

The Gambia



Coast & Upriver



16th to 23rd January, 2010



Sat 16	Kotu Creek	17.15 - 19.15
Sun 17	Abuko Lamin Brufut Senegambia Hotel	8.00 - 12.30 13.45 - 15.15 16.00 - 18.00 18.15 - 19.00
Mon 18	Tendaba	14.00 - 18.00
Tue 19	Tendaba mangroves Journey from Tendaba to Georgetown (including Soma & Kaur Wetlands)	8.30 -12.00 13.15 - 19.00
Wed 20	Sankulaykunda Ferry Crossing Baobolong Lodge area	7.30 - 14.00 16.45 - 19.00
Thu 21	Bansang Basse	9.30 - 11.30 13.30 - 14.30
Fri 22	Wassu area Wassu to Barra	8.30 - 11.30 11.30 - 17.00
Sat 23	Kotu area	7.30 - 11.00

THE GAMBIA

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Introduction

We first visited The Gambia in 1999, when we stayed at the Badala Park Hotel in the Kotu area, and birded the week from there, going no more than an hour inland, and venturing on to the North bank in the Barra area for one day. At that time, we used a guide who we had found around Kotu, Modu Barry, and he had suggested a trip up river to see some of the inland specialities. We didn't take him up on it at the time, since we wanted to cover the coastal habitats as best we could, but promised ourselves that we would return some day and base most of the holiday around the upriver sites, with the fabled Egyptian Plover as our prime target.



So it was that 11 years later we again arrived at the Badala Park Hotel, which didn't seem to have changed a great deal (in fact the package price for flights and B&B accommodation was almost the same at £370). This time we had pre-booked 4 days upriver ahead of the trip, with Bob Wilde's WildGambia (www.wildgambia.com) operation, who have until recently concentrated on fishing trips, but who have branched out into bird tours. This means that the guide, Lamin, is still relatively inexperienced, but the trip was a good price at £350 each for all except evening meals. For those birders who want an expansive tick list, the clamour of an experienced tour company with its crowd of participants may be better, but our tour was hugely enjoyable through seeing a mouth watering diversity of birds, and also being on a private tour just for the two of us. The only down side was the bad luck which could slice into any holiday here – the car breakdown. This could have resulted in losing a day upriver, but Bob did the correct thing and added the extra day on for nothing.

The Gambia must be the cheapest and easiest way to experience African birds South of the Sahara, but there are some aspects which need to be pointed out. The most obvious down side is the hassle you receive when there. For birders, this is a particular problem around Kotu, and especially at the Kotu Creek bridge. To be fair, I am sure that the "bird guides" there contain some very competent people, but if you want to enjoy the birds quietly and on your own, they can sometimes be adverse to taking no for an answer. From our experience, I would advise booking a guide ahead of arrival (Modu Barry should be contacted at 30A Grant Street, Banjul, The Gambia, modoubarry7@hotmail.com, or look out for him at the Kombo Beach Hotel just along from the bridge), and avoiding the hassle on the bridge. There is also generally hassle for the tourist nearer the coast, with many Gambians pleasantly enquiring your name and where you are from, and then asking for something along the way (classically some money for accompanying you, even if you didn't want it).

The other factor to be aware of is the travel infrastructure. The roads near to the resorts are very good, but the South bank road particularly away from here has deteriorated to some degree, leaving a bumpy transit which takes a little longer. The vehicles used seem to be far from new, and so (as we found out) reliability and comfort are not as back home. However, this is Africa!!!

The currency is the dalasis, and the notes passed around are either dirty or very dirty. Despite there being an ATM in the airport on arrival, it apparently only takes Gambian cards, as do the majority of the machines we passed elsewhere, so it is worth taking a combination of cash and travellers cheques. The street vendors are supposed to give the best rates, but we found the 40 dalasis to £1 at the hotel to be reasonable and convenient. Stirling is also apparently accepted, but we didn't try this, and the chance is that the exchange rate would have to be haggled. Electricity is usually UK three pin plugs, but Tendaba Camp had European two pin plugs, so these must occur regularly. The safety and working condition of the plugs can't always be guaranteed, as can the supply of electricity, although power cuts weren't too regular to be annoying. However, a torch in the suitcase is a good tip.

Accommodation

Badala Park Hotel (Kotu)

Having visited the Senegambia Hotel for their array of birds, it is obvious that the Badala Park hotel is fairly basic. This isn't a surprise, since it is the cheapest package to the area, but is still clean and more than adequate. A huge bonus is the location, situated as it is next to the Cycle Track, and a stone's throw away from the Kotu Creek. We tried to organise an earlier breakfast than the allotted 7am start a couple of times without success. There is a private Chinese restaurant and hotel owned one on site. The benefit of these is that you don't have to run the gauntlet of over eager Gambians trying to prise money from you when tackling the small selection of eateries outside. Two benefits of the hotel are UK plugs, and a safety deposit box in each room (not cheap at 770 Dalasis for 7 days).

Tendaba Camp

Despite the name, this does comprise brick built housing, next to a small village. It is likely that this is the only place to stay when visiting Tendaba, and the boats go from the jetty alongside for the mangrove trips, since the Camp is situated on the very wide Gambia River. The rooms are basic, with a separate shower block for when the attached "en suite" isn't up to the job. We experienced our first Gambian power cut while here (actually, that's not quite true, since there was one at the Badala Park when we were trying to leave for Tendaba). The restaurant is attached and pleasantly located in the open air next to the river, and had a buffet when we were there. This didn't begin until 8pm, and we were starving, so we ordered a Gambian chicken dish from the menu for 7pm, which tasted like ordinary chicken and chips. Sockets in the rooms were of the European adapter type.



Baobolong Lodge area (Georgetown)

This must be the place to stay not only for Georgetown, but also for the area as a whole. As usual, the accommodation is basic, and is probably the first such hotel I have stayed in where there is no reception (although building work to rectify this is apparently ongoing, along with a new kitchen). On arrival, we collected our key from the table inside the entrance to the accommodation compound, and were in our room within minutes. There are around 50 rooms to the hotel, and each seem to contain UK style plugs – these



do not always work, and there are of course the inevitable power cuts. The linen is wondrous – we were given 1 towel between two of us, and the spare we requested was of the amazing none drying kind first experienced at Tendaba. My bed also came with a covering sheet only, as well as a mosquito net which didn't hang. And I believe this is the upmarket hotel in the area. Don't misunderstand – this is not a complaint, merely Africa! The meals in the evening were served in the open air, and the choice was either take it or leave it – a usually tasty meat casserole or rice dish,

and spaghetti with sauce for the vegetarians (cost of this was 200 dalasis, with a beer or soft drink 30-40 dalasis).

Sites Diary

Kotu Creek area

(Day 1)

We eventually arrived at the Badala Park Hotel just after 5pm – fortune had been on our side, since we were the first drop off point for the transfer bus. As we approached the hotel, some changes to the area could be seen in the form of new restaurants at the head of the road, but the hotel itself, which we had been in 11 years before, seemed little different. It took a little time to get under (birding) way, due mainly to an inefficient security safe system in the room which needed sorting out first.



Bridge over Kotu Creek



The creek

The beauty of this location as a base is that there are a variety of habitats on the doorstep, in the form of rice paddies, the Kotu Creek, scattered woodland, and a nearby beach. This had changed a little since our last visit, with less water in the paddies, leaving fewer open pools for wading birds. The paddies themselves had overgrown to some extent, as had the vegetation along the creek path. It is sad to say that the main regression was in the intensity of the hassle from the locals, mainly from those purporting to be bird guides. There are undoubtedly some good ones there, but the numbers had swollen, and they were more persistent in trying to glean our services, despite being told that we had guides for the week, and didn't want company this

afternoon. There is a great danger that this behaviour could put individual birders off coming here – this is a view that I could not argue against.

Yet the birding remains fulfilling – we saw almost 50 species in the couple of hours we spent before dusk. There was a notable change in the mix of birds since our last visit. We saw no Glossy Starlings, only one Roller, and the large variety of wading birds which inhabited the now drier paddies has dwindled. And a lack of cows seems to have dispersed the Oxpeckers. On the converse, there were many more Senegal Coucals, as well as copious White-faced Whistling-Ducks, and the usual mix of waders on the creek (although the only Kingfisher here was a single Pied).



Kotu palms



Cycle Track paddies

Pick of the day's birds had to be the pair of Red-necked Falcons perched at the top of a tree next to the Kotu Creek bridge. Alongside them was a pair of equally showy Plantain-eaters, looking as prehistoric as ever. Many small birds were jumping about in the reeds – we picked out Tawny-flanked Prinia and Bronze Manakins from these. A big surprise was the almost total lack of Rollers in the area – a single Abyssinian was the sole representative.

The light was fading fast as we traversed the Cycle Track, but it was good to see a pair of Bearded Barbets and a Western Red-billed Hornbill in one tree. A small group of Yellow-billed Shrikes were silhouetted against the evening sky, with good numbers of African Palm Swifts passing overhead. With more Coucals seemingly constantly appearing, we finally found a Black Heron doing its stuff on a small marsh next to the Cycle Track, with an African Jacana on the adjacent pool.

