plover rose up from under our feet after about an hour searching and we were able to relocate it multiple times, allowing prolonged, walk-away 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 had a great time with the Black Crowned Cranes. The unassuming River Prinia, colourful Allen's Gallinule and secretive Savile's Bustard were also found whilst in the area as well as the rare Lesser Jacana, of which we found four in total (two had already been present, apparently)! In the south-east of the country, we easily found small numbers of Mali Firefinch and Neumann's Starlings, with another highlight being the Wilcock's Honeyguide, back in its favourite tree this year. A fine supporting cast in the area included Fox Kestrel and Sun Lark. A stay at Wassadou along the Gambie River on the edge of Niokolo Koba National Park allowed fine views of the sublime Egyptian Plover as well as Adamawa Turtle Dove, the bizarre Oriole Warbler and African Finfoot whilst a pair of nesting Verreaux's Eagle-Owl was very entertaining. Red-winged Pytilia's were also surprisingly easy this year and a great addition to our list was finding a White-backed Night Heron roosting. Finally, we visited the incredible Scissor-tailed Kite roost on Kousmar Island near Kaolack followed by a stay in the Saloum Delta where we had a breeze finding several superb White-crested Tiger Herons, along with several West African Crested Terns right behind the boat. Other notable or restricted range species seen during our amazing tour included; Marbled Duck, Stone Partridge, Double-spurred Spurfowl, Standard-winged Nightjar, Violet Turaco, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Bruce's Green Pigeon, 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, African Red-rumped Swallow, Oriole Warbler, Fulvous Babbler, Chestnut-bellied Starling, White-crowned Robin-Chat, Atlas Wheatear, Pygmy Sunbird, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Iberian Chiffchaff, Lavender Waxbill, Sahel Paradise Whydah, White-rumped Seedeater and Gosling's Bunting.

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. Despite a false start the following morning, which caused some delay, we were soon off to Podor, where we would stay the next three nights. It would be a long drive, but we made the most out of it. The other-worldly, flat Sahelian landscape cannot really be described as 'pretty' or 'beautiful' and a steadily increasing layer of plastic detritus seems to be coating the land. However, the street life and culture are certainly fascinating to watch 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 crazy stick nests of White-billed Buffalo Weavers loaded onto the bare skeletal Baobab limbs were a natural feature of the scenery and our first Western Red-billed Hornbills were seen alongside spectacular Long-tailed and Chestnut-bellied Starlings whilst other commonplace species regularly spotted along the way included beautiful Abyssinian Rollers, huge numbers of doves and pigeons and of course, ubiquitous Yellow-billed Kites and Pied Crows. It didn't take long before we found our first large gather of vultures, feeding on the frequent roadside casualties. We stopped when we saw a huge Lappet-faced Vulture gliding in and we watched a real

wake of vultures that also included Hooded, White-backed, Rüppell's and Griffon Vultures, still their hunger.

As we passed the historic town of Saint-Louis located on the Senegal River, we noted large numbers of waterbirds but these would have to wait until our return as our final destination today was further east. However, we did stop for a delicious fish lunch at a hotel by the banks of the Senegal River in the historic town of Richard Toll and gazed over the river to get a few species onto our Mauritanian list! The word 'Toll' means 'garden' in the Wolof language and is named after experimental agricultural 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 where the diminutive Sennar Penduline Tit was quickly discovered, which was a nice Sahel target of the list. Large flocks of small birds in this region often proved to be Sudan Golden Sparrows which held many decently plumaged male birds. Senegal is a wintering ground for a number of Palearctic migrants and in particular featured Western Bonelli's, Western Olivaceous, Western Orpheat and Western Subalpine Warblers all of which were seen whilst birding the far north. From here we completed the drive to Podor and arrived at the nightjar site in the afternoon where we saw our only European Turtle Dove of the tour. That gives one reason to fear something is terribly wrong, but perhaps the migration route had changed a bit this year... We began a walk into the scrub to see if we could find a Golden Nightjar before dark but were not successful. As soon as it became dark, we did get great views of a single male, illuminated by the torch beam.

