Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Greyish Eagle Owl • African Wood Owl • White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike • Goliath Heron. © tour participant Cliff Gilbert

Report compiled by tour leader:
Gary Elton
As previous trips, the Gambia didn’t disappoint! Birds as usual came thick and fast with many highlights that included six species of owls, a roosting daytime Long-tailed Nightjar, Goliath Heron, White-fronted Plover, Chestnut-bellied Starling and White-breasted Cuckoo Shrikes. That said, the commoner birds were also enjoyed by many, especially the stunning colours and beautiful appearance of the sunbirds, starlings, robin-chats and even the unassuming cordon-bleu’s and firefinches.

Unfortunately, this year the water levels were very low with virtually none at Kartong and the vegetation was generally very dry, due to a combination of low rainfall during the wet season and a hot spring/summer. This was a negative regarding Kartong, but a benefit for us when visiting lodges at lunchtime, with us sitting in the shade waiting for the birds to come to us! Ali and Dembo both did a great job as usual, both an integral part of the team.

Day 1 – Friday, February 22nd 2019
With a 30-minute departure delay at Gatwick, we arrived at Banjul slightly later than scheduled, we cleared customs and were met by our local guide Dembo then after quickly loading the bus with our luggage we headed off to the hotel. There was unfortunately little time for birding today, though a roadside Shikra, Yellow-billed Kites, Hooded Vultures and Pied Crows were all seen on our journey from the airport to our hotel. Room allocation ran relatively smoothly, after which several of the group chose to do a brief bit of birding around the hotel grounds, seeing species such as White-crowned Robin Chat and Hammerkop. Meeting later in the bar we had a brief chat about the week’s plans, which was followed by our first evening meal together.

Day 2 – Saturday, February 23rd 2019
Our routine of breakfast at 7:00AM with a 7:45 departure started today. Our first destinations of the trip were several local sites, in an effort to climatise everyone and ease them into the somewhat noticeable change in temperature! Kotu creek and cycle track was our first destination, which proved a good place to start. Our birding started at an easy enough pace with four species of dove on the wires as we disembarked the bus and a good chance to familiarize ourselves with species we were to repeatedly see. Dembo had estimated our visit as an hour, Gary had told everyone to expect an hour and a half and we actually took two and even then we had to drag ourselves away, with the birds coming thick and fast! The beauty of a first morning is that most if not everything is new and this was the case today. The cycle path we walked along was bordered by trees and looked out over some fields with a creek leading eventually to a small pool. This gave us opportunities for a variety of species and we weren't disappointed. A brief summary of the highlights included Black Heron, African Spoonbill, Sacred Ibis, Caspian tern, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Squacco and Black-headed Herons, Blue-bellied Roller and Senegal Coucal. Returning along the path we continued to nearby Kotu Bridge. Here the birds continued to appear with Great Egret, Western Reef Heron and Hammerkop noted roosting on posts alongside the bridge and Senegal Thick-knee, Wattled Lapwing, Greenshank and Redshank on the exposed mud along the edge of the mangroves. A single wire-tailed swallow was a nice find and three species of Kingfisher, Pied, Great and Malachite were much appreciated by everyone. A short walk along a path beside the creek gave us great views of the hoped-for Little Bee-eaters, while other species seen included a confiding African Spoonbill, Intermediate Egret, Great White Pelican, Wood sandpiper and a Sedge Warbler! Our last destination of the morning was Fajara Golf course, where a Northern Crombec was the first bird seen and showed well for us all near the entrance gate. Several pigs and cows could be seen wandering around on the greens and golfers unusually seemed to be everywhere! We managed a few nice birds though, which included Grey Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Gonolek and White-crowned Robin Chat. The temperature was now rising and the morning drawing to a close so we returned to the Senegambia hotel for lunch.

After a small technical hitch regarding the lunch, we made our way down to the pool bar where we enjoyed a surprisingly good, in fact to be fair, a very good lunch. The majority of us opted for a traditional meal of lady fish and Benachin rice, though the accompanying ‘pool audience’ quiz on the Gambia was a bit of a distraction and we clearly got the impression the presenter/quiz master had a long time-slot to fill! After lunch we returned to the front of the hotel to meet Dembo and the bus. A brief distraction along the way allowed us to enjoy ridiculously close views of a pair of Yellow-crowned Gonoleks, a small mixed flock of Brown and Blackcap Babblers and three White-crowned Robin chats all within ten foot of us and fifteen feet of each other! We boarded the bus and headed off to our destination for the afternoon, Tujereng, as Dembo again pointed out Gary's favourite site!
Arriving at the site we were conscious of the heat, as were the birds, as our birding was on the slow side to start with. A small flock of Yellow Wagtails flew over calling - a species we were going to see on several occasions during the afternoon - and the first of two Black-billed Wood Doves flew across the track. Tujereng is all about quality when it comes to birds and today was no exception. Our first additions were Variable and Splendid Sunbirds, followed by a Tawny Pipit, a flock of nine Wattled Lapwings walking through the burnt vegetation ahead of us, five Black-headed Herons in a nearby tall tree and then a fly over Osprey carrying a large fish. We left the main track we had been following to search for a Woodchat Shrike, which several of the group had glimpsed. This was a good move as the area we walked into proved particularly productive, with a large Baobab tree revealing an Eurasian Hoopoe, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver and Vielliot’s Barbet. A male Brown-backed woodpecker and Whinchat joined the growing list, both appearing in some nearer, shorter vegetation, then the icing on the cake was a flock of four Chestnut-bellied Starlings - a new species for Gary! A short walk along another path put Fine-spotted woodpecker on the list, along with another Vielliot’s Barbet and great views of a Dark Chanting Goshawk. We’d been hearing Red-winged warbler and finally we managed to see one, then Cliff spotted a distant White-fronted Black Chat, another hoped-for species. After a very successful afternoon it was back to hotel showers and dinner!