Abuko

(Day 2)



Wild Gambia, the company we were using for the rest of the week, finally arrived at the hotel at 7.30am, despite a time of 7am being arranged. This wasn't a major problem, since Abuko theoretically opens at 8am, although this in practice is whenever the people turn up. After dipping on reported White-faced Scops-Owl opposite the entrance, we proceeded to the research centre, initially down the wrong track, and of course shadowed by the predictable Gambian Bird Guide. His ruse was one of being stand offish, but being slightly ahead and pointing out goodies such as Duiker. We managed to

shake him off at the rather quiet pool next to the research station, after clocking up Black-crowned Night-Heron and African Darter.

The fun started only 20 metres or so further up the track from here, where a pair of confiding, yet unexpected, Ahanta Francolins were found at what turned out to be a very productive spot. They had been preceded by a Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, the first of quite a few within the reserve. Black-necked Weavers were abundant, both at the spot where we were ensconced, and also in numerous waves passing through. African Thrushes were also numerous here.

We hardly had time to finish counting the riches, when a little further down the track still, a gang of Oriole Warblers and Little Greenbuls stopped us once again. It took some time for their activity to abate, but this was replaced by one or two noisy Blackcap Babblers in the same spot. When I moved around to try for better views, an African Goshawk was disturbed, but kindly perched only a short distance away.



We couldn't remember Abuko being so lively in such a short space of time, and a trio of Violet Turacos kept the party going at the top of a palm. Just in front, a Klaas's Cuckoo kept vigil. On the opposite side of the track, we thought a pair of Tawny Eagles had been very patient with our passing, until we realised why when they started to copulate.

With such a brilliant approach to the animal orphanage area, it was predictable that the visit to the jewel box hide would be much quieter. On paying the 50 dalasis each for entry, the caretaker warned that there wasn't much water coming from the leaking pipe, but topped it up from his own supply anyway. After negotiating the craft sellers, we settled down for an hour in the confines of the hide. There was indeed still a pool present, although the menagerie of expected birds didn't appear. We did watch a plethora of various doves, and a small party of Red-billed Firefinches, but the addition of a Gambian Gun Squirrel was the only other spot of excitement.



Entrance to the jewel hide



Inside the hide

The return to the entrance was predictably much quieter, with the heat of the day rising, and conversely much busier with birding parties. However, we did manage to add both species of Paradise Flycatcher, as well as the thump of monster on water as a Giant Kingfisher plunged for food at the pool.

Lamin

Lamin, and the Lodge to which we were aiming, is only a short drive away from Abuko down some rather bumpy and sandy back streets. It is situated on a mangrove, which was at high tide when we arrived (low tide may be better for wading birds), and seems to be prone to visits from the local bored tourists, looking for excitement beyond the sun

lounger. Not a great deal was spotted over the mangroves while having lunch, apart from a couple of terns and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters.



Lamin Lodge



Rice fields

This turned for the better when we headed for a trudge through the rice fields. They were not what I expected, since we covered small open allotment areas bounded by dry woodland and marsh. The real excitement started just after Namaqua Doves and Beautiful Sunbirds. We were watching some of the copious Little Bee-eaters, when a disturbance revealed a smallish Olive Grass Snake trying to squeeze the life out of a squealing rodent. It was probably due to our presence that the rat escaped the ensnaring coils twice. The woodland held a noisy party of Green Wood Hoopoes, as well as Brown Babblers and a Greater Blue-eared Starling.

We left the woods for the small allotments, which were being worked by aged Gambians. We added Fine-Spotted Woodpecker here.

Brufut

Despite knowing this small reserve as Brufut Woods, most of the excitement is centred around the lagoon next to the sea. We came across this by following the beach for a little way, and added a pair of Palm-nut Vultures and overflying Lanner Falcons along this route. When we reached the lagoon, we realised that the white egret mixing with the 3 Western Reef Herons was actually a white phase Reef Heron. One of the darker birds made the mistake of wandering off to fish on its own, which resulted in the spectre of both the Lanners stooping on it in an attempt to add it to their menu.



The lagoon held quite a number of birds, most of which were Grey-hooded Gulls. However, sifting through these found a few Kelp Gulls. There was also a minor collection of Terns, principally populated by Caspian, but also added to with singles of Royal and Sandwich. A Grey Kestrel was perched in the clearing beyond. The return to the car through the woods was largely uneventful, save for the passing of a small party of Banded Mongooses.

The Senegambia Hotel

This is a much more upmarket establishment than our modest Badala Park Hotel, and despite being in a much less bird attractive spot than the latter, is recommended for good views of one or two speciality species. After negotiating the swimwear clad

residents, and not knowing where we were going, we chanced upon what was probably the best birding spot in the grounds – a rough area of gravel and unkempt bushes beside the lawns. First to fall was White-crowned Robin-Chat next to a dripping tap. While watching this, a Yellow-crowned Gonolek meandered towards us. Blackcap Babblers made up the backdrop.



On the lawns, our attention was drawn skywards by a small group of circling birds, which looked like tiny birds of prey. The late evening light cast a brick red colour on their underparts, and the slightly forked tail was enough to further confuse the issue. The riddle was solved when they landed – Broad-billed Rollers. They were eventually scattered by a marauding Shikra. We decided that was to be that for the day, and wandered back out of the hotel, but not before a Cardinal Woodpecker paused our exit.

Tendaba

(Day 3)

The day started badly and got worse as the hours rolled on. Up in plenty of time to make the 8am ferry from Banjul to Barra (5.45am), we crushed ourselves in the all too small 4x4 which had been provided, were ready to go, and then . . . nothing. The battery was dead, inexplicably, since it had just been driven to the hotel. A “mechanic” was fetched by Lamin, the guide/driver, and he hammered a couple of wires and battery terminals with a screwdriver before we managed to get the engine going with the tried and tested bump start. The plan was then to wholly re-jig the week, taking the road South of the river to Tendaba, rather than the ferry crossing to the North. This was to facilitate changing the battery at a town en route, where we would meet another member of the company. This is where things went downhill even further. The battery he had bought didn't fit, so they went off to find another five minutes away. Almost an hour later, the pair returned with distilled water and no battery! The decision was then to go to the local market to get a battery, which they completed in less than the half hour promised (my demeanour probably did little to discourage their haste!).



Despite running the gauntlet of the kids wanting to know your name, and then try to winkle money from you, and the clamour of a typical bustling, but not endearing, town, we spotted one or two birds through the throng while waiting. Pick was a Shikra circling over the main road, with a couple of Plantain-eaters at the top of a tree for some time. 4 Long-tailed Glossy Starlings were directly above us. Alongside this was the opportunity to people watch, and marvel at the contrast between this hub of humanity and home.

The journey to Tendaba Camp probably covered barely 60 miles, but the initially decent tarmac roads descended into red and rough wide tracks, which rumbled and jostled the

car no end. Another not so memorable feature was the plethora of checkpoints – mainly police, but also two army (one being at the end of the Western Division, where a bridge crossed the river). Some good birds were also to be occasionally seen. This was headed by a Purple Roller just outside of Kotu, alongside a Black-winged Kite. Some distance into the poorer tracks, we stopped to admire a Dark Chanting Goshawk, when a Grey Woodpecker appeared in the tree below.

We finally arrived at Tendaba Camp at around 1.30pm. Lamin asked us whether we would like to have a lie down, or see some birds. Had to think about that one for some time!!! We set off back along the long entrance track, and stopped short for images of the copious Long-tailed Glossy Starlings. No luck with these, but a Marsh Mongoose appeared in the mangroves. We spent some time trying to get good views of a large band of Senegal Parrots, and failed dismally, but did catch up with a Bruce's Green Pigeon. One of the main locations at Tendaba is the inappropriately named Tendaba Airport, since there is no airport to be seen, and there is little likelihood that one was ever intended. On the contrary, the area covers some saline lagoons, with a marshy grassland and small pool. The latter was covered first, and delivered big time with an over-flying Grasshopper Buzzard. These are not the easiest of raptors to find, but the rufous in the wings during flight is very distinctive.



Turning towards the small marshy pool itself, the wading birds had to wait until a few sticks over a hidden well were scoured, to sort out the small flock of Black-rumped Waxbills, since they were accompanied by a single Red-billed Quelea (the most numerous bird in the world, and we saw just the one!) and a non-breeding LBJ. The pool contained a group of 7 warring Hamerkops, a handful of Squacco Herons, and some agitated Wattled Lapwings overhead. A group of 5 small buzzing finch type birds eventually gave away their identity as Black-faced Quail-Finches, when one was finally spotted away from the cover of the grass next to the pool. An Abyssinian Roller to the rear looked stunning in the direct light.

