

The Gambia and Senegal

1 - 15 December 2006

Trip report

Leader

Tim Earl

Local leader

Dembo Sonko

Driver

Baba Nyassi

This is one of the most interesting holidays we put on combining tremendous birds with an excellent introduction to Africa. The trip up-river to the former capital Georgetown (now Janjangburah) and onwards to the fantastic town of Basse is amazing. Here we watch Carmine and Red-throated Bee-eaters, Egyptian Plovers and Paradise-whydahs. We see the traditional African ways of life: thriving markets, tiny farming hamlets, women doing their washing on the banks of the River Gambia. Payment? Well, certainly enduring the state of the country's major roads is an ordeal, although they were much better this year, the bank-notes are filthy (best to buy them in Britain before coming out) and Western standards of almost everything do not apply. But this is a taste of life in a Third World country. It is eye-opening and this is our account:-

Friday 1st December

To the Hotel Senegambia

Leaving Britain on a wet and windy day seemed good as we followed autumn migrants south, hoping to catch up with them. The flight to Banjul was uneventful. Clear conditions later allowed everyone to enjoy views of snow-topped Atlas Mountains and the seemingly endless Sahara Desert.

The arrival at Banjul airport was chaotic and vibrant – as ever. After an age we all found our cases and belongings before meeting our guide Dembo and driver Baba, old friends from previous years. A band of musicians belted out a bongo-drum greeting accompanied by singers as we went to the bus.

Lots of Cattle Egrets were on the airport grass and a few Spectacled Pigeons flew down from the roof but it was not until we got under way that a few novelties began to be seen. Lots of pigeons, Laughing Dove mainly, a Blue-bellied Roller, a Black-shouldered Kite and a Piapiac. Several Hooded Vultures were seen in palms and scruffy White-billed Buffalo-weaver nests were hanging in a tree with a few of their owners in silhouette.

We all met for a bird walk soon after checking in and within minutes had found a pair of Bearded Barbets in a tree outside my room. A West African Thrush was feeding in the grass a few feet away unconcerned by our presence.

The sea was brilliant – two Arctic Skuas went past as we arrived followed by three Slender-billed Gulls, despite a setting sun in our eyes.

A flock of noisy Brown Babblers entertained us with their imitations of modern 'yoof' and Broad-billed Rollers were descending on the hotel grounds to roost. A couple of Red-billed Hornbills made up the day's list and we retired for a shower before drinks and supper. We arranged to meet at 7.30pm but my get-together with our local agents was delayed by traffic jams (the president was on his way to the airport). After I had discussed the itinerary with our agents we went into a good buffet supper over which a few Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bats flew as they went from one bread-fruit flower to the next.

Saturday 2 December

The golf course, Kotu stream and Madiana Woods

The day got off to a cracking start with a rare Klaas's Cuckoo seen in the breadfruit tree under which we had dinner. In truth, it was cracking for the many other birders in the hotel for whom the bird was a major twitch. We sat eating breakfast and eventually decided to go and see the bird. It was worth the effort although animation was not its main feature.

We left the hotel at 8am for the nearby Kotu stream where a host of waders including Wattled, Spur-winged and Black-capped Lapwings, Grey (Black-bellied) and Greater Ringed Plovers, Red and Greenshanks were roosting on the high tide.

Moving on to the Kotu golf course we started a productive walk with Red-billed Firefinch and Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, enjoyed watching a Pearl-spotted Owllet in the middle and ended with Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird. The owllet was startling as it occasionally turned its head to reveal two huge 'false eyes' which evolved to intimidate other birds.

Our next stop was at the Kotu ponds – in reality the local sewage works. In fairness, they do not smell but watching Wood, Green and Common Sandpipers, Black-winged Stilts and Little Grebes in such surroundings is not the best. Dembo checked out a known site for Northern White-faced Scops Owl with success and we had splendid views of this sometimes difficult bird. A flock of 40 White-faced Whistling-ducks lived up to their name as they dropped in and gave us great 'scope views.