Day 3 – Sunday, February 24th 2019

After Breakfast and a prompt departure, we were soon heading off along the coast to our destination for the morning, Tanji Bird Reserve. As usual, the action started as soon as we climbed off the bus, with Dembo hearing a Violet Turaco calling in a nearby tree. We walked over towards the sound and were soon enjoying views of two of these impressive birds. The habitat at the site is largely mature scrub bordered by trees and we spent the morning walking along the sandy tracks that criss-crossed the area, visiting similar habitats on both sides of the main road. A good selection of the largely expected species were seen, including several Vielliot’s Barbets, Fanti Saw-wings, Ospreys and Senegal Parrots though bird of the morning for most of the group were several, striking, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds. Single African Darter and Hoopoe were also particularly noteworthy. Our next stop of the morning was the nearby fishing village where we parked and walked out onto the beach to view the birds, people and fishing boats there. Grey-headed and Slender-billed Gulls were immediately obvious as were Caspian and Royal Terns. Whilst we were watching these, a skua appeared in amongst them causing mayhem, we watched it discussing its ID, a sub-adult bird which didn’t help matters, but Arctic was the final conclusion (just so you all know!). We quickly realised that, due to the hide tide, the majority of roosting birds had moved off the beach and into the estuary behind. Our view now was straight into the sun so we retraced our steps through the edge of the village to a more favourable position along the roadside. A male Subalpine Warbler was a nice bonus for some of the group on the walk round, though a male Giant Kingfisher perched in a Riverside tree was more cooperative and seen well by everyone. The roosting gulls held little in the way of surprises, a single Sandwich Tern the best we could do and two nearby Common Sandpipers were appreciated as new birds for the trip.

We boarded the bus and headed to our lunch stop at nearby Tanji Eco Lodge. The food here was excellent as always, though the drinking pool and its associated bird life was a bigger draw for visitors, giving opportunities to see some of the more secretive species. Birds seen visiting the pools during our stay included Snowy- crowned Robin-chat, Western Bluebill, Little Greenbul, Brown-throated Wattle-eye plus both species of Wood Dove, Black-billed and Blue spotted, often seen drinking together and giving a good opportunity to compare the two. Back along the coast towards Banjul, we visited a selection of wetland sites. The first of these was a roadside wetland area called Kamaloo corner. A skulking Zitting Cisticola greeted us as we departed the bus, stopping to try and gain views of it before crossing the road to view the wetland area. Here, White-faced Whistling Ducks sat in full view in front of us, along with a Black Heron on a small piece of vegetation nearby. Dembo had set off to look for Greater Painted-snipe and was soon waving for us to following him down. He had seen several birds but in typical fashion they had disappeared as we arrived and unfortunately didn’t reappear. Two distant Spoonbills proved to be Eurasian and both types of pelican were noted. A group of distant Whimbrels on the far bank had a smaller wader with them, which on closer inspection proved to be a Marsh Sandpiper and two equally distant terns proved to be Gull-billed.

Our next stop was a roadside one again, this time at Cape Point. Here we enjoyed our first Abyssinian Roller plus some equally smart Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters. We then followed Dembo out to view the beach, climbing onto a rickety bridge only to find it was unfinished, frustratingly falling 20 feet short of the shore! We viewed the beach as best we could from the end of the bridge, noting a selection of terns and gulls plus a single Oystercatcher and around 40 Ringed Plovers. Our final stop of the day was on Bund Road, stopping initially to climb a stairway leading to a flat roof to overlook the general area, which revealed Wire-tailed Swallow and Namaqua Dove. We then headed to the nearby harbour to be met by thousands of gulls and terns feeding on the dropping tide. Searching through them revealed at least six Black-headed Gulls, a more unusual species in this part of the world! A small group of Bar-tailed Godwits were also seen along with an African Spoonbill and
again both species of pelican. The estuary behind us revealed a nice selection of wading birds including Black-winged Stilt, Common, Green and Wood Sandpipers, Redshank, and Greenshank. Our drive back to the hotel gave us some more colourful roadside birds, namely a Blue-breasted kingfisher, Grey Kestrel and two more Abyssinian Rollers.

Day 4 – Monday, February 25th 2019
Our day started with a roadside stop for a rather smart and confiding Red-necked Falcon perched on a pylon, allowing us to enjoy great views of it. We all re-boarded the bus then moved on 50 yards to watch an equally confiding and smart pair of Blue-bellied Rollers! Arriving at Pirang, we stopped on the entrance track to view a pair of African Green Pigeons and then a pair of African Golden Orioles, overall a fantastic and encouraging start to the day! We disembarked from the bus and headed along the forest trial to look for our first target bird. An adult Palm-nut Vulture flew over us and a pair of Guinea Turacos were seen in the high tree canopy above us, the latter eventually giving us satisfactory views. A troop of Guinea Baboons started barking above us; with young animals in the party, the adults were obviously concerned about our presence. We quickly walked on towards our destination, afraid the Baboons would disturb any birds hidden in the high canopy. We needn't have worried, as a few minutes later we were stood watching a Verreaux’s Eagle Owl sat high in the canopy, seemingly unperturbed by all the commotion around it. We did a loop through the forest, adding Grey-headed Bristlebill, Green Crombec, Lavender Waxbill and both African and Red-bellied Paradise Flycatchers to our day list. One more surprise came to finish the morning for us, again in the form of a roosting owl, this time Northern White-faced. We then headed back to the bus, noting a distant pale morph Booted Eagle soaring high above us in amongst some Hooded Vultures.