The circumnavigation of the salt lagoon, which did hold a small amount of water in three pools, was in an exposed and high heat, with the ground underneath often slippery. A single Caspian Tern accompanied a group of Gull-billed Terns. Other birds on the lagoons were in low numbers, comprising Spur-winged & Ringed Plovers, Wattled Lapwing, Wood Sandpipers, and Black-winged Stilts.

Before finding a way back to the track, a Brown Snake-Eagle was seen perched on an exposed tree in the marshy area. Quite a group of European Bee-eaters were hunting over the track earlier, but these had dispersed when we were on the return. Good numbers of Western Red-billed Hornbills punctuated the teeming



Vinaceous Doves along the track, with a couple of African Grey Hornbills thrown in for good measure. Apart from a pair of Bearded Barbets feeding on a fruit tree, no new birds for the day were seen on the return leg to the accommodation.

Tendaba Mangroves

(Day 4)

The plan for the morning was to take a three hour boat trip through the mangroves at Tendaba, which lie on the opposite bank of the expansive Gambia River. We were to leave at 8am, but naturally the boatman had to land his catch or some such first, so we eventually departed at 8.30. This gave us time to take in the still morning of the river, with Pink-backed Pelicans idling by, and a few wading birds in the exposed mud from the jetty. A pair of Pied Kingfishers, the first of many for the day, were successfully fishing just offshore. We had requested a private boat for the two of



us, but felt sorry for a couple of Danes who would otherwise have had to wait 2 hours for the next "cultural" trip. Our kindness paid off, since the trips were priced by the boat, which was 1600 dalasis, so this was halved between us.

The boat took the main waterway through the mangroves at a very leisurely pace. This combined with the stillness of the morning, and a very acceptable temperature, to make the journey itself very enjoyable. From the off, it was obvious that there are three speciality birds which can be seen regularly here – African Finfoot, Pel's Fishing-Owl, and White-backed Night-Heron. We skilfully managed to duck out on all three, but this didn't spoil the outing in the least bit, such was the quality of the birds on show. Pied Kingfishers were particularly numerous, but we were getting used to them (to a degree), so they were upstaged by a collection of Blue-breasted & Malachite Kingfishers, some of both obliging by staying on their waterside fishing perches as we passed.



One speciality bird to be seen here is Mangrove Sunbird, and they didn't disappoint, if not in visibility, since they were more often than not active within the leaf cover, but in numbers. Some did show well enough for identification. Another was Goliath Heron, and this was nearly missed – we had become so used to the plethora of Grey Herons (as well as Western Reef Herons), that we almost bypassed a single Goliath silhouetted against the sky. The boatman retraced our steps for a good look. Bee-eaters were far from in short supply. Blue-cheeked were apparently the most numerous, but were also supported by lesser counts of White-throated & European, with a single Swallow-tailed in tow. Raptors were generally in short supply, with only Short-toed Eagle and Montagu's Harrier.

Journey from Tendaba to Georgetown

This rather long journey took in some poor roads on the South side of the river, and two ferry journeys. The first was at the terminus of the poorer roads (Farafenni Ferry), the other an arduous wait for the short crossing to Georgetown, where the delay was apparently due to a broken down vessel. Naturally some stops were made, both for individual sightings and for a couple of sites. The former included a small collection of vultures. The coastal area only offered Hooded Vulture, so it was nice to see flying White-backed, and a perched juvenile White-headed. A group of Starlings on the North side of the river turned out to be Purple, to add to many unidentified flying Blue-Eared seen, and the copious numbers of Long-tailed Glossies (especially numerous on the North Bank). A special mention had to be said for the glamorous Abyssinian Roller, which is so regularly encountered that it is almost renamed "just another Roller".

Soma Wetlands were the first of two significant water habitats to be encountered. Both can have the potential of Egyptian Plover, although the word was that they had now moved upriver. Soma is a large area of brackish, open salt marsh, bisected by the road. It was very hot and exposed there when we arrived, with a heat haze covering the distant water edges. Wading birds were here, but relatively sparsely distributed, with the pick being Marsh Sandpiper, a group of Sanderlings, and a single Kentish Plover.



Soma



Kaur

Kaur Wetlands were more productive, and the temperature had dropped considerably when we exited the car. They looked to be more of an open freshwater pool or two, and held good numbers of wildfowl in the form of White-faced Whistling-Ducks and uncombed Comb Ducks. Waders were also in ready presence – I managed to sift out a Kittlitz's Plover from the much more numerous Senegal Thick-knees, Collared Pratincoles, Marsh Sandpipers, and Black-winged Stilts.

Sankulaykunda Ferry Crossing area

(Day 5)

The day started well. We woke at 6am to have a lavish breakfast of jam on bread and bananas, then set off for the small ferry to the South of the island which was then to take us to Bansang and untold avian goodies. The ferry was an experience – sufficient room for 2 cars, and the propulsion mechanism was the strong arms of the passengers. This moved us serenely to the other bank, where we alighted waiting for the car to be driven off. Except that the ailing engine had other plans, and this time it wasn't the battery that was the problem. The engine was dead!



Lamin had one or two cunning plans - including him catching the bus taxi to Bansang to look for a spare part (initially without us, until we explained that this would give us a chance at birding the Bansang area while he fixed the car), hitching a lift on a motorbike to look for spares, which he did when the bush taxi failed to materialise after an hour, and then phoning head office for a new car when the spare part wasn't found. This whole procedure took about 5½ hours.



The dead car



Rice paddies

Hence the whole of the morning's birding was enforced coverage of the half mile or so from the ferry terminal, which if not producing the upriver specialities we had been hoping for, found enough of the more common birds to keep us going. The area consisted mainly of dry or burnt rice fields, with the odd pool here and there. A small village, with much more traditional build than the corrugated iron enclosures further down river was a little further along the road. The whole district seemed encrusted with Abyssinian Rollers, with one field holding court to 8 individuals. We also soon found many parties of Glossy Starlings, with usually contained a selection of species. Long-tailed were predictably the most numerous, and often kept their own counsel, but other groups comprised Greater Blue-eared & Bronze-tailed. Out of breeding plumage bishop types were in small flocks, but all but nigh impossible to identify (save for some which could be narrowed down to Northern Red Bishops with perseverance).

More luck was had with the birds of prey, which were reasonably common, and not too difficult to sort out (in most cases, apart from a handful of larger birds which didn't show enough to call). First, just after we left the ferry and the dead vehicle, was a pair of Gabar Goshawks, with the similarly coloured but much bulkier Dark-chanting Goshawk showing later. A Shikra put in a few late appearances. The much larger and broader winged Harrier-Hawks were busy landing on the rice paddies looking for food, while the Grey Kestrels preferred to perch on wires and high trees. At one point, at least 3 Brown Snake-Eagles were in view around one particular field (one vacating the tree where we had our lunch). This same field also hosted fly through Marsh & Montagu's Harriers at different times.

We did venture into the village for a short amount of time. Even at the edge of the buildings, a pair of White-crowned Robin-Chats were showy on one of the fences. Our first couple of Village Indigobirds of the trip joined a collection of Red-billed Firefinches and Black-rumped Waxbills. To the rear of the village, a quartet of Green Bee-eaters caught the morning sun.



Baobolong Lodge area

After traipsing around the ferry area all morning, we did the unthinkable and had a rest in the room to escape the main of the heat in the day. The car was broken, and no hope of a quick taxi to a birding spot, so we took the decision to explore the area around the hotel. We made a left out of the hotel (away from the Georgetown ferry), which took us through the attached village and almost directly into an elongated marshy area. This ran adjacent to the few remaining houses of the village, and had enough water to support a decent number of African Jacanas, a few Squacco Herons, and an unexpected Common Snipe.



Marsh



Open bush

As we made our way further along this marsh area, it became a lot drier, and the bush a little thicker. There were reasonable sized parties of winter plumaged bishops and weavers here, which to our minds defy correct identification, but a female Cordon-bleu in one party was surprisingly the first of the trip. A Blue-bellied Roller was also the first to be seen perched. Many Western Red-billed Hornbills vied with Long-tailed Glossy Starlings to be the most common in the area, but a single Fine-spotted Woodpecker took some pinning down. This couldn't be said of the Yellow-crowned Gonolek which was a startling red against the greenery.

This slightly enclosed area of trees gave way to more open bush and rice paddies. After a pair of Senegal Thick-knees, Senegal Coucals were seemingly everywhere. A small creek was followed for a short way, which was a good decision when a Malachite Kingfisher was disturbed. It landed on a small twig in the creek halfway up, and was still there on our return. To finish, at least 3 Hamerkops were in view at one time, and a dapper male Marsh Harrier passed by twice.

Bansang

(Day 6)



Bansang main street

The replacement car was delivered after the 7am breakfast (which arrived at 7.30), and we found ourselves in an open-topped Jeep which actually worked (and continued to do so for the whole day). The ferry to the South of island traversed, we made our way to Bansang, which only took around half an hour. It was strange to be back into the regular police check mode – a welcome respite was had yesterday when we couldn't go anywhere.