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. No sooner had we arrived at our destination than a family group of Fulvous Babblers put in an appearance as they ran or flew towards us, low to the ground on stiff, whirring wings and happily flaunted themselves in front of us. Neither did it take us long to find our next target, the delightful Cricket Warbler and we had close views of several birds as they foraged in the sparse vegetation wiggling their long tails. The characterful Black Scrub Robin flaunted itself but rarely allowed very close approach. A nice pair of Little Grey Woodpeckers (a Sahelian specialty) was a great find, whilst several Great Grey Shrikes of the race elegans and senator Woodchat Shrikes were dotted around. Our first African Collared Doves were seen and other goodies included large numbers of Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks, our first Dark Chanting Goshawk perched atop the acacias and a nice male Atlas Wheatear. Nearby, we visited a site where Horus Swifts (a recently discovered 'new' species for Senegal) have been found breeding. We were pleased to find them still at home alongside Little Swifts in the cliffs overhanging the river where attractive African Green and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters also put up a good show. A Vieillot's Barbet welcomed us back for lunch and in the afternoon we returned to the same areas where a Black Scimitarbill amongst the Green Wood Hoopoes, our first Brubru, several more African Grey and Little Grey Woodpeckers were found, and of course we went for seconds with the Golden Nightjar. This time, we had a nice pair showing well in the torch light.

After our stay at Podor we headed back westwards and our morning birding in the Richard Toll area produced a daytime roost of up to 19 Long-tailed Nightjars alongside a male Standard-winged Nightjar, several Spotted and Senegal Thick-knees, whilst African Green Bee-eaters kept flicking in and out of the bushes. Out on the sandy wastes we found small numbers of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and obliging pairs of Temminck's Courser put on a great show. A Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, of the local resident subspecies *minor* was found, while we also added Northern Anteater Chat to our list. After a great morning we celebrated with another superb fish lunch at Richard Toll before continuing westwards. In the afternoon we made our first visit to the Trois Marigots on the outskirts of St Louis. Our aim was to find Savile's Bustard which appears to be common in the area but habitat loss is threatening the ease with which they can be found. We tracked down a nice pair and although the birds were very shy and wary, we all had great views of this Sahel specialty. Marigots are side streams or tributary rivulets whose water levels are often seasonal and here they are surrounded by tamarisk and tall stands of phragmites. The open waters and inundated flats are home to a wealth of birds and we soon picked out our first River Prinias; a Sahelian specialty 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. Winding Cisticola didn't take long to find, but soon we were distracted by the other avifauna. Greater Swamp Warblers making their guttural cries, skulked in the reeds but allowed views whilst Black Crakes scattered everywhere, 'Iberian' Yellow Wagtails and African Swamphens were common. A very nice surprise discovery were the four Lesser Jacanas that were actively foraging. They gave amazing views and were a serious distraction from the few Allen's Gallinules that were giving away great views feeding in the reed edge. We came across a large flock of resting Collared Pratincoles, with several Senegal Thick-knees hiding behind them, as Spur-winged and Black-headed Lapwings were wandering amongst them. A single Whiskered Tern was flapping above the marshland, with Little Bee-eaters grabbing insects from perches throughout the marigots area. Senegal Coucals were coucalling everywhere from within the reed. A single Temminck's Stint was a nice surprise discovery to end the day. As soon as the sun set, we were on our way to our nice accommodation near the Djoudj.

The Djoudj is an important wetland staging post and wintering area for migratory birds that lies in the Senegal delta. 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. Arriving at the park entrance we 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. Along 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 Iberian Chiffchaffs were tentatively identified. Mammals featured well here too, with a Warthog mother scurrying around with its piglet, and an African Golden Wolf showing itself amazingly well, right next to the road! We drove across the barren flats, looking for Arabian Bustard. Sadly, we found no trace of this species, but had a great time at the lake's edge, enjoying the enormous flocks of wildfowl, with two Yellow-billed Storks flying overhead and a total of six Marbled Teals flying past being the species-specific highlights. The park is well-known for its huge breeding colony of Great White Pelicans and a boat trip into the heart of the area was an absolutely unforgettable experience. The young were quite well grown by this time of year and the frenzied flapping and exercising of the wings of birds, eager to fly whipped up the guano and dust into the air so that the stench of fish and ammonia was quite overpowering but the sights and sounds were indeed something to see. Flotillas of fishing adults diving in unison were wondrous to behold and the whole experience was simply awesome! To add to this of course there was a fine selection of other birds to be seen along the reedy margins of the waterway where majestic African Fish Eagles perched up and close looks were obtained of African Darter and Reed and White-breasted Cormorants whilst Whiskered and Caspian Terns followed our boat. We added several other key birds here, including a single African Spoonbill nice and close next to the boat, a pair of Knob-billed Ducks and a single Spur-winged Goose. In the afternoon, we drove across the flats again, but didn't add much new in the form of new species.