Lunch was at an old favourite beach restaurant where we were made most welcome and fed well. In addition we saw the first of three Ospreys for the day (our last was eating a fish which looked like a small Barracuda), several Royal Terns and a few Grey-headed Gulls.

We headed off for Madiana Woods to end the day searching for a Golden-tailed Woodpecker, without success. We were rewarded with five Yellow-billed Oxpeckers, a stunning fly-past Palm-nut Vulture, a female Greater Honeyguide and masses of Red-billed and Grey Hornbills.

After exchanging some money we retired to the hotel for a shower before another excellent dinner.

Sunday 3 December

Abuko, Lamin Lodge and Tujereng Woods

A cuckoo again got the day off to a good start. We found a Levaillant's Cuckoo fledgling being fed by three Brown Babblers. It was an interesting observation not only to see the cuckoo but also when we realised that a pair of babblers had a 'helper'. We were exploring the grounds of the hotel before breakfast when the birds were found. The early session (7.15 start) also turned up a Lesser Crested Tern, Royal Tern and a Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling.

Our morning was spent in Abuko Nature Reserve which we shared with a party of Scandinavian girls, although they soon left us far behind. A couple of Red Colobus Monkeys played hard to get and it was not until we reached the hide that things started to hot up. Two or three Violet Turacos were seen in a cabbage tree but a Green Turaco which put in a brief appearance was seen only by one or two. Happily, Dembo found another pair later in the morning and we all had good though neck-breaking views eventually.

The pond produced good views of Giant Kingfisher, Intermediate Egret, Grey and Black-headed Herons, several Black-crowned Night-herons and a few Nile Crocodiles. A pair of Fanti-sawwings were stars... we do not see them on every trip, and the usual Hamerkop delighted us all.

The 'photographic hide' was excellent with great views of Malachite Kingfisher, Palm-nut Vulture and another (tiny) croc. A Collared Sunbird and Blue-spotted Ground-dove were seen on the way back from the hide.

Common Wattle-eye was found among a feeding flock of birds which produced good views of Yellow-breasted Apalis and African Paradise-flycatcher. A pair of Black-necked Weavers showed quite well soon afterwards. We found a pair of Little Bee-eaters as the forest opened out while those at the end of the line had reasonable views of Bronze Mannikins and Variable Sunbird.

After checking out a few animals in the so-called orphanage, we were picked up by Baba and driven to Lamin Lodge for a good lunch. It was made the better by getting views of Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Great Egret, Sandwich and Lesser-crested Terns. Mud-skipper and Fiddler-crabs were in the mud as we crossed through Red Mangroves to and from the lodge.

I made a mental note to bring a small Dictaphone next year to record the 'Birdwatchers' Song' which is sung to us by a nasal crooner who makes up words according to the visiting group. This song has had at least three airings in recent years.

It was already late (3pm) when we set off for a new site discovered when I visited Dembo in January, The Tujereng Woods are more like fields with scattered trees. Used to grow melons, they become thick with weeds and birds in the dry season and we enjoyed a frantic hour trying to locate some great birds, Among the wintering European species were Melodious and Subalpine Warblers and a rather handsome Woodchat Shrike.

More frustrating were the small-brown-jobs such as Red-winged Warbler, Red Bishop, Zitting and Singing Cisticolas (the latter never seen). Most of us had good views of White-winged Black-tit and Brown-backed Woodpecker. A Grey Woodpecker was more obliging and allowed us all to study it through scopes. The session ended with a fly-past of three Pink-backed Pelicans and great views of a Rufous-crowned Roller.

Monday 4 December

Mandinobar rice fields, Farabanta bush track and Bijilo forest

An early start saw us walking down to the Mandinobar rice fields in the company of Green Pigeons, two Shikra and a pair of stunning Blue-bellied Rollers. The rice fields were quite busy with birds and people (one woman was spending the morning scaring Village Weavers from her rice crops). Dembo found a Wahlberg's Eagle in a high tree, a Senegal Coucal posed for us on a fence post as did a Squacco Heron and there was a great flurry when two Levaillant's Cuckoos flew over.