Once at Bansang town, we made a swift stop to view the paddies within the edge of town, only to view a Wattled Lapwing

and a few other bits and bobs. However, we were eager to find the Bansang Quarry, where Red-throated Bee-eaters were reputed to be found throughout the year. We left this to Lamin, who drove beyond the town to an open area. It didn't look right, but we bowed to his better judgement and walked the open habitat for a while. We did pick up the first African Fish-eagle and Scarlet-chested Sunbird of the trip, but predictably no Bee-eaters. We persuaded Lamin to make a call to found out if there was better information, and then to pass the outside of town. As we drove through a cut in the hill, we picked up a Bee-eater call, and quickly located a Red-throated Bee-eater above us. We eventually got close views, and picked up a Shikra as well, wondering whether the actual quarry was over the opposite hill.



So we climbed up and did indeed find the quarry proper, along with a good number of Bee-eaters around us. The bonus came in the extra birds we found. A Pygmy Sunbird and a couple of Bush Petronias were on the ascent up the hill, and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks were mixed in with more on the bush clad plateau. The bushes around the top of the rim had a different mix. Cinnamon-breasted Bunting was the pick, although there was competition from a pair of Cut-throat Finches among the numerous Village Weavers.

Basse

For 11 years we had planned a return to The Gambia someday to go upriver, and one of the principle reasons was to see Egyptian Plover. We had checked with the information that they would still be present at this time of year, and so had been monitoring pools since being in this part of the country. This had been in vain, although we knew that the birds had generally moved upriver. So it was off to Basse, which was a much more reliable site. The town was much larger than I expected, and after we had picked up some extra water, we took a left through the markets in the streets to eventually reach the river. This was the site of the ferry crossing – both with the larger vehicle carrier, and also smaller canoes. Lamin had a word with one of the chaps who owned one of the half dozen or so punt canoes (Dembo Camara for those looking for a name to ask for), and bartered to price for one hours trip to look for the bird from 150 to 125 dalasis. We added a sweetener of 50 dalasis for finding the bird.



Ferry



Location of plover on river bank

The reward wasn't necessary, since I spotted a couple of Spur-winged Lapwings upriver on the opposite bank, with what looked like a smaller bird. Scope up and the quarry was found – an Egyptian Plover within punting distance. It didn't take too long to reach the opposite bank, and it became obvious that the bird was completely unperturbed by our

presence, so we allowed the boat to drift slowly towards it, after warding off the noisy approaches of a pair of local kids no doubt intent on letting us know at the tops of their voices that we were "twobobs".

Journey back from Basse to Baobolong Lodge



This journey was eventful for not necessarily the right reasons. The first stop was to look for Carmine Bee-eaters, which was at a river bank along a track which was taken from one of the villages on the main road. The track terminated in a small village and the river bank. It also terminated at the site of a swarm of angry bees. The villagers must have been amazed at the site of two tourists and their Gambian guide dancing and swatting furiously, and then making a hasty exit from the area in the car. For the record, we had a total of 9 stings between us – no-one was spared the pleasure. We did stop a little further up the track to take in a pair of

Cardinal Woodpeckers, but were quietly glad to be away from the place.

A lot further towards Bansang, we stopped to admire a Dark Chanting Goshawk perched above us, and managed to dig out a good selection of birds in the surrounding bush. Pygmy Sunbirds were the closest yet, and a pair of Yellow-fronted Canaries were intermittently singing and then eluding us. A Green-winged Pytilia was briefly spotted in the thickets. On the opposite side of the road, a remarkably plain and washed out brown bird at the top of a tree proved to be juvenile Exclamatory Paradise Whydah.

The journey from Georgetown to Barra

(Day 7)

Today was departure day from Georgetown, and the plan was to catch the first ferry over to the North bank of the river, and then stop either at birding sites or for promising looking birds on the way. Unbelievably, after the bad luck we had had with cars over the week, this plan was actually put into action, but was again almost thwarted, being rescued by a turn of good luck for once. It turned out at breakfast that the ferry had broken down, and wasn't going to be fixed in a hurry. However, Bob (the Wild Gambia owner, who had brought yesterday's replacement 4x4 for the Basse trip) had organised another car the previous evening for the North bank tarmac roads. The driver had arrived late, missing the last ferry, so we already had the car on the side of the river where we wanted it, and only had to catch a small boat to get there.

Wassu area

We were initially heading for Wassu, with its different habitats, but were sidetracked briefly by a group of *hirundines* on the telegraph wires overhead. The difference in size and build of the Mosque Swallows was in interesting contrast to the attendant Red-rumped & Red-chested Swallows.

The pools either side of the road just before Wassu were parked by and covered for some time. The initial impression was a many fewer African Jacanas than when we had passed by some days ago, but this was made up for by many other species which were apparent as we explored the surrounds. The African Mourning Doves which we had noticed preferred waterside habitat at Tendaba Mangroves were also here, but only as a pair. Beneath them was



the first brace of many Senegal Thick-knees which were at the water's edge. While following a roving group of Green Wood Hoopoes through the bushes lining the pools, other birds were unearthed. A small group of Senegal Parrots were the first of the trip to allow reasonably close approach – not usually easy due to their camouflage and wary nature. A trio of Brown Bulbuls were at the base of a tree hosting singles of Northern Puffback and Subalpine Warbler. As we were about to leave, our attention was drawn to three Bruce's Green Pigeons opposite to where the car was parked.



Wassu paddies at first looked like mundane paddyfields with the standard birds we had seen before – overflying Marsh Harriers with a scattering of wading birds. When we reached a bridge over a stream, this changed somewhat. African Mourning Doves were a little more numerous and vocal than at the pools. A wader which flew up from the base of the stream edge was Greater Painted Snipe. A small flycatcher caught our attention – the first of two Swamp Flycatchers, which showed much less of the indistinct breast band than we had expected.

The stone circles at Wassu had been the area we had been looking forward to. This dry and fairly open patch is reputed to hold Carmine Bee-eaters, but sadly not today. Overall, the area was a disappointment, with only a group of Tawny-flanked Prinias and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks to show for our efforts. The handful of Yellow-billed Oxpeckers on herded cattle were an addition to the surprisingly low overall trip count.

From Wassu to Barra

The rest of the journey, apart from a short stop at the very hot and exposed Baobolong Wetlands, which held the usual waterbirds already seen on the trip, was spent travelling and stopping when we saw something interesting. There were three notable encounters of three notable birds. Lamin had briefed the driver as to the size and appearance of breeding plumage Whydahs. By chance, it was me who noticed something which looked promising around 70 metres into the bush from the road. Two good pieces of luck – it turned out to be a displaying male Exclamatory Paradise Whydah with his admiring harem, and there was a track through the bush to where he was showing off. His plan seemed to be to sit on top of one of 5 favourite bushes for a short while, three of which were now close to where we stood, and then bedazzle the onlooking females with his ridiculously long tail.



Second stop was when I spotted what looked like a large eagle on the ground in a stubble and low bush field. After backing up the car for a look, what proved indeed to be an impressive African Hawk-Eagle flew up from the deck, and landed in a nearby tree. This was a little thoughtless, since the tree was in full foliage, and the quarry took some time to find. It did make amends by soaring the short distance to a bare tree, and posed for a short time. Lamin had also seen a Warthog on the opposite side of the road while we were busy with the raptor, but it managed to evade us.

Third stop was yet another bird high on our wanted list – an Abyssinian Ground Hornbill perched in a tree! The bird had looked like a large dark shape when we first saw the

outline, and its constant attention to preening wings meant we weren't sure what it was. Being a ground bird half way up a tree didn't make the matter easier. However, it raised its head eventually, and was found to have a mate not far away – in another tree!



Barra ferry terminal



Banjul

The rest of the journey to the ferry at Barra was uneventful. The ferry journey itself was quite productive, if not interminably slow. The shoreline beyond the Barra side held a few Whimbrels, Oystercatchers, and a unidentified godwit. On the way over, we were joined by Lesser Crested Terns, Kelp & Grey-hooded Gulls, and both Arctic & Pomarine Skuas as we approached the Banjul side. Over the Banjul terminal, and oblivious to the depraved humanity below, were swarms of Little Swifts.

Kotu area

(Day 8)



Village alongside Badala Park



Badala Parl pool

For the last morning, when we had about 4 hours to spare until the transit bus left for the airport, we opted to cover the Kotu area rather than take up the option of being driven somewhere further and risk the wrath of the combustion engine again. We asked Lamin to come with us, partly to show him some of the birds which he could brush up on, and also to minimise the hassle we would get from the resident "bird guides". After staying in the Badala Park Hotel for the second time, we only now found the lily covered lagoon to the rear, which looks to have some potential. This was proven with the presence of breeding Black Crake, and also a Purple Heron which flew from the spartan reeds. A pair of Little Grebes were also feeding between the lilies.