We spent the following morning combining birds and 'culture' by visiting the historical town of Saint-Louis which was once not only the capital of Senegal but also of the whole of French West Africa and 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 historical Faidherbe Bridge and like most towns in Senegal is coated with a layer of plastic detritus! The mudflats and lagoons helped us add to our wader list whilst we checked every bird to find perhaps something rare. We drove across the famous 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 and Grey-headed Gulls were plentiful as they breed in the nearby Langue de Barbarie National Park but we also spotted a Yellow-legged Gull of the race *atlantis*. From the beach itself, we added a handful of Northern Gannets to our list before we headed for lunch. In the afternoon, we went back to Trois Marigots, adding another female Savile's Bustard to our tally, but nothing new was seen. However, it remains a great area for some afternoon birding, enjoying the large numbers of birds and variety of species here.

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. We added our first Double-spurred Francolins to the list en route, and made a stop at a waterhole, where we did some nice birding in the heat of the day. We watched thirsty birds coming to drink and enjoyed good views of a flock of swallows coming in for a drink, with at least one Mosque Swallow amongst the group. A migrant Short-toed Snake Eagle was perhaps looking for a nice meal and a Black-crowned Tchagra was a nice find. We added two Sennar Penduline Tits to our tally too and checking every small flock of passerines paid off with two Cut-throat Finches showing very well. 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 for at least about an hour, as our haunt from previous tours had been destroyed by stupid birders driving across the area with cars as they didn't want to walk... However, we thankfully found at least two birds in the end. They flew up from underneath our feet, something like a cross between a butterfly, grasshopper, a lark and a quail, settling nearby. It took us a bit of maneuvering to get it in view, but soon everyone enjoyed point-blank views of this peculiar little bird. We birded a bit more on our way back to the vehicles, adding Singing Bush Lark, Desert Cisticola and Tawny-flanked Prinia to our list. We still had quite some ground to cover and only one more stop was allowed when we spotted a few cows crossing the road. The cows weren't that

interesting, it was the passengers we were interested in. A small flock of Yellow-billed Oxpeckers was making the most of it, enjoying some fresh blood in the afternoon sun. Then it was onwards 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!

The next day the drive was even longer as we headed to Kedougou in the far south-east of the country. We stopped just outside of town to hopefully watch the stream of Lesser Kestrels that winter here, leaving their roost. Sadly, they didn't use the exact same route this time, so while we did see quite a few Lesser Kestrels, it wasn't as large a number as hoped for. This wasn't a dealbreaker though, as we were treated to great views of at least five male Sahel Paradise Whydah in breeding plumage, so including large tail (!), further on during our journey. At the same site, we also connected with our first male Pygmy Sunbird, two Yellow-crowned Gonolek, a few Purple Rollers and en route we found our first group of Piapiacs. We stopped for lunch in Tambacounda and the afternoon was spent driving through the enormous Niokolo Koba National Park to reach Kedougou. It is not allowed to stop and birdwatch in the park without a permit but on the way, we still managed good looks at a pair of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills, a perched Long-crested Eagle and a large group of Helmeted Guineafowl. It was also a good drive for raptors and during the course of the day we had added Brown Snake Eagle, Bateleur, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Harrier-Hawk and Red-necked Falcon to the list.

The aim of the following morning our target was to find Mali Firefinch and we headed for an area with an escarpment that is not only a good place for the finch, but is usually quite birdy. Double-spurred Spurfowls were seen en route, along with a plethora of raptors, including Lizard Buzzard, Shikra, African Hawk-Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Lanner Falcon and the much-desired Fox Kestrel. En route towards the higher hills that hold Mali Firefinch, we came across a nice band of White-crested Helmetshrikes. Stunning birds and always in a nice flock. This time, the flock had another member in the form of a great male Red-headed Bunting as well! The firefinches weren't as easy as last year and we had to work quite hard for them, but just as we were about to give up, one showed itself very well! We also added two Black-rumped Waxbills to our tour list while working our way back to the cars. Slowing driving back for lunch, we had our first of many Violet Turacos, whilst the Pearl-spotted Owlet attracted a few angry Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds, our first Gosling's Buntings and many Yellow-fronted Canaries. Recent burning of the grasslands had made some habitat for a few African Wattled Lapwings and the Blue-bellied Rollers were still around, doing their famous display. The afternoon was spent in some other areas nearer to Kedougou where we found our target Sun Lark whilst a visit to a rocky outcrop gave us a small flock of the desirable Neumann's Starling. A Fox Kestrel flew past overhead, two more Mali Firefinches were present in the shrubbery here and we saw many Brown and Black-capped Babblers.