Moving on, we drove to the Farabanta bush track where a stunning Abyssinian Roller was perched to welcome us. It was a handsome bird and when three Rose-ringed Parakeets flew around behind it the picture was perfect. An immature Dark Chanting Goshawk was the next bird to be investigated and again we were distracted by other birds flying past – this time an adult, probably one of its parents, and a pair of Lanner Falcons.

A perched Grasshopper Buzzard was mistaken for a Lanner when first seen: it seemed to have a Rufous head but this was a trick of the light and when the bird flew we were able to see the reddish primaries clearly.

One of the most exciting sightings of the trip occurred when a pair of Beudouin's Snake-eagles circled low overhead offering us wonderful views even without binoculars. Once considered to be a sub-species of Short-toed Eagle, to our eyes they looked nothing like.

The bush track is a known site for Greyish Eagle-owl and after searching several suitable trees, Dembo located the pair. We were careful not to get too close but this meant poor views against the light. Nevertheless, the occasional beady eye was opened to check us out and most of the features could be seen with patience.

A Senegal (Green-backed) Eremomela flitted through small Cashew trees and gave us reasonable views. They are well marked birds but typical warblers: never seem to remain still for long. A Striped Kingfisher was far more obliging perching in a tree for some minutes before diving into the grass and coming out with a large insect of some sort. It flew off to consume its meal in private, shortly after bashing the unfortunate creature on a branch.

Three Patas Monkeys, a rare sighting for The Gambia, crossed our path as we headed for another section of the forest which we explored with little success.

We returned to the hotel for lunch and a restful nap. The lunch took some locating due to poor communication while the nap turned into a room change for some of us to accommodate the hotel which had

an overbooking problem. Those initiative tests solved, we went around the corner for a super walk through Bijilo Forest, a fairly new coastal reserve.

Green Vervet Monkeys are common and tame in the reserve as tourists feed them with peanuts bought at the entrance. We saw quite a few. Red Colobus do not become tame and seeing a small troop was a thrill as it meant all three of the country's monkeys had been seen in a day. Swallow-tailed and Little Bee-eaters entertained us as did a Red-billed Wood-dove. We were watching a Senegal Coucal when I spotted a Whitethroat skulking in deep undergrowth. Happily, the winter visitor from back home popped up and we all enjoyed good views.

Woodpeckers are common in the reserve and we were delighted to have several opportunities to study Grey Woodpecker well. One seemed to be drinking cocoanut milk although in reality this was probably water from a smashed nut high in the palm.

Returning to the bus we diverted for a few minutes to search for White-throated Bee-eater in a section of the reserve closer to the sea. Success! About five were seen bringing a great day's birding to an end.

Tuesday 5 December

Yundum fields, Carmalou Corner and Brufut Forest

Breakfast at the hotel can be exciting [er, not when it's Cattle Egrets pooping on your fruit... Ed] and this morning we were amazed at a passage of Common Swifts passing overhead. They apparently remain in the Senegambia area feeding on insects in front of a weather system called the Guinea front. When this breaks down at the turn of the year the swifts move off into Central Africa. After arriving at Yundum fields we were amazed to find Pallid Swifts passing overhead in numbers too.

Our second Klaas's Cuckoo put in an appearance and started a spell where birds were popping up in succession – Black-crowned Tchagra showed briefly, a Singing Cisticola sat on a wall for us to admire and a Little Weaver was found in a dense patch of weeds, A Tawny-flanked Prinia carrying food was clearly feeding young close to the track we were on and a Northern Wheatear shot past us.

We eventually turned our attention to an Acacia which was acting like a night at London Palladium for birds. There were lots of our old favourites such as Grey-headed Sparrows and a few Namaqua Doves as a backdrop but three Chiffchaffs and a party of Cut-throats were on stage too.

Moving into field which had been harvested, we found a Whinchat and further glimpses of Black-crowned Tchagra. Two African Yellow White-eyes were seen and a Northern Black Flycatcher was most obliging. Good numbers of Pin-tailed Whydahs were popping up regularly and a Striped Kingfisher posed well. Mottled Spinetails flew past and we were able to see white rumps almost circling their tails.