Lunch next with another stop en route courtesy of Ali (who had an uncanny knack of spotting good roadside birds!) this time it was a Purple Roller sat on top of a small nearby bush. Lunch was followed with some time to kill, so we took a walk to nearby Lamin Lodge, noting Grey-backed Camaroptera, Red-billed Firefinch and Blue-cheeked Cordon-bleu feeding on the ground, with a Mouse-brown Sunbird in the tree alongside them. After a relaxing siesta at the lodge, we made a short drive to search for another owl, this time Pearl-spotted Owlet, Dembo is a master at calling these in and it wasn’t long before the bird had called back and Dembo had located it in the tree canopy. Pied-winged Swallow and Bearded Barbet completed our visit as we boarded the bus and headed off to our last destination of the day, Lamin rice fields. We didn’t get far before Ali struck again, this time a Lizard Buzzard perched in a roadside tree. The rice fields proved extremely productive and we had a great walk with lots of birds! Highlights here were Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Striated Herons, a flushed Stone Partridge (though only seen by a few of the group) Black Crane and African Jacana. The best of the bunch, though, were two more Northern White-faced Owls, Woodland Kingfishers and a Greater Painted-snipe, the latter a female, which gave great views as it ran around the paddy field in front of us. A Black Heron stepped up a gear as well, by putting on a brief umbrellia display, something we’d all hoped to see. As we walked back we realized we had to negotiate another bridge, well bridge is generous, it was literally just a few loose planks of wood, though with Dembo’s help and guidance everyone survived the experience intact! Our final walk concluded with a close Lizard Buzzard before we returned to the bus and hotel after a very successful day.

Day 5 – Tuesday, February 26th 2019
Our morning’s destination today was Farasutu Forest and, on arrival there, Dembo explained the visit was to be in two parts. So with our local guide, Mustapha, we set off for part one! Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Variable Sunbird and African Paradise Flycatcher were our first birds, closely followed by an adult African Harrier-hawk and a male Woodchat Shrike that made an encouraging start! As with previous days, things just got better, with Mustapha having a treat in store for us in the form of a roosting Greyish Eagle Owl, our fourth owl species of the trip. We enjoyed great views of the owl, then rather than rush off Mustapha started searching the mass of leaf litter and small bushes for any roosting Nightjars. We tried to help in our own way but unsurprisingly it was Mustapha who found one - to say impressively is an understatement! The bird was barely visible even when you knew where it was, with Mustapha pointing his laser light on the bird’scocked tail, which then enabled us to see the rest of it! A nearby pair of Cardinal Woodpeckers and an impressive flock of eight Bearded Barbets concluded part one of our visit, as we returned to the bus to restock with water before continuing on for part two!

A brief stop at the drinkers (and facilities for some!) produced our first Orange-cheeked and Black-rumped Waxbills, after which we carried on along the track, with Mustapha stopping and pointing his telescope into a nearby tree. African Wood Owl! The fifth owl species and one of the more tricky, so a real bonus! Great looks and photo opportunities followed after which we continued walking to view a series of large pools. Senegal thick-knees and Wattled Lapwings were easily seen and to some degree expected, though a roosting Black-crowned Night Heron was a welcome new addition for us. A pair of noisy Red-necked Falcons flew over us as we retraced our steps to the drinkers. Here we spent 20 minutes enjoying good views of the commoner local
species and we were particularly pleased to see both species of waxbill again. Lunch today was a return visit to Tanji Eco Lodge with again the added bonus of the bird drinkers there, meaning a relaxing hour in the shade watching and photographing the birds as they came in to drink.

After lunch our next destination was Brufut forest, making a brief stop en route for a roadside Lizard Buzzard. Our walk at Brufut was as productive as ever, the highlights being eight African Green Pigeons feeding in a fig tree, a pair of Northern Crombecs, a Lesser Honeyguide, two male Copper Sunbirds and a male Northern Puffback, these last four species all in the same tree! Obliging Red-winged Warbler, Lavender Waxbills and a Village Indigobird and a not so obliging Yellow-throated Leaflove swelled our day list. The best here was yet to come and much appreciated when they did appear, judging by the gnos of approval! With a small flock of Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters hawking over us and briefly sitting in the pathside trees alongside us. Once again the bird drinkers at Brufut proved a draw to both the birds and us, as we concluded our visit by sitting there to see what came in to drink. The answer, mainly the expected woodland species, and the exception for us a Little Weaver, which offered a good comparison with a Village Weaver that, sat alongside it. A calling Yellow White-eye, whilst heard calling by the group, was only seen by Gary, though a Black Scimitarbill was far more obliging and concluded another successful day’s birding!

Day 6 – Wednesday, February 27th 2019
A slightly longer drive today to our destination at Marakissa, where we were to spend the morning birding around the forest then have lunch at Marakissa River Lodge. As usual the birding started almost as soon as we got off the bus, with a small flock of swifts over us readily identified as Pallid Swifts, their pale throats, brown coloration and seemingly more rounded wing point a stark contrast to yesterday’s Commons. A flock of Green Wood Hoopoes, a species that had eluded a large percentage of the group, appeared and showed well and ironically were to be the first of several flocks we saw well today. A pair of Fine-spotted Woodpeckers showed well nearby and a hoped-for Lanner Falcon was spotted by Graeme, perched on the top of a large nearby pylon. The day had started very dusty, noticeable almost as soon as we left the hotel and this continued throughout the morning with this and a combination of a stiff breeze meaning bird activity was a bit slow. That said, we as usual racked up a nice selection of species, which included Wryneck, African Golden Oriole, Pied Hornbill, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Grey Kestrel and Lizard Buzzard. The best was yet to come, though as a high pitched call was heard followed by a combination of a grey-and-white bird flying out of and along the tree line. The cry ‘White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike!’ was heard from Dembo as he morphed into Usain Bolt and excitedly ran up the path after it (at this point we knew it was a good bird!!). The bird settled and flew several times before disappearing all together. We walked down to the bridge at the end of the path to a largely dried out riverbed. A confiding Wire-tailed Swallow, Lizard Buzzard, Grey Kestrel, Black Crake and Black Heron were all noteworthy here. We re-traced our route back along the path and as we approached the area we had seen the White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, we heard the high pitched call again. With that, the bird again came into view, though this time it settled only once before flying off again.