The next day we headed along rough roads down towards the border with Guinea and the area around Dindéfelo situated in the foothills of the Fouta Djallon mountains. From the open Sahel of the north, we had now arrived in the wooded Sudanian-Guinea savannas and as a result there was quite a difference in the avifauna. We started in the darkness and as the dawn broke, the dry bush came alive. We stopped to enjoy some 'rolling' Blue-bellied Rollers and found two perched Grasshopper Buzzards, a nice bonus, before continuing to the end of the road where we prepared for the 1.5 km walk to the cascades that tumble down the high, craggy cliffs. The walk was mainly completed undercover and it was refreshingly cooler in the shade of the lush vegetation. The area was kept moist by a rushing stream that often attracts the washerwomen from the village so that many of the available branches were bedecked with drying laundry but today they were mostly absent. In this place Blackcap and Brown Babblers squabbled from the tangles, with a Moustached Grass Warbler foraging on the floor, and thirsty birds came to drink finding relief from the hot sun. The change of habitat brought a rush of new birds for the trip and included Guinea Turaco, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, African Blue Flycatcher, Red-winged Prinia, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Northern Yellow White-eye, African Thrush, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Familiar Chat, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Lavender Waxbill, Western Violet-backed and Green-headed Sunbird and Olive-naped Weavers. The Willcock's Honeyguide was back at its favourite tree again this year, interestingly enough, as it was absent last year. At the end of the track we enjoyed the beautiful waterfall and some managed to obtain views of a few Red-throated Rock Martins flying above the fall. Sadly, Blue-spotted Wood Dove remained a heard-only, but we did manage to track down an obliging Narina Trogon this year, and added three more Mali Firefinches to our total. We stayed until after lunch at a small campement and afterwards we made our way slowly back to the accommodation.

Our time in the Kedougou area was drawing to a close but one last early morning visit to some productive bush added a Fine-spotted Woodpecker, a few Blue-breasted Kingfishers and a family of Sun Larks. 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. En route, we added quite a few more raptors, including two Western Banded Snake Eagles, a few more Bateleurs and two more Grasshopper Buzzards. We also had another opportunity to observe the prehistoric Abyssinian Ground Hornbills. On the way the first

vehicle managed to see our first Stone Partridges as we drove into the park entrance and we arrived in time for sundowners and settled in to watch over the river as the day drew to a close. We saw our first Hadada Ibises, White-crowned Robin-Chats, a somewhat distant Palm-nut Vulture and we picked up a great White-backed Night Heron as it flew across the river to its roost.

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 during the course of our stay. The birds along the river seemed oblivious to 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 a number of pairs of these beautifully marked birds. Several African Finfoot were seen both during our mini cruises and from terra firma as were small numbers of the localised Adamawa Turtle Dove. 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, Spur-winged and African Wattled Lapwings, Hadada Ibis, Striated Heron, Swamp Flycatcher, Red-winged Pytilia, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Oriole Warbler and African Pied Wagtail. Bush walks produced Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Bruce's Green Pigeon and a pair of Verreaux's Eagle-Owls had decided to nest just across from the camp, allowing great scope views. Northern Carmine Bee-eaters were seen from the boats in the afternoons and performed 'murmuration' flights over the roost areas at dusk whilst at night we saw a fantastic Northern White-faced Owl and the little African Scops Owl.

It was a long, fairly uneventful drive back to Kaolack but we did stop en route to add Lesser Blue-eared Starling to our list. 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 has hosted 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 wooden pirogue and with a bit of effort we soon found ourselves on the island and squelched the remaining distance to the roosting trees. We had arrived in good time but it was a little longer before the first Scissor-tailed Kites were spotted as tiny, white 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 did the birds. They began to make their descent, with wings folded back, 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 minibuses 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. We started our day with a nice Greyish Eagle-Owl; our sixth owl for the trip! The rest of the morning was spent at Sangako Forest, where we got better views of Stone Partridge for everyone, our first two Beaudouin's Snake Eagles, one of the few raptors we were still missing, a fleeting Greater Honeyguide that showed well in the end and our first two African Red-rumped Swallows.