We then took to the outside world and walked the cycle track, which runs alongside the hotel. Village Weavers seemed to be everywhere, and sometimes in flocks of several hundred birds. On the pool to the left of the track, a Black Heron was again showing off its distinctive cloaking feeding action, in more or less the same spot as the first day. The first of the Senegal Coucals began to appear shortly after our arrival, but the sight of a

Lizard Buzzard flashing across us to land in a palm tree was oddly the first of the trip. Along the track to the Palm Beach Hotel, a small collection of saturated Tawny-flanked Prinias were trying to clean and dry themselves on the upright stems. A cisticola or two seemed to be with them, and one planted itself in the open for some time. We gazed cross-eyed at the relevant page for this little ***, but sensibly decided in the end it must have been Zitting Cisticola.



Back to the torture of the hassle at Kotu Creek, we were armed with our own Gambian this time, and this proved a good move. Words still had to be spoken to them, but there were fewer this morning, and we found a little more space. A trio of Blue-bellied Rollers, which hadn't been seen here earlier in the week, seemed to be centred around a dead tree with a hole in the top, which they possibly cheeped as home. The wires over the stream played host to Red-chested Swallows and a brace of Pied Kingfishers, with Reed Cormorants in the adjacent trees. A single streamerless Wire-tailed Swallow obligingly perched on a stump just in front of the bridge for some time.

The next three stops, and the last of the trip, had been good on our last visit, but disappointing this time. We searched for the leaking pipe on the first track to the left after the bridge over Kotu Creek, but it seems that it had gone (progress – why can't they leave leaking pipes to leak?). Then to the golf course. It took longer than I remembered to get to it, principally due to a large wall where the original access area was. There is now only one access point to the golf course, and a wire fence surrounding. The whole area looked a lot more sterile than in its glory days. The sewage works unfortunately were quite active with workmen, with trucks carrying who knows what to be dumped in one of the four pits. Only one of these contained an appreciable amount of water, with the main birds being Spur-winged Lapwings, Black-winged Stilts, and a few Wood Sandpipers. A Shikra perched at the rear of the lagoons was in almost the same spot as a decade ago, and an African Pied Hornbill flew over.



SPECIES SEEN

Ahanta Francolin

Pternistis achantensis

This is reputed to be a difficult bird to see, presumably due to a retiring nature and low numbers. We were thus very fortunate when 2 appeared from the forest and quietly searched the more open leaf litter directly in front of us only ~20 metres from the education centre at Abuko



Double-spurred Francolin

Pternistis bicalcaratus

In contrast to the above, this species is common and seen regularly, although the vast majority of sightings are of birds breaking cover and flying to yet more cover – they do not seem to tolerate close approach (~6 along cycle track pm; ~16 flushed Tendaba; 3 on journey to Farafenni Ferry; 2 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 Wassu pool; 1 cycle track on second visit)

White-faced Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna viduata

~200 over cycle track & Badala Park Hotel; ~100 Kaur Wetlands

Spur-winged Goose

Plectropterus gambensis

1 over rice fields at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 5 flying over Wassu rice fields

Knob-billed Duck

Sarkidiornis melanotos

~30 Kaur Wetland

African Pygmy Goose

Nettapus auritus

A pair were on one of the roadside pools on the journey from Wassu to Barra

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

2 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 2 Badala Park pool

Yellow-billed Stork

Mycteria ibis

5 over Tendaba mangroves, 1 feeding on mud at the same mangroves; 2 on a nest in the town centre of Farafenni, in a bare tree directly over the street stalls

Marabou Stork

Leptoptilos crumeniferus

2 circling over Sankulaykunda ferry crossing

African Sacred Ibis

Threskiornis aethiopicus

1 over Kotu Creek; 1 feeding on mud at Tendaba mangroves; ~15 over cycle track paddies, 1 perched in tree also at the paddies

African Spoonbill

Platalea alba

2 feeding on Tendaba mud at mangroves

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

5 juveniles at the opposite end of the main pool at Abuko; 1 overhead at Lamin; 2 flying over Sankulaykunda ferry crossing

Striated Heron

Butorides striata

~3 Kotu Creek on the first evening; 3 Tendaba mangroves; 1 in paddies behind Baobolong Lodge; 1 cycle track paddies on the last day

Western Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Very common in places, and can be very approachable in urban areas, such as within the market stalls of Kotu (1 Kotu Creek; 5 from Senegambia Hotel; ~20 journey to Tendaba; small numbers journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; fairly common Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; common on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; common on North Bank journey; quite common in Kotu area)



Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

This is generally a common bird throughout, and can be expected on almost any wetland

or marshy habitat (1 cycle Track; 1 Abuko; 4 Tendaba airport; 3 in the paddies Baobolong Lodge area; 2 on journey to Basse; 3 Wassu rice fields; ~20 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Badala Park pool

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Commonly seen, but usually in small numbers at any one wetland site (1 Kotu Creek; 1 Abuko; 1 Brufut; 3 Tendaba airport; 1 Tendaba camp; ~35 Tendaba mangroves; ~6 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 Baobolong Lodge area; 3 at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 Wassu paddies; ~6 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Banjul ferry terminal)



Black-headed Heron

Ardea melanocephala

1 Rice Paddies, Kotu; 1 Lamin rice fields; 1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 at Bansang; 2 cycle track paddies on last day

Goliath Heron

Ardea goliath

We almost passed the single bird we saw on the trip at Tendaba mangroves. Possibly too used to seeing the copious Grey Herons here, we failed to take much notice of the silhouette of the bird against the sky a short distance through a gap in the trees, but did reverse the boat when we realised our mistake



Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

1 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 3 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Badala Park pool

Western Great Egret

Ardea alba

2 Tendaba Airport; ~8 Tedaba mangroves; at least 1 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Kotu Creek

Intermediate Egret

Egretta intermedia

1 Tendaba airport

Black Heron

Egretta ardesiaca

As usual, the great attraction of these birds is their unique cloaking action when looking for food in the water beneath, although the only bird seen doing so was one on the cycle track pool on both visits (2 cycle Track; 1 Kaur Wetlands; 1 at a roadside pool towards Farafenni; ~12 in cycle track area on second visit; 1 on Badala Park pool)



Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

1 from bus; 1 Tendaba airport; 1 Soma Wetlands; common Baobolong wetlands

Western Reef Heron

Egretta gularis

This is a very common bird on most wetlands and moist areas, with both dark and light phase birds being present (4-5 dark phase, 1 light phase Brufut; 1 Tendaba Camp; ~40 Tendaba Wetlands; ~6 Soma Wetlands; both light and dark phase common Baobolong wetlands; ~3 Kotu area)

Hamerkop

Scopus umbretta

7 Tendaba airport; 1 Farafenni Ferry; ~15 rice paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 Baobolong Lodge area open paddies; 1 rice fields Bansang; 3 Wassu paddies; 2 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni



Pink-backed Pelican

Pelecanus rufescens

2 with raptors over Abuko; 9 on Gambia River, Tendaba; 5 Tendaba Camp; ~12 Tendaba mangrove mud; ~20 at rear of Baobolong wetlands; 5 overhead Wassu paddies; 1 over Kotu Creek

Reed Cormorant

Microcarbo africanus

1 Kaur Wetlands; 1 over roadside pool towards Farafenni; ~8 Kotu Creek; 1 Badala Park pool



Great Cormorant

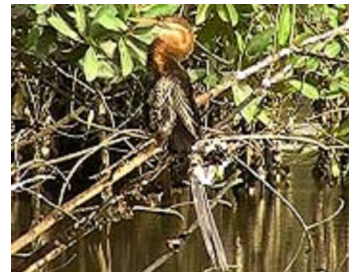
Phalacrocorax carbo

~15 Baobolong wetlands; 4 from Barra to Banjul ferry

African Darter

Anhinga rufa

3 flew into the pool at Abuko; ~50 Tendaba Wetlands



Western Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

1 Brufut; 1 Tendaba mangroves

Black-winged Kite

Elanus caeruleus

3 on wires near to Yundum; 1 journey to Tendaba; 1 Tendaba mangroves; 1 journey on North Bank to Georgetown



Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Common to abundant throughout

African Fish Eagle

Haliaeetus vocifer

1 Bansang. This was one of the benefits of not finding Bansang Quarry at the first attempt, with the only bird of the trip being seen in the distance on a tree overlooking what must have been the river

Palm-nut Vulture

Gypohierax angolensis

2 in tree next to beach at Brufut; 1 with nest material at Abuko

**Hooded Vulture***Necrosyrtes monachus*

Abundant throughout

White-backed Vulture*Gyps africanus*

Only the relatively small Hooded Vulture seems to occur in the coastal area, so we started to take notice of gatherings of vultures as we ventured further upriver. This paid off with the odd sighting of single to groups of this species, although most stops still revealed Hooded. (At least 1 on journey from Tendaba on South Bank; 1 from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing ferry; ~40 around carcass on road from Bansang to Basse