Lunch followed at Marakissa River Lodge where the food was fantastic as always, reflected in the lack of any talking over lunch! The water drinkers here are arguably the best, too and birds seen included four species of starling (including Splendid), Greater Honeyguide, White-crowned Robin-chat and Yellow-throated Leaflove. The nearby drier up swimming pool produced several flocks we saw well today. A pair of Fine-spotted Woodpeckers showed well nearby and a hoped-for Lanner Falcon was spotted by Graeme, perched on the top of a large nearby pylon. The day had started very dusty, noticeable almost as soon as we left the hotel and this continued throughout the morning with this and a combination of a stiff breeze meaning bird activity was a bit slow. That said, we as usual racked up a nice selection of species, which included Wryneck, African Golden Oriole, Pied Hornbill, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Grey Kestrel and Lizard Buzzard. The best was yet to come, though as a high pitched call was heard followed by a combination of a grey-and-white bird flying out of and along the tree line. The cry ‘White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike!’ was heard from Dembo as he morphed into Usain Bolt and excitedly ran up the path after it (at this point we knew it was a good bird!!). The bird settled and flew several times before disappearing all together. We walked down to the bridge at the end of the path to a largely dried out riverbed. A confiding Wire-tailed Swallow, Lizard Buzzard, Grey Kestrel, Black Crake and Black Heron were all noteworthy here. We re-traced our route back along the path and as we approached the area we had seen the White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, we heard the high pitched call again. With that, the bird again came into view, though this time it settled only once before flying off again.

Day 7 – Thursday, February 28th 2019
As usual with our trips to The Gambia, the last full day of the trip sees us heading to Kartong, a bird observatory close to the southern border with Senegal. An earlier than normal start and a packed breakfast taken on the veranda there as dawn is breaking is the tried and tested way of experiencing the best of the site. As we looked out, the first African Swamphen of the trip appeared and the first of the many Ospreys we were to see today was also noted. A Black-headed Heron was watched feeding along the edge of the reedbed, which this year was uncharacteristically dry - a reflection on the lack of winter rainfall and the heat that had affected the whole site.
A large, distant falcon was tentatively identified as a Lanner, which did the decent thing and flew towards and over us allowing both a good view and confirmation of its identification. The observatory warden, Colin, had greeted us on our arrival and would have normally walked around the site with us but a back injury was curtailing his activities. His two trainees, Dembo (which at times proved confusing!) and Michael, guided for us this time, our route as usual taking as through the reserve and onto the beach. The birding as usual was very good and highlights from the first part of the walk included Abyssinian and Purple Roller, Malachite and Grey-headed Kingfisher, Black Crane, African Collared Dove, and Black-shouldered Kite. Arriving at the beach we took advantage of a beach bar selling freshly squeezed orange and grapefruit drinks, which was a welcome respite before heading off along the beach in search of our hoped-for target species, White-fronted Plover. It was a very windy day and as we walked along the beach hopes were not high for finding the birds. We stopped to look at the distant collection of gulls along the beach, noting a few whimbrel with them. Then Dembo (our one!) spotted the first of what was to turn out to be three White-fronted Plovers on the edge of a stretch of water that spread inland from the beach – success, so worth the effort! A small number of waders, mainly Whimbrel had been building up on the beach and a look through them revealed a Kentish Plover, which was to be the only one of the trip. We walked back through the mangroves, enjoying great views of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters and, as we approached the bus, two rollers chasing each other turned out to be an Abyssinian and Purple!

Lunch was excellent and followed by a boat trip which turned out to be a fitting end to our day. We climbed on board, with some of the group actually heeding the 'mind your head' warning! Then we headed off down river. We stopped firstly by an exposed mud bank, which held a selection of waders and gulls plus Great White and Pink-backed Pelicans; not as many birds as we’d normally expect, but presumably the three Ospreys sat on the exposed mud as well had some bearing on that! We then turned round and headed up river. Ospreys lined the route, with one perched every few hundred yards, along with Redshank, Senegal Thick-knee and Whimbrel amongst the mangrove roots along the river edge. A large flock of small waders flew towards and alongside us before heading back up river. Colin commented that the tide was probably pushing them off their feeding site and we may be unlucky if the tide was already covering it! We needn’t have worried though, as we approached we could see good numbers of waders still running around along the edge. A bigger bird, wading in the water in the distance took our attention away from the waders, one look and we realized it was a Goliath Heron! We sped towards it, noting a selection of waders including Black-winged Stilt, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint on the mud as we cruised past. Great views of the heron followed as it fed unperturbed while we watched. Pleased with our success we headed back to look at the waders again. Initially nothing new caught our eye then Jon noted a stonking ginger male White-fronted Plover in amongst them! We then headed back to the quay, noting only the second Purple Heron of the trip on the way. We dropped Colin, Dembo and Michael back in the village as we headed back to the coast. One final stop was in store for us to search for a species that had eluded us so far. We pulled over by the side of a large football pit and cycle track area. We started our walk in reverse from the first day, by getting Ali to drop us adjacent to the quay, realising it was feeding on termites and many other birds were feeding with it. Birds noted included Blackcap and Brown Babblers, Yellow-crowned Gonoleks, Fork-tailed Drongo and Red-billed Hornbill. A Yellow-fronted Canary greeted us as we approached the pools, which unfortunately was as good as it got, as the area had been totally cleaned up since our previous visits and the water levels very high. A flock of over around 35 White-faced Whistling Ducks and around 50 Grey-headed Gulls were the only birds on show. We quickly moved on to another site Dembo had nearby, where a selection of the previous pools species were found plus a Grey Kestrel and Abyssinian Roller in nearby trees.