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; a species that spends most of its time inside the dense mangrove swamps that line the convoluted waterways of the Saloum Delta. The huge Goliath Heron was found easily, as was the White-crested Tiger Heron this year. It didn't take us very long and it was a very obliging individual. Much more difficult was the small, mouse-sized Mangrove (or Brown) Sunbird but eventually we all managed to obtain good views. We continued the boat trip further upriver and also had a much easier time with West African Crested Terns this time around, with about ten individuals flying and foraging about.

The following morning, we did another boat trip, during which we visited Sipo Island, but other than two more Beaudouin's Snake Eagles and quite a few Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters, this didn't produce any new or noteworthy species. The rest of our time in the region was spent exploring the surrounding bush country. During this time we managed good views of African Golden Oriole, Klaas's Cuckoo, Variable and Western Violet-backed Sunbirds, Yellow-crowned Gonoleks, more Mosque and West African Swallows and added European Bee-eater and Lesser Honeyguide to the list, but sadly the Yellow Penduline Tit had to remain a leader-only as two birds disappeared as soon as they were located.

Our final morning allowed us to catch up with a few species that had up to now been a bit elusive and at last we managed to get everyone got onto the superb Oriole Warbler and Yellow-throated Leaflove and an African Pygmy Kingfisher was a very welcome bonus,

with a single Tree Pipit being a nice addition to our list. Then it was time to pack and head back to the airport near Dakar.

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 charismatic White-crested Tiger Heron 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. On behalf of the entire group I would like to extend a very special thanks to our great local guide Carlos, and to Modou and Issa, the best drivers Senegal has to offer!

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1st: Golden Nightjar

2nd: African Scissor-tailed Kite

3rd: White-crested Tiger Heron

4th: Egyptian Plover

5th: Quail-plover & Lesser Jacana

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g., it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P.(Eds). **2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.2).**

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

BIRDS

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Marbled Duck ◊ *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

Stone Partridge ◊ *Ptilopachus petrosus*

Double-spurred Spurfowl ◊ (D-s Francolin) *Pternistis bicalcaratus*

Golden Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus eximius*

Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus*

Standard-winged Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus longipennis*

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri*

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Horus Swift *Apus horus*

Western Plantain-eater (W Grey P-e) *Crinifer piscator*

Violet Turaco ◊ *Tauraco violaceus*

Guinea Turaco (Green T) *Tauraco persa*

Savile's Bustard ◊ *Lophotis savilei*

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Adamawa Turtle Dove ◊ *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*

African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens*

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer* Heard-only.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Bruce's Green Pigeon ◊ *Treron waalia*

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Black Crane *Zapornia flavirostra*

Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*
Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*
Quail-plover ◊ *Ortyxelos meiffrenii*
Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*
Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis*
Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola*
Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*
Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus*
White-crowned Lapwing (W-headed L) *Vanellus albiceps*
African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*
Kittlitz's Plover *Anarhynchus pecuarius*
Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrinus*
Egyptian Plover ◊ *Pluvianus aegyptius*
Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis*
African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Ruff *Calidris pugnax*
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*
Cream-colored Courser *Cursorius cursor*
Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*
Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
West African Crested Tern ◊ (A Royal Tern) *Thalasseus albididorsalis*
Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*
Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*
Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*
African Darter *Anhinga rufa*
Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus*
White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*
African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*
White-crested Tiger Heron ◊ *Tigriornis leucolopha*

Little Bittern *Botaurus minutus*

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Western Reef Heron (W R Egret) *Egretta gularis*

White-backed Night Heron ◊ *Calherodius leuconotus*

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata*

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha*

Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Scissor-tailed Kite ◊ (African Swallow-t K) *Chelictinia riocourii*

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus*

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

White-backed Vulture (African W-b V) *Gyps africanus*

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli*

Griffon Vulture (Eurasian G V) *Gyps fulvus*

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle ◊ *Circaetus beaudouini*

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*

Long-crested Eagle *Lophætus occipitalis*

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*

Shikra *Tachyspiza badia*

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

African Fish Eagle *Icthyophaga vocifer*

Grasshopper Buzzard ◊ *Butastur rufipennis*

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*

Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis*

Greyish Eagle-Owl *Bubo cinerascens*

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Ketupa lactea*

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus*

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*

Western Red-billed Hornbill ◊ *Tockus kemp*

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus*

Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) *Coracias naevius*

Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus*

Blue-bellied Roller ◊ *Coracias cyanogaster*

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*
African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*
Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus*
Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*
Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*
Red-throated Bee-eater *Merops bulocki*
African Green Bee-eater ◊ (Little G b-e) *Merops viridissimus*
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*
Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus*
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*
Vieillot's Barbet ◊ *Lybius vieilloti*
Bearded Barbet ◊ *Pogonornis dubius*
Willcocks's Honeyguide ◊ *Indicator willcocksii*
Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*
Fine-spotted Woodpecker ◊ *Campethera punctuligera*
Little Grey Woodpecker ◊ (Sahelian W) *Dendropicos elachus*
Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*
African Grey Woodpecker (Grey W) *Dendropicos goertae*
Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Fox Kestrel ◊ *Falco alopex*
Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*
Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*
Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*
Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*
Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P) *Psittacula krameri*
Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*
Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W-e) *Platysteira cyanea*