A young Dideric Cuckoo was fed by a passing Yellow-fronted Canary but this surely was not its foster parent we decided. Our final study-bird of the morning was an immature Dark chanting Goshawk which sat on a pylon and was later on a gate as we stopped the bus to photograph it.

Dave called the journey to our lunch stop to a halt when he spotted a Sacred Ibis in a marsh at Carmalou Corner. This resulted in great views of several feeding herons including Great White Egret, Striated and Squacco and five Western Reef-herons. Two Caspian Terns were roosting on a distant sand-spit but their huge bills were seen clearly.

Lunch at Bacchus Beach Bar started with a Slender-billed Gull close to the restaurant, an Oystercatcher and a couple of Bar-tailed Godwits which were with a Greenshank. We decided to investigate a gull roost after the meal and were rewarded with a Lesser Black-backed Gull, one Gull-billed Tern, scores of Lesser Crested and Caspian terns and another Slender-billed Gull. The roost had lots of waders in or close – one Curlew, Sanderlings and Turnstones.

Birding was dropped for a while as we toured the former colonial town of Banjul but our exit along the Bund Road produced sightings (poor against the light) of two Yellow-billed Storks and at least one Black-headed Gull among the hundreds roosting.

We visited St Peter's secondary school to drop off stationary I had organised and enjoyed a brief visit to classrooms where a high level of education was being taught.

Our last stop of the day was in Brufut Woods where some had views of Lavender Waxwings. A pair of Bush Petronias was far more obliging and a small pool was thronging with Village Weavers, African Thrushes, doves and a small party of nervous Orange-cheeked Waxbills.

Wednesday 6 December

To Senegal and Keur Saloum

Africa can be trying but today it seemed to be trying hard to be trying. Plans for a 6am start were well in place. Baba had driven the bus to Banjul at 11pm yesterday and slept there to be at the head of the queue for the first ferry across the River Gambia to Barra. The bus to pick us and our luggage arrived at the hotel with Dembo on time and everyone boarded. Then we discovered that picnic breakfasts and lunches had not been prepared. We eventually assembled in the restaurant for a snatched breakfast, made a few miserable sandwiches and fled for the port.

It was too late. The ferry, with Baba and our bus had left. Indeed, the boat was returning for the second shuttle and we were on the jetty with luggage on a trolley. A man with an empty pickup allowed us to load it with luggage and we joined a throng of people which surged onto the ferry. It was cold and we almost shivered standing in front of the vessel's bridge looking at the pickup below surrounded by people.

A few Pomarine and one Arctic Skua were seen on the crossing which took longer than usual due to a running tide. We eventually rejoined the surge of humanity and walked off the boat with Dembo riding with our luggage on the back of the pickup. It had been loaded into the bus by the time we caught up, delighted to be reunited with Baba. A swift (and customary) stop was made at the police station for comfort, although using the prisoners' loo was enough to put us off crime for ever, and we set off for Senegal, by now two hours later than planned.

Happily, everyone took the attitude that this is what experiencing Africa can be like on occasions and we were in fine spirits. A stop for what had been planned as our breakfast cuppa was welcome. Peanuts were being harvested in nearby fields and we walked these to search for birds with little of note except a couple of Wheatears and a few glossy starlings. We bought several pockets-full of tasty peanuts for the equivalent of 10p and trundled on towards Senegal along a road pock-marked with pot-holes, our first taste of up-country driving.

The boarder into Senegal was crossed with much form-filling, three stamps in our passports but in a record time of 45 minutes. Money was exchanged in a shady deal with a bloke who had a fist full of Senegal currency and we were away. Mottled Spinetail was the first Senegal bird of note quickly followed by an immature Beaudouin's Snake-eagle and a Rufous-crested Roller.

I have made friends with people who run a wildlife park just inside the border and they allowed us to picnic in the car park and use their facilities as usual, despite being told that their normal tip of good grub left over from our picnic would not be forthcoming. Our meagre rations were consumed and after watching a few House Martins and Little Swifts we set off north. A stop at a little pond produced our first African Jacana and a Hamerkop. Walking down to a stream, Dembo spotted a Pygmy-kingfisher which we admired for some time as it returned to the same perch. A Tree Pipit was found (yet another wintering European species) and a Woodland Kingfisher joined it in the same tree.