Day 8 – Friday, March 1st 2019
Breakfast as usual on our last day, with an opportunity to do half a day’s birding before vacating our rooms, heading to the airport and then home. A local destination again this morning, a revisit to the nearby Kotu Creek and cycle track area. We started our walk in reverse from the first day, by getting Ali to drop us adjacent to the cycle track then walking towards the bridge. Almost our first bird was a new one, and impressive! A Long-crested Eagle perched on the ground! The scopes were quickly trained on the bird and in Dembo’s words ‘wow!’ The bird was watched flying up into some nearby palms and being harassed by the local Pied Crows before it disappeared from view. We continued our walk, noting Sacred Ibis, Black Heron and African Spoonbill in the adjacent creek. A short diversion followed with a track taking us to view a large pool. A nice selection of birds followed here, with the highlights including Giant and Malachite Kingfishers, an umbrellaing Black Heron, both species of spoonbill, Hadada Ibis and a new bird for the trip - Common Moorhen! We continued our walk to the bridge at Kotu, noting a flock of eight Sacred Ibis and a Woodchat Shrike on the way. A quick look from the bridge gave us a selection of the expected species before we walked along a nearby track towards Kotu sewage pools (well it is a birding trip!) As we approached the pools, a Fine-spotted Woodpecker was seen feeding on the ground near the path. We stood and watched, realizing it was feeding on termites and many other birds were feeding with it. Birds noted included Blackcap and Brown Babblers, Yellow-crowned Gonoleks, Fork-tailed Drongo and Red-billed Hornbill. A Yellow-fronted Canary greeted us as we approached the pools, which unfortunately was as good as it got, as the area had been totally cleaned up since our previous visits and the water levels very high. A flock of over around 35 White-faced Whistling Ducks and around 50 Grey-headed Gulls were the only birds on show. We quickly moved on to another site Dembo had nearby, where a selection of the previous pools species were found plus a Grey Kestrel and Abyssinian Roller in nearby trees.

With time now ticking on we returned to the hotel, checked out and headed to our lunch stop. One last small job had to be done before we arrive at the restaurant, though. March 1st is Dembo’s birthday and we’d deliberately
not said anything to make him think we'd forgotten it; we hadn’t and when he least expected it we all broke into song! He seemingly really appreciated it as well!

Lunch was followed by a drive to the airport with a brief delay as the president's convoy stopped the traffic (to say it seemed over the top was an understatement!) An uneventful check-in meant we were in the departure lounge in good time for the journey home with the flight taking off on time and arriving back in the UK as scheduled.

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### Annotated List of Birds Recorded

*(Total species - 222)*

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*
- Recorded on three dates, at Kotu Creek, Ponds and Kamaloo Corner.

**Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus*
- One briefly for several of the group at Lamin rice fields.

**Double-spurred Francolin** *Pternistis bicalcaratus*
- Recorded on three dates, unfortunately either heard or flushed birds, at Kotu Creek, Tanji and Marakissa.

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis*
- One at Marakissa Bridge was a welcome addition.

**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
- Noted on six dates, with a flock of eight on the last day noteworthy.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*
- Two at the same bridge as the Yellow-billed Stork, with another on our last day at Kotu Creek.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
- Two at Kamaloo corner and three on our last morning at Kotu Creek.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*
- Recorded on five dates, largest number was a count of around 15 on our last morning around Kotu Creek.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
- An adult bird at Farasuta and a 2nd year bird at Marakissa bridge.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*
- Four dates, with a maximum of three at Lamin rice fields.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
- Scattered in wetland areas in small numbers.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
- Common and noted daily, especially around cattle herds and in the rice fields.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
- Noted on five dates, in ones and twos.

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*
- Singles at Kotu Creek and Kartong and five somewhat out of context in a tree at Tujereng.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath*
- A contender for bird of the trip and to many I think probably the winner! Great views of this magnificent heron during our boat trip at Kartong.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
- Single birds briefly at Marakissa Bridge and on the Kartong River trip.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
- Widespread in small numbers and noted almost daily.

**Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*
- Noted most days in ones and twos.

**Black Egret** *Egretta ardesiaca*
- One/two on four dates including several umbrellaing birds!

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
- Small numbers on four dates in wetland areas.

**Western Reef Egret** *Egretta gularis*
- Common in any mangrove or coastal wetland habitat. Overwhelmingly, most birds in The Gambia are dark morph individuals and, typically, no white birds were seen this year.

**Hamerkop** *Egretta garzetta*
- Seen on all but one day with a maximum of four at Lamin rice fields.

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*
- Seen on three dates, some nice views and comparisons with the following species.

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens*
- Common along the coast with good numbers at Kamaloo Corner, Bund Road and Kartong on the river trip.
Reed Cormorant  *Microcarbo africanus*
Small numbers logged daily throughout the trip.

White-breasted Cormorant  *Phalacrocorax lucidus*
Seen on three dates with a maximum of 50 flyover birds at Tanji on 24th.

African Darter  *Anhinga rufa*
Single birds on four dates.

Western Osprey  *Pandion haliaetus*
Common along the coast with birds seen regularly ferrying fish overhead. Numerous in the Kartong area with birds seen throughout our time there.

Black-winged Kite  *Elanus caeruleus*
A roadside bird courtesy of Ali on 23rd and one at Kartong on 28th.

African Harrier-hawk  *Polyboroides typus*
Recorded on four dates, 1-3 in total, all adults other than two immature birds.

Palm-nut Vulture  *Gypohierax angolensis*
Four adults on three dates.

Hooded Vulture  *Necrosyrtes monachus*
Abundant and noted daily throughout the trip.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle  *Circaetus beaudouini*
Two at Penyem, one in flight and one perched.

Long-crested Eagle  *Lophaetus occipitalis*
A surprise bird found perched on the ground on our last day at Kotu Creek.

Booted Eagle  *Hieraaetus pennatus*
A pale morph bird was found soaring with Hooded Vultures at Pirang.

Lizard Buzzard  *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*
Seen on three dates with several from a moving bus courtesy of Ali. Best views were at Marakissa where three were seen in total.