**Griffon Vulture***Gyps fulvus*

One of the larger gatherings of the above vultures were feeding on a carcass on the ground a short distance from the road. Most appeared to be White-backed Vultures, but closer inspection revealed a couple of larger and more cinnamon backed Griffons

White-headed Vulture*Trigonoceps occipitalis*

Of all the potential vulture species we could possibly encounter, this was probably the least likely due to its scarcity. We were surprised that we did see one perched on a tree on the journey from Tendaba on the South Bank, not far from a circling group of what were presumably White-backed Vultures

**Short-toed Snake Eagle***Circaetus gallicus*

1 Tendaba mangroves

Brown Snake Eagle*Circaetus cinereus*

1 Tendaba airport; 4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing, with 3 in sight at one time; 1 at top of tree on journey from Bansang to Basse

**Western Marsh Harrier***Circus aeruginosus*

1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 over Baobolong Lodge area paddies; 3 at Baobolong wetlands; 2 Wassu paddies

Montagu's Harrier*Circus pygargus*

1 Tendaba mangroves; 2 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 1 over Sankulaykunda ferry crossing paddies; 1 near Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 over car near Wassu

African Harrier-Hawk*Polyboroides typus*

1 Cycle track; 2-3 regular over Sankulaykunda ferry crossing paddies; 1 Wassu paddies; 1 on journey from Farafenni to Barra

Dark Chanting Goshawk

Melierax metabates

2 journey to Tendaba; 1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 on journey from Bansang to Basse; 2 separate birds on journey from Georgetown to Barra



Gabar Goshawk

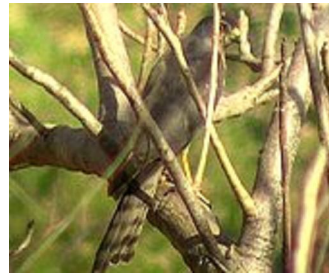
Micronisus gabar

Pair over paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing

African Goshawk

Accipiter tachiro

While watching a group of Oriole Warblers and Blackcap Babblers in Abuko, I tried to get better views from further down the path when this bird was disturbed, which didn't take umbrage, and landed on a branch not far into the forest



Shikra

Accipiter badius

1 over Badala Park Hotel; 1 Senegambia Hotel; 1 over town en route to Tendaba; 2 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 at Bansang

Lizard Buzzard

Kaupifalco monogrammicus

We were surprised to wait until the last morning to see this bird, when one was spotted flying from the cycle track paddies in Kotu to land on a palm tree

Grasshopper Buzzard

Butastur rufipennis

Usually very difficult to catch up with in The Gambia, the one bird we saw at Tendaba airport was seen flying low over the open ground to then circle almost directly above us, displaying the distinctive rufous shading on the wing tips



Tawny Eagle

Aquila rapax

Pair mating Abuko, with 2 further separate birds at a separate part of the reserve



African Hawk-Eagle

Aquila spilogaster

1 initially on the ground in a stubble field, then in tree and flight between Farafenni and Barra

Booted Eagle

Hieraaetus pennatus

1 over car Farafenni to Barra

Common Kestrel

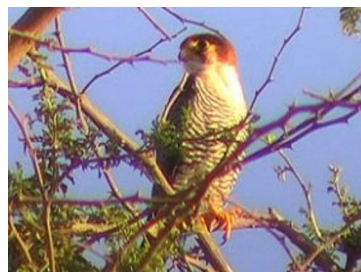
Falco tinnunculus

1 Wassu stone circles; 1 between Farafenni and Barra. Both birds were females

Grey Kestrel

Falco ardosiaceus

Easily the most commonly seen of the falcons (pair over Kotu Creek; 1 Brufut; 1 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; pair at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 Baobolong Lodge area; at least 8 on journey from Georgetown to Barra; 2 over Kotu area



Red-necked Falcon

Falco chicquera

Pair perched next to Kotu Creek bridge; 1 at Bansang

Lanner Falcon

Falco biarmicus

An initial bird was seen flying over Lamin rice field, but it was the pair at Brufut which provided one of the most stunning experiences of the trip. The two had been seen along the shore as we approached the lagoon, but took us aback when they started to stoop on a lone Western Reef Heron at the far end, away from the anonymity of the rest of the wading birds. They took quite a few tries at it, and the potential quarry nearly made the wrong choice by flying, but the pair eventually left the seen empty clawed

Black Crake

Amaurornis flavirostra

6 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 1 with juvenile Badala Park pool

Senegal Thick-knee

Burhinus senegalensis

This is a very regular bird, often in good numbers, either alongside or in the vicinity of water throughout the country (2 Kotu Creek; 2 over rice paddies; ~50 Kaur Wetlands; 1 Tendaba mangroves; 2 dry bush Baobolong Lodge area; very common on most wetlands between Georgetown and Barra)



Eurasian Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

2 Barra shoreline

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

~30 Kotu Creek; 2 Brufut; ~6 Tendaba airport; ~12 Soma Wetlands; ~20 Kaur Wetlands; ~6 on walk back from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 Baobolong Lodge area paddies; fairly common at wetlands between Georgetown and Barra; ~30 in Kotu area



Spur-winged Lapwing

Vanellus spinosus

This is probably the most common wader to be seen, usually, but not always, near to water (2 Kotu Creek; 3 cycle Track; 1 Lamin; 6 Tendaba airport; quite common on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; common both sides of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; common on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; very common on journey in all habitats from Georgetown to Barra; common Kotu area)

Black-headed Lapwing*Vanellus tectus*

1 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 2 Bansang; 3 at one of stops on North bank

African Wattled Lapwing*Vanellus senegallus*

2 Tendaba Airport; 2 in bush at Tendaba; 1 paddies at Bansang; 3 cycle track paddies

**Common Ringed Plover***Charadrius hiaticula*

2 Tendaba airport; ~6 Soma Wetlands; 2 Kaur Wetlands

Kittlitz's Plover*Charadrius pecuarius*

1 Kaur Wetlands

Kentish Plover*Charadrius alexandrinus*

1 Soma Wetlands

Egyptian Plover*Pluvianus aegyptius*

This was the bird we had been waiting so long to see. We had checked that they were still present at this time of year, but it was apparent that they tend to move upriver early in the year. There was no great surprise when cursory checks of the usual haunts along the South bank were ploverless, so looked forward to the journey to Basse, which is about 2½ hours drive from our base on Georgetown. After negotiating the packed streets of Basse, a boat was hired to deliver us to the river banks away from the throng, but not before the bird was spotted a little way down river on the opposite bank with a pair of Spur-winged Lapwings. We eventually crept to within a stone's throw of this dapper bird

**Greater Painted Snipe***Rostratula benghalensis*

1 flew from the stream into Wassu paddies

African Jacana*Actophilornis africanus*

1 next to cycle Track; 1 Abuko; at least 100 Wassu ponds; ~6 Bansang paddies; ~20 on pond on journey from Bansang to Basse; common on wetlands of North bank; 2 Badala Park pool

Common Snipe*Gallinago gallinago*

1 flew from the marsh at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 at Wassu paddies

Whimbrel*Numenius phaeopus*

4-5 Kotu Creek; 1 Brufut; ~40 Tendaba Wetlands; 2 Barra shoreline; 1 Kotu Creek

Common Redshank*Tringa tetanus*

~6 Tendaba mangroves

Marsh Sandpiper*Tringa stagnatilis*

1 Tendaba mangroves; 3 Kaur Wetlands

Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

1 Kotu Creek; 1 Brufut; 2 Tendaba airport; ~12 Tendaba mangroves; 1 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Badala Park pool

**Green Sandpiper***Tringa ochropus*

1 Kotu Creek; 2 Sewage works

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

2 Tendaba airport; 1 Wassu pool; ~7 Kotu area

Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
1 Brufut; ~20 Tendaba mangroves; 1 on creek Baobolong Lodge area bush; 1 in paddies on walk back from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing ferry; 1 Wassu pool; 1 Baobolong wetlands; 1 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; ~4 Kotu area	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
At least 8 seen at Tendaba Camp	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
~8 Soma Wetlands	
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
~8 Kaur Wetlands	
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
~25 Kaur Wetlands; 1 at roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni	
Grey-hooded Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
A mix of both breeding and non-breeding plumaged birds were seen (very common at Brufut, both on the pool and on the sea; common on ferry journey and terminals between Barra and Banjul; ~70 Baobolong wetlands; few over Kotu Creek)	
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
4 at Brufut; ~20 from Barra to Banjul ferry	
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
1 Lamin Rice Fields; ~20 Tendeaba airport; ~5 Tendaba mangroves; 2 Baobolong wetlands; ~6 from Barra to Banjul ferry	
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Some of the birds seen were initially confusing, since they sported more of a yellow than deep orange bill (~30 Brufut; 1 Tendaba airport; 1 Soma Wetlands; 1 Tendaba; ~4 from Barra to Banjul ferry; 1 over Kotu Creek)	
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
1 Brufut	
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>
~4 from Barra to Banjul ferry	
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
1 Lamin Lodge; 1 Brufut; 1 Baobolong wetlands	
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
1 light phase and 2 dark phase near Banjul ferry terminal	
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
3 near Banjul ferry terminal	
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
Quite common Kotu and from the transfer bus; few Lamin; few on journey to Tendaba; 2 on journey from Tendaba; ~4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; ~6 on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; occasional on journey along North bank; small flocks over Barra to Banjul ferry; ~6 Kotu area	
African Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i>
At least 1 identified in the village at Baobolong Lodge area	