Some of us were tired after a disturbed night and early start so we drove the short distance to our hotel without stops, arriving at 2.15pm. A rest was in order after check-in and we assembled on a new balcony overlooking mangroves and a super creek at 4.15.

One of the highlights of this holiday is a pirogue trip along the creek which ends at dusk when we settle next to an island within the mangrove forest which is used as a roost. We were well into the exciting excursion having chalked up hosts of waders and terns when Africa struck again... the shear-pin on our outboard's prop went and we had to be rescued by a boat-load of French tourists (he-haw, he-haw, he-haw-he-haw) to took delight in filming us and taking snaps. [Had they forgotten the War... Ed?] A relief boat was summonsed, complete with an apologetic hotel manager, and we resumed the excursion to the roost site.

It was wonderful.

A Goliath Heron was seen on the way in but even that did not prepare us for the thrill awaiting us. There were almost 50 Pied Kingfishers roosting on the island, for example. And their numbers were swollen by more arriving by the minute. We estimated about 200 by the time our pirogue returned to the hotel. They were joined by squadrons of Western Reef Herons, Reed Cormorants, Little and Cattle Egrets which piled into the roost in waves. Pink-backed Pelicans passed over on their way to roost somewhere else, about 75 in total.

Among other species which came in was a flock of White-billed Buffalo-weavers, a lone Sacred Ibis and two Anhingas. The numbers were as follows with the 2005 figures in brackets:

Pink-backed Pelican	80	
Western Reef Heron	200	(250)
Little Egret	12	(10)
Cattle Egret	200	(500)
Intermediate Egret	2	(1)
Great White Egret	5	(1)
Long-tailed Cormorant	150	(10)
Pied Kingfisher	200	(20)

Silenced by the spectacle, one of the great highlights of all Travelling Naturalist trips, we returned to the hotel in time for a shower, drink and delicious meal.

Thursday 7 December

Exploring Senegal

A new balcony had been built at the hotel and we started the day with coffee or tea from it, overlooking the creek and mangroves at 7am. A Marsh Mongoose was spotted immediately as it scurried from one side of the jetty area to the other, most obligingly. A Goliath Heron fishing opposite us was beautiful in the early morning sun as was a Pink-backed Pelican which was waiting on the mud for fishermen to return and feed it.

A female Beautiful Sunbird kept us busy for a time until a flock of Red-billed Quelea was spotted in elephant grass with Little and Village Weavers. Dave gave the balcony a second visit after breakfast and was rewarded with big flocks of House and Sand Martins.

We set off to explore the area around the main Dakar Road for the morning, reaching the marshes near ???. Several stops were made along the way in creeks at first and then marshes and likely bits of scrub. Common Kestrel was added to the list shortly to be followed by a super male Montagu's Harrier. Birds of prey kept up the entertainment when we came across a Red-necked Falcon which was feeding bits of a freshly killed bird to a well-grown chick. A flock of Quelea was close at hand and we wondered if the victim could have been one of them... it seemed to provide a good meal whatever the species.

A dam had lots of water-birds for our delight – Marsh Sandpiper, Black Egret and African Spoonbill were new for our lists but there were plenty of other species too.

As the country became drier we encountered species such as Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark, Black-rumped Waxbills (in scores) and a few Mottled Spinetail Swifts. Suddenly there was a shout: "Swallow-tailed Kite," and we were treated to the first views of this most elegant bird. It was terrific, similar to a Black-shouldered Kite but with a huge forked tail, graceful and neat. We were all delighted at the find. By the end of the morning we had seen about five more.

Black Storks resting on a salt-rimed dry lake were difficult in the hot conditions but two vultures – Eurasian and Rüppell's Griffon were a little easier with an explanation of their distinguishing characteristics.

Members of the Waxbill family are common in the drier parts, coming to ponds to drink. Among the more usual species we found African Silverbill, a pretty little bird which stood out from the Bronze Mannikins and Black-rumped Waxbills.