Dark Chanting Goshawk  *Melierax metabates*
Great views of one at Tujereng which was the only one of the trip.

Shikra  *Accipiter badius*
One to two on five dates but often rather brief in appearance.

Western Marsh Harrier  *Circus aeruginosus*
Only one, as we drove onto Bund Road.

Yellow-billed Kite  *Milvus aegyptius*
Now 'split' from Black Kite, this species was noted as common throughout the trip, with a row of 13 at Kotu on a power line a noteworthy sight.

Black Crake  *Amaurornis flavirostra*
Up to three at Lamin rice fields, Marakissa and Kartong.

African Swamphen  *Porphyrio madagascariensis*
Several around the bulrush stands at Kartong, though the lack of any water had impacted numbers.

Common Moorhen  *Gallinula chloropus*
Only one seen, on our last day at Kotu Creek.

Senegal Thick-knee  *Burhinus senegalensis*
A good scattering of very obliging birds at wetlands on all days, in excess of 20 birds at most sites.

Eurasian Oystercatcher  *Haematopus ostralegus*
A single at Cape Point and half a dozen on the Kartong River trip.

Black-winged Stilt  *Himantopus himantopus*
Around 50 on the small inland water area at Bund Road was a good count. Four were seen on our river trip with six noted on our last day at Kotu Creek

Spur-winged Lapwing  *Vanellus spinosus*
Widespread and common in damp areas throughout the trip.

Black-headed Lapwing  *Vanellus tectus*
Fourteen were a last minute addition on a roadside football pitch on the way back from Kartong.

African Wattled Lapwing  *Vanellus senegallus*
Noted on five dates in open, scrubby areas, with nine at Tujereng and ten at Farasutu.

Grey Plover  *Pluvialis squatarola*
Around 20 in total seen on our Kartong visit.

Common Ringed Plover  *Charadrius hiaticula*
Reasonable numbers with c40, at Cape Point and on the beach and river at Kartong.

White-fronted Plover  *Charadrius marginatus*
Three on the beach at Kartong and a stunning male found by Jon on the boat trip there.
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
A single bird with Whimbrel on the beach at Kartong.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*
Only one, but amazing views of a female at Lamin rice fields.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*
Seen regularly in wetland areas.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Small numbers at wetlands during the week.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Six at Bund Road and a single at Kartong.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Recorded at Tanji Beach and Kartong.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
At least six were noted in amongst the roosting waders on the river at Kartong.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Small numbers on the beach at Kartong.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
Around 10, again with roosting waders on the river at Kartong.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Noted on four dates in small numbers in wetland areas.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
One to four on six dates at wetlands throughout the week.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Easily seen on our visit to Bund Road and Kartong.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
A single distant bird at Kamaloo Corner.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
A few noted at Kotu on both visits with largest numbers along the Bund Road.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Common along the coast at Tanji and Kartong.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
At least six in amongst the large collection of gulls along the Bund Road.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*
Abundant and by far the commonest gull species along the coast.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Four dates, largely coastal sites and easily seen.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Three at Kamaloo Corner, two at Marakissa and two at Kartong.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*
Noted regularly at wetland sites and particularly common along the coast at Tanji, Banul and Kartong.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*
Very much tied to the coast seen regularly on and along the beaches.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
Small numbers along the coast at Tanji, Banjul and Kartong.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*
Around 30 on the beach at Kartong.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*
A Skua harassing gulls at Tanji Fishing Village caused much debate. A near-adult, it invited confusion with the very similar-looking Pomarine Skua but in the end, with some help of Cliff’s excellent pictures, it was concluded that it was indeed an Arctic.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*
Noted most days in built up areas.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*
Common in urban and semirural settings with the largest numbers around the coastal conurbations.

African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*
All too briefly, one seen by Gary and Graeme at Kartong.

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*
Common in wetland areas, especially around the edge of mangroves.
Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*
- Common and widespread and noted every day – “I am a red-eyed dove”!!

Vinous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*
- Very common – the smaller, lighter-coloured dove of the region with a broad neck band.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*
- Common, especially in semirural areas and cultivated lands.

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*
- Widespread in dry, savanna woodland and secondary growth areas.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*
- More localised and mostly seen in wooded areas, such as at Tanji and Marakissa.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*
- Three at Bund Road and a single at Marrakissa.

**African Green Pigeon Treron calvus**
- Up to eight in the larger trees around Pirang, Brufut and Marakissa.

**Guinea Turaco Tauraco persa**
- Nice views at Pirang (2) and a single at Farasutu.

**Violet Turaco Musophaga violacea**
- Nice views of a roadside pair at Tanji with another ‘over the road’ at Penyem.

**Western Plantain-eater Crinifer piscator**
- Wonderfully common, their chortling calls a familiar background sound throughout the week.

**Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis**
- Widespread, with singles and pairs noted daily.

Klaas’s Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*
- A photograph of one was discovered in Cliff’s collection upon returning home!

**African Scops Owl Otus senegalensis**
- Our first roosting bird was at Pirang and was followed by two more at Lamin rice fields.

Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis*
- Our first roosting bird was at Pirang and was followed by two more at Lamin rice fields.

**Greyish Eagle Owl Bubo cinerascens**
- Nice views of a roosting individual was enjoyed at close range at Farasutu.

Verreaux’s Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*
- Nice views of the pink eyelids as one looked dolefully down at us from its roost site at Pirang.

**African Wood Owl Strix woodfordii**
- Always a special treat due in part to their scarcity and in part to their great ability to hide! One seen very well at Farasutu on 26th.

**Pearl-spotted Owlet Glaucidium perlatum**
- Seen on two dates, with the best view near Lamin Lodge.

**Long-tailed Nightjar Caprimulgus climacurus**
- Wonderful close views of one at Farasutu.

**African Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus**
- Widespread and common and noted daily.

**Common Swift Apus apus**
- A flock of a dozen or so flew over us at Farasutu, good views and useful prior to the Pallids the next day.