Mourning Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>
As mentioned in the guide books, this species was only seen in the proximity of water. It has a more obvious grey crown than other doves seen (quite common Tendaba mangroves; ~12 Wassu paddies)	
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Definitely more common than those reported, this species suffers from the abundance of Vinaceous & Laughing Doves, leaving no hunger for more specific identification than is necessary (~20 Abuko, fairly common elsewhere; 2 Kotu area)	



Vinaceous Dove

Streptopelia vinacea

Probably the most abundant bird both seen and heard

Laughing Dove

Stigmatopelia senegalensis

2 Rice Paddies; 2 Abuko; 2 Lamin; quite common South of river; very common on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; quite common Sankulaykunda ferry crossing and Baobolong Lodge area; common Kotu area



Black-billed Wood Dove

Turtur abyssinicus

Many Wood Doves were seen flying throughout the journey, but most were unable to be specifically identified (1 Abuko; 2 Lamin rice fields; probably common at Tendaba mangroves - 1 definite; 3 identified in bush at Baobolong Lodge area; probably this species regularly from road on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse)

Blue-spotted Wood Dove

Turtur afer

2 Abuko



Namaqua Dove

Oena capensis

2 pairs Lamin rice fields; ~8 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 4 on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; ~15 on North bank journey

Bruce's Green Pigeon

Treron waalia

2 Tendaba track; 1 in tree Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 at Wassu pool



African Green Pigeon

Treron calvus

1 Lamin rice fields

Rose-ringed Parakeet*Psittacula krameri*

1 over Badala Park Hotel; 1 Lamin rice fields; 6 Tendaba; ~15 on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; ~4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 Baobolong Lodge area; 3 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 over Kotu area

Senegal Parrot*Poicephalus senegalus*

Pair in tree at rice paddies; 2 Lamin rice fields; ~25 Tendaba track; 2 Wassu; 1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 Baobolong Lodge area; 2 near Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 along river track; ~8 Wassu pool; 2 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 2 over Kotu paddies

**Violet Turaco***Musophaga violacea*

3 in one palm tree at Abuko

**Western Plantain-eater***Crinifer piscator*

Pair at top of tree next to Kotu Bridge; 1 Abuko; 2 town en route to Tendaba; 4 Tendaba track; 2 Baobolong Lodge area; 2 in hotel grounds, Baobolong Lodge area; ~4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 along river track from Basse; ~6 on journey from Georgetown to Barra; ~8 Kotu area

**Senegal Coucal***Centropus senegalensis*

~12 in Kotu Creek area; 1 Brufut; 1 Lamin; 4 Tendaba track; 1 Tendaba Wetlands; 1 Kaur Wetlands; common both sides of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 journey from Basse to Bansang; occasional on North bank journey; ~10 Kotu area

Klaas's Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx klaas*

1 Abuko

African Palm Swift*Cypsiurus parvus*

Quite common over rice paddies early evening; few over Lamin; ~6 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; quite common Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; common over Bansang and Basse; quite common on North bank journey; small numbers over Kotu area

Common Swift*Apus apus*

1 over Wassu paddies

Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus*

~6 on journey to Tendaba

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

2 Abuko; 1 over Gambia River; ~6 over Bansang; abundant over Banjul ferry terminal; small numbers over Kotu area

Purple Roller*Coracias naevius*

1 on wires on journey to Tendaba; 2 on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; 4 separate birds on journey from Georgetown to Barra



Abyssinian Roller

Coracias abyssinicus

A familiar sight throughout the country, with 8 being seen in one field in one particular area. They are both very common and approachable (1 Kotu Creek; 1 Tendaba airport; 3 Tendaba track; at least 25 on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; very common both sides of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; common on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; very common on North bank journey2 in Kotu area; 2 on transit journey to airport)

Blue-bellied Roller

Coracias cyanogaster

1 on journey to Tendaba; 1 on a bush at Baobolong Lodge area; 3 together around what may have been a nest hole next to Kotu Creek



Broad-billed Roller

Eurystomus glaucurus

This group of ~10 at the Senegambia Hotel were initially an enigma, rolling into a treat as the penny dropped. We picked up the first 6 or so overhead in the orange evening light, and this gave their colour a rich brick red glow. The shape was also reminiscent of a bird of prey, apart from the forked tail. Being directly above us, they evaded a good overall look until they were seen to land at the top of one of the trees in the grounds, when their identity was straight forward

Striped Kingfisher

Halcyon chelicuti

1 Tendaba airport

Blue-breasted Kingfisher

Halcyon malimbica

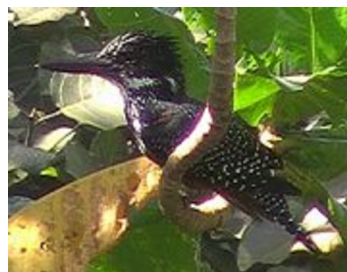
~7 at Tendaba mangroves; 1 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing



Malachite Kingfisher

Alcedo cristata

~12 Tendaba mangroves; 1 on creek Baobolong Lodge area



Giant Kingfisher

Megaceryle maxima

1 Abuko; 3 at roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni

Pied Kingfisher

Ceryle rudis

1 Kotu Creek; 1 Brufut; 2 Tendaba Camp; very common at Tendaba mangroves; 1 Soma Wetlands; 3 Koma Wetlands; 1 Wassu pools; 1 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 1 Baobolong wetlands; ~6 Kotu area



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater

Merops hirundineus

3 Abuko; 1 Tendaba mangroves

Little Bee-eater

Merops pusillus

Common Abuko, Brufut, and Lamin



Red-throated Bee-eater

Merops bulocki

Lamin assured us that he knew of the location of Bansang Quarry, a known location for this species. After it became apparent that he didn't, we persuaded him to drive back to where we thought it may be, and the first of ~15 called above the cut in the rocks that held the road. We then walked up one of its banks to find the quarry itself

White-throated Bee-eater

Merops albicollis

~6 Tendaba mangroves

Green Bee-eater

Merops orientalis

4 in village at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 on journey from Basse to Bansang



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Merops persicus

1 definite, possibly many more in the distance at Lamin Lodge; ~15 Tendaba mangroves; occasional on journey from Georgetown to Barra

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

~20 Tendaba track; ~6 Tendaba mangroves

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops

1 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank

Green Wood Hoopoe

Phoeniculus purpureus

These were usually in roving flocks, moving from bases and lower parts of trees, but were generally difficult to approach (~20 in a flock at Lamin woods; 1 town en route to Tendaba; 2 on journey from Tendaba on North Bank; ~8 in bush at Baobolong Lodge area; ~8 Wassu pool; 3 cycle track paddies)



Western Red-billed Hornbill

Tockus kempfi

2 Kotu rice paddies; 1 Brufut; ~20 Tendaba; ~8 on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; ~4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; ~12 Baobolong Lodge area; ~10 on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; ~8 on North bank journey; ~6 Kotu area

African Pied Hornbill

Tockus fasciatus

1 Kotu sewage works

African Grey Hornbill

Tockus nasutus

2 Lamin, pair Brufut; 4 Tendaba track; 3 on journey from Tendaba to Georgetown; ~10 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing ~20 on journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; ~20 on North bank journey; 2 Kotu area

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

Bucorvus abyssinicus

Pair perched in trees between Farafenni and Barra



Bearded Barbet

Lybius dumbius

2 rice paddies along cycle track; 2 Tendaba track; 1 on bush while waiting for early morning ferry at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 on roadside stop on the North bank

Fine-spotted Woodpecker

Campethera punctuligera

1 Lamin rice fields; 1 in open bush at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing



Cardinal Woodpecker

Dendropicos fuscescens

1 Senegambia Hotel; 2 on track to river between Basse and Bansang

African Grey Woodpecker

Dendropicos goertae

1 en route to Tendaba

Brown-throated Wattle-eye

Platysteira cyanea

5 Abuko; 2 Brufut

Northern Puffback

Dryoscopus gambensis

1 Wassu pool

Yellow-crowned Gonolek

Laniarius barbarus

1 Senegambia Hotel; 1 Tendaba track; 1 along track at Baobolong Lodge area; 1 in village at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 Wassu pool; 1 cycle track pool



Yellow-billed Shrike

Corvinella corvine

1 from bus on transit from airport to hotel; 3 cycle track rice paddies; 1 Lamin woods; 3 Tendaba track; 1 alongside village at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 at a roadside stop between Wassu and Farafenni