Turning around to return, we came across a flock of Chestnut-bellied Starlings which ended the morning's purple patch.

We enjoyed a late lunch on the new balcony and set off for the village of Missarah a few miles away. Here we walked over a stream and up into a mixture of woods and fields. A couple of Gull-billed Terns were loafing around over the stream and a female Montagu's Harrier crossed close to us. Lesley spotted a Hoopoe which few of us managed to see (a characteristic of this species... many missed another seen in fields at Basse a few days later). We had more luck with a wintering Quail which flushed on three occasions before returning to its starting place and a flock of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters gave general delight.

Eventually it was time to return and we set off back to be pulled up short by good views of a wintering Redstart on the track in front of us.

Double-spurred Francolins flushed and flew into a recently cropped field and we decided to follow the good luck we had with the Quail. Eventually, the two birds jumped up and flew off affording brief flight views. Soon afterwards Dave and I were started by a small bird with white panels in the wings – a rare Quail Plover. We tried to flush it again for the rest of the group but were embarrassed later to read that the best way to see the species after it has been flushed is to stand and watch for movement in the grass... whoops!

Friday 8 December

To Janjangbureh via the North Bank

Travelling days are often quite birdless but we had great fun with coursers, a bustard hunt and one of the prizes of this trip, our first Egyptian Plovers. We set off early for the border where formalities went smoothly and after a rough road down towards Barra we turned left and set off along the North Bank. Some had been improved and metalled, other sections were under repair with bad diversions while some was a quite good gravel surface.

We stopped to search a recently harvested peanut field which held two delightful Temminck's Coursers and a pair of Northern Anteater Chats. While we were searching for them a Beaudouin's Snake-eagle drifted over.

A delightful pony marsh had scores of white water lilies in flower and the obligatory Jacana among them. Red-rumped Swallows swooped overhead and a party of White-faced Whistling Ducks seemed to be playing leap-frog at the back. European Bee-eaters were admired after being spotted and reversed for.

We arrived at our lunch stop 15 minutes late – not bad going for 'Gambian about time'. A Four-banded Sandgrouse objected to our presence and shot out from between us but otherwise the picnic went without much interruption.

We reached some spectacular marshes soon afterwards but there was little new to admire except about 100 Dunlin enjoying a warm winter after their breeding efforts in the high Arctic. A stop was made to search fields for a Savile's Bustard but many herds of cattle had been grazing since it was last seen and we could not locate the bird although its calls were heard. Two Great Spotted Cuckoos were seen during the search which also flushed many Iberian-race 'blue-headed' Yellow Wagtails no doubt attracted by the presence of the cattle.

Amazingly, Baba had to screech to a stop after a Black-bellied Bustard was thwarted from crossing the road by the bus soon afterwards. A search through dense thickets failed to relocate it.

The Kaur Marshes were as good and frustrating as ever with lots of birds and little time left to enjoy them. Scores of Senegal Thick-knees were searched in hope of finding a rarity without success until a little voice said "I can see two Egyptian Plovers down the road".

There they were... two of the most beautiful waders in the world walking down the road in front of us (well called Lesley). We hopped back into the bus and drove down to enjoy them before they were flushed by other traffic.

Other birds seen included Collared Pratincoles (one on the ground and scores in the air) two Ruff, several Comb-billed Ducks and a White Wagtail. Several Black Egrets were feeding communally by making their

classic umbrella wing formations touch to form a big broolly (fish are attracted to the shade and then get skewered). It was a great example of communal feeding.

Frustrated by the lack of time, we set off for the ferry to Janjangbureh which we reached by 5.15pm getting us to the Baobolong Camp by 5.45 – in time for a well-earned beer before a shower, call-over and dinner.

Saturday 9 December

To Basse and Bansang quarry

The trip up to Basse is one of the top days of this tour with Carmine and Red-throated Bee-eaters high on our list of target species. We saw both in grand style. Basse is a thriving, vibrant and colourful town, even though this year it had been closed for half a day as part of a monthly national ‘clean up your town’ day.