**Pallid Swift Apus pallidus**
- A flock of 10 over us at Marakissa gave great views and enabled all the salient points to be noted.

**Little Swift Apus affinis**
- Noted on five dates in small numbers.

**Purple Roller Coracias naevius**
- A roadside bird found by Ali and a second at Kartong.

**Abyssinian Roller Coracias abyssinicus**
- Up to three on three dates.

**Blue-bellied Roller Coracias cyanogaster**
- One of the commoner rollers, seen on four dates with some great views enjoyed at times.

**Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus**
- Seen virtually daily, though far more impressive in flight than perched!

**Grey-headed Kingfisher Halcyon leucocephala**
- A showy bird at Kartong was a nice addition to the list.

**Blue-breasted Kingfisher Halcyon malimbica**
- Good views of a roadside bird was unfortunately the only one seen.

**Woodland Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis**
- Two at Lamin rice fields, one of which did the decent thing and posed nicely for us.
Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus*
- Seen on four dates, with a noteworthy, showy and approachable bird at Marakissa River Lodge.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*
- A good total, four birds on four dates, again best views at Marakissa River Lodge.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
- Widespread and common with birds noted every day.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*
- A flock of six flew around us at Brufut with several landing and affording us cracking views.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*
- Pairs or small groups seen almost daily and often quite tame.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*
- Often heard ‘prooping’ overhead as migrants passed through the area, with some nice perched birds, namely at Cape Point and Kartong.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*
- A single bird seen by Matt at Brufut.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
- Two birds, singles at Tujereng and Tanji.

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*
- Small numbers daily, though we had to wait until Marakissa for everyone to finally catch up with them.

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*
- A single bird at Marakissa found perched and calling in typical fashion on the top of a distant bare tree.

Western Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus kempi*
- Very common and seen daily.

African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*
- Our first was an elusive treetop bird at Pirang with more confiding birds seen by everyone at Marakissa.

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*
- Relatively common and seen most days of the trip.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogonius chrysoconus*
- Heard and seen on four dates daily, with some great views had of several of these smart little birds.

Vieillot’s Barbet *Lybius vieilloti*
- Nice views were had of co-operative birds at Tujereng and Tanji.

Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius*
- Seen on five dates with a memorable flock of eight perched birds at Farasutu

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*
- One showed well for the group at Brufut.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*
- One, possibly two were seen at Marakissa River Lodge.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
- A surprise find at Marakissa and seen by most, if not all of the group, though it was a frustratingly active bird!

Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera*
- Recorded on four dates, best views were of a pair at Marakissa forest.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*
- Nice views of a showy pair at Farasutu

African Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae*
- A small scattering of birds on four dates.

Brown-backed Woodpecker *Picoides obsoletus*
- A male at Tujereng was a welcome addition and seen well by us all.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiacus*
- A roadside bird near Kotu, one at Marrakissa and another at Kotu on our last day.

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*
- A perched roadside bird gave us great views on 25th, with two more flyover birds seen at Farasutu

Lanner *Falco biarmicus*
- Two seen, one perched on a large pylon at Marakissa and a second at Kartong.

Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*
- Widespread and noted daily – a species that seems to be recovering from the ravages of the pet trade.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
- Odd noisy pairs noted daily.

Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*
- Heard and seen on three dates at Tanji Eco Lodge, Pirang and Farasutu.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*
- Only heard unfortunately, at Tujereng and Lamin Lodge.
Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*
Great views of a male at Brufut.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus*
Heard daily throughout the tour and most of us got repeated looks at birds.

White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike *Ceblepyris pectoralis*
Rarity-wise bird of the trip, with a single seen twice in flight and perched briefly at Marakissa Forest.

Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvina corvina*
A scattering of birds on four dates, often in small family parties and seen well by the group.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
Frequent this year with birds noted on four dates, including three at Kartong.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*
Some great views, with a pair at Pirang Forest and at least four at Marakissa Forest.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*
Three dates, all singles other than two at Kotu Creek on 23rd.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*
Some nice views on four dates. Three at Tanji Eco Lodge at the drinking pool gave us particularly good views.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*
Far less common than the former, with one in the forest at Farasutu and two at Pirang.

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*
Bands of these roadside birds were noted daily throughout the week.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*
Noisy, boisterous and ever-present.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*
Widespread and common throughout and often the first sound heard in the morning.

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens*
Seen very well at Tanji, where one or two were regularly seen coming to the drinking pots with another at the pots at Farasutu.

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Altistellas flavicollis*
Two briefly at both Brufut and at Marakissa River Lodge.

Grey-headed Bristlebill *Bleda canicapilla*
Two at Pirang forest proved challenging with only some of the group managing to see them.

Fanti Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne obscura*
Two birds at Tanji on 24th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
One along the beach on our visit to Kartong.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
A single bird briefly around the bridge at Kotu creek on our last day.

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida*
Common and seen daily in small numbers.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*
Recorded on five dates with a particularly obliging bird on the bridge rail at Marakissa.

Pied-winged Swallow *Hirundo leucosoma*
Two dates two birds, both sightings rather brief at Lamin Lodge and Marakissa.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*
Small numbers noted trickling over us during our visit to Kartong.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*
Singles at Fajara Golf Course and Kartong and two at Brufut.

Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*
One heard and seen in the tree canopy at Pirang Forest.

Western Bonelli’s Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*
A calling bird was heard and seen well along the cycle track at Kotu creek on our first full day.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Two seen, one at Marrikassa Forest the other at Kotu Creek on our last day.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
One at Farasuta and the other at Kartong.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
One seen skulking around in the base of the mangroves at Kotu Creek.

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*
Two briefly at Kamaloo corner and Bund Road.