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*

Yellow-crowned Gonolek ◊ *Laniarius barbarus*

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus*

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

Fork-tailed Drongo (Glossy-backed D) *Dicrurus [adsimilis] divaricatus*

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

Yellow-billed Shrike *Lanius corvinus*

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*

Sennar Penduline Tit ◊ *Anthoscopus punctifrons*

Yellow Penduline Tit ◊ *Anthoscopus parvulus* Leader-only.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra javanica*

Sun Lark ◊ *Galerida modesta*

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Yellow-gorgeted Greenbul *Atimastillas flavicollis*

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*

Red-throated Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne rufigula*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida*

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Western House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

African Red-rumped Swallow ◊ *Cecropis melanocrissus*

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*

Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Iberian Chiffchaff ◊ *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens*

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus [scirpaceus] scirpaceus*

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus*

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus*

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

River Prinia ◊ *Prinia fluviatilis*

Red-winged Prinia (R-w Warbler) *Prinia erythroptera*

Cricket Warbler ◊ *Spiloptila clamans*

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

Oriole Warbler ◊ *Hypergerus atriceps*

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata*

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

Senegal Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla*

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Western Orphean Warbler *Curruca hortensis*

Western Subalpine Warbler *Curruca iberiae*

Common Whitethroat *Curruca communis*

Northern Yellow White-eye (African Y W) *Zosterops senegalensis*

Fulvous Babbler ◊ *Argya fulva*

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii*

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus*

Bronze-tailed Starling (B-t Glossy S) *Lamprotornis chalcurus*

Purple Starling (P Glossy S) *Lamprotornis purpureus*

Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*

Chestnut-bellied Starling ◊ *Lamprotornis pulcher*

Neumann's Starling ◊ *Onychognathus neumanni*

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin (African S R) *Cercotrichas [galactotes] minor*

Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) *Fraseria plumbea*

Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides*

Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica*

White-crowned Robin-Chat ◊ *Cossypha albicapillus*

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Anteater Chat (Northern A C) *Myrmecocichla aethiops*

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Atlas Wheatear ◊ (Seebohm's W) *Oenanthe seebohmi*

Western Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*

Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris*

Mangrove Sunbird (Brown S) *Anthreptes gabonicus*

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei*

Pygmy Sunbird ◊ *Hedydipna platura*

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*

Sahel Bush Sparrow (Bush Petronia) *Gymnoris dentata*

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus*

Sudan Golden Sparrow ◊ *Passer luteus*

White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus*

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*

Olive-naped Weaver *Ploceus brachypterus*

Heuglin's Masked Weaver ◊ *Ploceus heuglini*

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus*

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus*

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps*

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*

African Silverbill (Warbling S) *Euodice cantans*

Lavender Waxbill ◊ *Glaucostrepera caerulea*

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*

Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W) *Amandava subflava*

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*

Red-winged Pytilia ◊ *Pytilia phoenicoptera*

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*

Mali Firefinch ◊ (Kulikoro F) *Lagonosticta virata*

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*

Sahel Paradise Whydah ◊ *Vidua orientalis*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Yellow W) *Motacilla [flava] flavissima*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Spanish W) *Motacilla [flava] iberiae*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] flava*

White Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] alba*

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

White-rumped Seedeater ♦ *Crithagra leucopygia*

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica*

Gosling's Bunting ♦ *Emberiza goslingi*

MAMMALS

Common Genet (Small-spotted G) *Genetta genetta*

Marsh Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus*

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*

African Golden Wolf *Canis lupaster*

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*

Common Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*

Green Monkey (Callithrix M) *Chlorocebus sabaesus*

Common Patas Monkey *Erythrocebus patas*

Guinea Baboon *Papio papio*

Upper Guinea Red Colobus *Piliocolobus badius*

African Savanna Hare *Lepus victoriae*

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*

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