Woodchat Shrike

Lanius senator

1 late evening in open bush at Baobolong Lodge area

Fork-tailed Drongo

Dicrurus adsimilis

1 Kotu Creek; 1 rice paddies at cycle track; 2 Lamin rice fields; 1 Tendaba track; 2 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 1 at Bansang



Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher

Terpsiphone rufiventer

2 Abuko; 1 Brufut

African Paradise Flycatcher

Terpsiphone viridis

1 Abuko

Piapiac

Ptilostomus afer

Small groups of 5-6 from bus and in Kotu Creek area; 1 on journey to Tendaba; 3 rice paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 on North bank journey



Pied Crow

Corvus albus

Quite common from bus transfer to hotel and Kotu Creek area; quite common South of river on journey to Tendaba; 2 Tendaba; 2 between Bansang and Basse; common between Barra and Banjul; common Kotu area on last morning

Crested Lark

Galerida cristata

2 Baobolong wetlands

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark

Eremopterix leucotis

~4 Bansang Quarry; ~6 roadside pool between Wassu and Farafenni; 4 Wassu stone circle



Common Bulbul

Pycnonotus barbatus

Quite common around Badala Park Hotel; ~15 Tendaba Camp; ~8 Baobolong Lodge

area; ~6 Bansang; 2 Wassu pool; common Kotu area

Little Greenbul

Andropadus virens

6 Abuko



Fanti Saw-wing

Psalidoprocne obscura

1 Abuko; 3 Lamin

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Quite common over Wassu paddies

Red-chested Swallow

Hirundo lucida

12 in mixed swallow flock perched on wires before Wassu; ~6 over Banjul ferry terminal; 5 Kotu Creek



Wire-tailed Swallow

Hirundo smithii

~8 Kotu Creek on first visit; 1 without streamers at Lamin; 4-5 River Gambia checkpoint; 2 Kotu Creek on last morning

Mosque Swallow

Cecropis senegalensis

27 in mixed swallow flock perched on wires before Wassu



Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

~6 over Tendaba airport; ~4 at Soma Wetlands; quite common over paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 on journey from Basse to Bansang; ~10 in mixed swallow flock perched on wires before Wassu

Eurasian Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

1 Wassu paddies next to the small river bridge

Melodious Warbler

Hippolais polyglotta

1 Tendaba track; 1 in bush on walk from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing to Baobolong Lodge area

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

1 Cycle track



Tawny-flanked Prinia

Prinia subflava

1 Kotu Creek; ~15 Tendaba track; ~5 alongside road at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 Bansang; ~6 Wassu stone circle; group of ~6 cycle track

Oriole Warbler

Hypergerus atriceps

Group of ~5 around track with Little Greenbuls in Abuko for some time. This was likely to be a family party of two adults feeding fully grown but not yet independent juveniles



Green-backed Camaroptera

Camaroptera brachyura

1 Brufut; 1 Tendaba airport

Senegal Eremomela

Eremomela pusilla

2 Tendaba airport; 2 in bushes on walk back from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 2 Bansang

Blackcap Babbler

Turdoides reinwardtii

2 Abuko in mixed flock with Oriole Warblers; 2 Senegambia



Brown Babbler

Turdoides plebejus

1 Senegambia Hotel; 3 Wassu pool; 4 Kotu area



Subalpine Warbler

Sylvia cantillans

1 Wassu pool; 1 Wassu paddies

Greater Blue-eared Starling

Lamprotornis chalybaeus

Particularly common upriver, where large gatherings could be found, often near to human habitation (1 Lamin woods; 2 journey to Georgetown on North Bank: at least 30 in paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; ~10 Baobolong lodge; common journey from Baobolong lodge to Basse; abundant in places on North bank journey)

Lesser Blue-eared Starling

Lamprotornis chloropterus

~40 Tendaba



Bronze-tailed Starling

Lamprotornis chalcurus

~6 in mixed group identified at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing paddies

Purple Starling

Lamprotornis purpureus

6 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 2 in mixed group identified at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing paddies; ~4 Baobolong lodge



Long-tailed Glossy Starling

Lamprotornis caudatus

Very common throughout

Yellow-billed Oxpecker

Buphagus africanus

5 on journey to Tendaba; 2 on donkeys in paddies at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 on cattle at Bansang; 3 on cattle at Wassu stone circle



African Thrush

Turdus pelios

Common Abuko, Brufut, and Lamin; 1 cycle track



Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat

Cossypha niveicapilla

4 Abuko



White-crowned Robin-Chat

Cossypha albicapilla

Pair Badala Park Hotel; 1 Senegambia Hotel; pair in village at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; group of 4 in Badala Park gardens on last morning

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

1 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 3 Wassu stone circle

Northern Black Flycatcher

Melaenornis edolioides

1 Senegambia Hotel

Swamp Flycatcher

Muscicapa aquaticus

2 were seen from the bridge over the stream at Wassu paddies

Mangrove Sunbird

Anthreptes gabonicus

~20 Tendaba mangroves

Pygmy Sunbird

Hedydipna platura

~5 on stop from Basse to Bansang

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*

1 Bansang; 1 on journey from Basse to Bansang

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*

2 next to Kotu Creek; ~10 Lamin; 4 Tendaba; ~10 in flowering tree on walk back from Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; ~6 in grounds of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing hotel, with pair feeding young in nest; ~10 Kotu area on last morning



Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*

2 females Abuko; 1 male Lamin; 1 Tendaba mangroves; 2 Kotu Creek

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

~6 Kotu area

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*

1 Brufut; 1 Kotu Creek

Bush Petronia *Gymnoris dentate*

~6 Bansang Quarry; 1 at a roadside pool stop after Farafenni



White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*

~10 in tree along track at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 Baobolong lodge; 1 over Wassu paddies; ~50 in one tree cycle track paddies

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*

Very common Abuko



Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

Abundant throughout

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

1 Tendaba airport; 1 in mixed flock Sankulaykunda ferry crossing



Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*

Small to sometimes very large flocks of small finches in non-breeding plumage were regularly encountered. These cannot be identified usually with any great deal of accuracy unless a breeding plumaged male is present. One or two of the flocks allowed some scrutiny, but this was the only species which could be identified with any certainty

Green-winged Pytilia

Pytilia melba

1 on stop from Basse to Bansang

Cut-throat Finch

Amadina fasciata

2 Bansang Quarry

Red-billed Firefinch

Lagonosticta senegala

~10 Abuko; ~20 Tendaba track; quite common both sides of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; ~15 Kotu area

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Uraeginthus bengalus

1 in mixed flock in bush at Baobolong Lodge area; 3 at Wassu pool; 2 next to Kotu Creek

Black-rumped Waxbill

Estrilda troglodytes

~20 Tendaba airport; some present in mixed flocks both sides of Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 at Bansang Quarry; 2 at Wassu paddies



Black-faced Quail-Finch

Ortygospiza atricollis

5 Tendaba airport

Bronze Mannikin

Lonchura cucullata

Quite common around Kotu Creek; quite common Abuko & Senegambia Hotel; ~10 Bansang Quarry; ~30 Kotu area

Village Indigobird

Vidua chalybeata

2 at village near to the Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 1 along creek at Sankulaykunda ferry crossing



Exclamatory Paradise Whydah

Vidua interjecta

1 juvenile on stop from Basse to Bansang; 1 full breeding plumaged male with ~10 females between Wassu and Farafenni. This was originally seen from the road, but luckily a track led to the 5 favoured perches as it displayed to its admiring onlookers. An impossible but beguiling bird

Western Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

2 Tendaba airport; ~4 Sankulaykunda ferry crossing paddies; 2 Baobolong wetlands; 1 Wassu paddies

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba

2 Tendaba Camp; ~6 Soma Wetlands; 1 Baobolong wetlands

Yellow-fronted Canary

Crithagra mozambica

2 on stop from Basse to Bansang

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting

Emberiza tahapisi

1 Bansang Quarry

TOTAL SPECIES = 205

MAMMALS

Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat **Epomophorus gambianus**

~50 in roosting tree at Baobolong Lodge area



Green Vervet **Chlorocebus aethiops**

~12 Abuko; 1 individual was looking on as we were completing the Georgetown ferry crossing for the last time



Patas Monkey **Erythrocebus patas**

3 on journey to Tendaba; ~6 in long grass on journey to Georgetown on North Bank; 2 groups of 3 and ~6 near Sankulaykunda ferry crossing; 3 small groups on journey from Georgetown to Barra

West African Red Colobus **Procolobus badius**

5 were at Abuko, including a mother carrying a fairly young immature



Marsh Mongoose **Atilax paludinosus**

1 Tendaba near to the camp among the mangroves

Striped (Banded) Mongoose **Mungos mungo**

~10 Brufut, moving through the dense bush cover alongside the track back to the car

Gambian Sun Squirrel **Heliosciurus gambianus**

1 Abuko; 1 Tendaba track; 1 on track to river while looking for Carmine Bee-eaters



Striped Ground Squirrel **Xerus erythropus**

2 on journey to Georgetown on North Bank