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*
One in subsong In the scrub at Tanji.
Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*
Unfortunately only heard, on our first full day at Tujereng.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*
As above unfortunately only heard at Tujereng.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
Two briefly, one at Kamaloo Corner the other at Stala.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*
Common and widespread, with nice views had at Tujereng, Lamin Lodge and Brufut.

Red-winged Warbler *Heiolais erythropterus*
Seen and heard at four sites with particularly good views at Tujereng, Lamin Lodge and Brufut.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*
Several heard and a couple seen quite well at Pirang Forest.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata*
A particularly showy bird at Lamin Lodge with several others noted at Farasutu.

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*
Noisy and common with some nice views of birds around the hotel and at lodges, such as at Marakissa.

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii*
Noisy and common with some nice views of birds around the hotel and at lodges, such as at Marakissa.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
A feature of the drinking pools at Tanji during lunch with at least one female coming to drink.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
Two very brief birds, one at Tujereng the other at Brufut.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*
Two male birds, one near the road bridge at Tanji fishing Village and one at Kartong.

African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*
Heard by us at the drinkers at Brufut but only seen by Gary.

Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis chalcurus*
A presumed single bird at the drinking pots at Marakissa Lodge.

Splendid Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*
The name says it all! Great views of at least six, at the water bowls at Marakissa River Lodge.

Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus*
Seen at Tujereng and Kartong, though best views were at the water bowls at Marakissa.

Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*
Small numbers seen at a number of locations throughout the week.

Chestnut-bellied Starling *Lamprotornis pulcher*
A close runner for bird of the trip for at least one of us! Four calling birds at Tujereng did the decent thing and perched up in full view for us.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*
Two hanging off the side of a cow at near Penyem.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*
Small numbers of this unassuming bird seen daily.

Snowy-crowned Robin-chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*
Seen well at the drinking pool on both our visits to Tanji Eco Lodge.

White-fronted Black Chat *Oenanthe albifrons*
A distant bird at Tujereng was a great spot by Cliff.

Mouse-brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus*
Great views were had of a showy bird after lunch at Lamin Lodge.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*
Two males seen, the first at Pirang Forest was particularly smart.

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*
Widespread and very common with birds seen every day of the trip.

Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigastrus*
Widespread in small numbers most days of the trip, including a number of stunning males in full colour.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*
Widespread but more localised than Beautiful Sunbird.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*
Challenging views of one in the canopy at Pirang, then two much more obliging, moulting males at Brufut.
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
Very localised; noted in the hotel area and at Tanji.

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus*
A handful of birds noted on five dates.

**Chestnut-crowned Sparrow**-weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus*
Nice scope views of a perched bird at Tujereng.

**White-billed Buffalo Weaver** *Bubalornis albostris*
Small parties seen daily, mainly along the roadsides.

**Little Weaver** *Ploceus luteolus*
Two at Brufut, with one at a drinker pot with a Village Weaver for comparison.

**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis*
Widespread in more thickly wooded areas and seen regularly at Tanji Eco Lodge coming in to drink.

**Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver**-weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus*
Nice scope views of a perched bird at Tujereng.

**Yellow-crowned Bishop** *Euplectes afer*
A small flock of around 10 at Marakissa on 27th

**Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus*
Seen on three dates with birds visiting the drinkers at Tanji Eco Lodge affording the best views..

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*
Abundant throughout the region and seen in good quantity daily.

**Western Bluebill** *Spermophaga haematina*
At least three including two smart adults and an immature coming into the drinkers at Tanji Eco Lodge on both our visits there.

**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegalena*
Widespread and recorded daily. Some nice, confiding birds at a number of places, especially Tanji.

**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus*
Widespread and noted on six dates.

**Lavender Waxbill** *Estrilda caerulescens*
Pairs and small groups seen at Pirang, Tanji, Brufut and Marakissa.

**Orange-cheeked Waxbill** *Estrilda melpoda*
Good views of birds visiting water bowls at Farasutu and Marakissa.

**Black-rumped Waxbill** *Estrilda troglodytes*
A few seen visiting the water bowls at Farasutu.

**Bronze Mannikin** *Spermestes cucullatus*
Tight packs of little buzz bombs would often whizz past us, while plenty were enjoyed at water bowls and pools, especially at Tanji.

**Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata*
Singles seen at Brufut and Marakissa with both birds adopting a ‘shuffling movement’ when feeding presumably to search out food hidden in the sand.

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
British Yellow Wagtails of the race *flavissima* were noted regularly in dry, open areas. The more slurred calls of Iberian Wagtails (race *iberiae*) were heard at Kartong with around six of this subspecies seen there.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
Two noted on Tanji beach around the fishing village.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*
One was seen perched up in the open at Tujereng, allowing everyone to view it through the scope.

**Yellow-fronted Canary** *Serinus mozambicus*
Seen well at Tujereng (2), Brufut and Kotu Ponds.
Mammals
Guinea Baboon *Papio papio*
Green Monkey *Chlorocebus sабaeus*
Temminck’s Red Colobus *Piliocolobus temminckii*
Striped Ground Squirrel *Xerus erythropus*
Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*

Reptiles
Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*
Yellow-headed Rock Agama *Agama agama*
Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus*

Butterflies
Citrus Swallowtail *Papilio demodocus*
Veined Swallowtail *Graphium leonidas*
African Migrant *Catopsilia florella*
Small Grass Yellow *Eurema brigitta*
Common Grass Yellow *Eurema hecabe*
Small Orange Tip *Colotis evagore antigone*
Brown-veined White *Belenois calypso*
African Spirit *Leposia alcesta*
Common Dotted Border *Mylothris chloris*
Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*
African Grass Blue *Zizeeria knysna*
Plain Tiger (African Monarch) *Danaus chrysippus f. chrysippus*
Dark Blue Pansy *Juronia oenone*
River Sailer *Neptis serena*
Guineafowl *Hamanumida daedalus*
Elegant Acraea *Acraea egina*
Spio Grizzled Skipper *Spialia spio*