We left promptly at 7.45 arriving at the ferry from Janjangbureh before other vehicles. A good road and discipline saw us in Basse by 9.30 and as it was still cool I decided to check the jetty for Egyptian Plovers before things there got too busy. We were too late for birds on the jetty but did see a pair well on the far bank. They are stunning creatures and on a river bank looked more in their element than those seen yesterday.

After a comfort stop we set off for the Basse rice fields where there were many birds on the move. A pair of Black-shouldered Kites gave excellent views in a nearby tree and a number of Quailfinches jumped up out of the grass to zoom past us giving their characteristic calls. Try as we did, none could be located on the ground for a good look.

There were compensations: scores of Abyssinian Rollers were scattered over the extensive rice fields and grasslands, Marsh Harriers were quartering, Spur-winged Geese were settled in a patch of swamp which held scores of common birds including at least 10 Jacanas.

Lesley quietly said “I think I can see a bee-eater”, and sure enough there was the first Northern Carmine Bee-eater of the day and trip. We broke off from our individual quests and went in search of more. Soon a small tree was found with nine birds using it as a feeding perch. We walked around to get the sun right and enjoyed the glorious sight for some time as the bee-eaters went out, snatched an insect and returned to eat it. Anything else to day was surely going to be an anticlimax... or was it.

Returning to the bus we had brief views of a Gabar Goshawk and a Hoopoe before visiting a bridge over a stream used by waxbills to drink and bathe. There were lots of Bronze Mannikins plus a lone Bar-breasted Firefinch which was seen by two of us.

Lunch was eaten on the veranda of an old colonial club. Very old. So old that the rooms have been taken over by nesting Little Swifts and flocks of waxbills pick around in the overgrown former gardens. But the views are good and we occasionally see Egyptian Plover from the balcony as we did today prompting a switch to the jetty for closer examination. As always, fruit was presented to the women doing their washing to say sorry for disturbing them (telescopes are often mistaken for movie cameras which they do not like).

After a couple of stops for cooking oil and fuel for the bus we set off back towards Janjangbureh. A favourite pond was empty of birds so we drove on to Bansang Quarry, once featured in a David Attenborough documentary. It was hot and lots of birds were dropping in to drink in the quarry’s two pools.

But it was the colony of Red-throated Bee-eaters which first caught our attention. They were nesting in sandy banks behind where we set up telescopes overlooking the drinking pools. Nearby bushes and elephant grasses were festooned with the birds giving us excellent views. Their stunning plumage with its great range of colours gave rise to a debate as to whether Red-throated are more beautiful than Carmine Bee-eaters.

The pools and surrounding vegetation were massed with Bronze Mannikins, Cinnamon-Breasted Buntings, scores of Bush Petronia and a few Chestnut-backed Sparrow-larks, Mosque and Red-rumped Swallows hawked flies overhead while Green Sandpiper and a couple of Black-winged Stilts picked around the further pond. Exclamatory Paradise-whydahs delighted us with their extravagant tails and colourful plumage.

All too soon it was time to leave for the ferry back to Janjangbureh where the group split, some returning to the Baobolong Camp while others enjoyed the late afternoon dusk which fell over rice fields on the island. Swarms of Red-billed Quelea, Northern Red-bishops and Yellow-crowned Bishops came in to roost while

three Four-banded Sandgrouse flew out of the area. A Bruce's Pigeon was seen while a Pearl-spotted Owlet heralded the night with its distinctive song.

Sunday 10 December

Sapu Village and Jahally rice fields; Janjangbureh island

This was a more relaxed day with shorter distances driven and a siesta before the afternoon bird walk. Our departure was delayed by a later than expected breakfast as it was Sunday. Both Garden and Olivaceous Warblers were seen in the trees above our table as we waited for food to be organised and several Yellow-throated Leafloves put in an appearance for the second day in succession. A female Northern Puffback was also seen by a few and a splendid Fine-spotted Woodpecker made up the pre-breakfast sightings.

The ferry crossing to or from the South Bank was a difficult process each time we made it. Baba's new bus touched the ground every time it was driven on or off causing some damage and the ferry's engine was broken which meant that the male passengers had to haul the vessel across by pulling on a thick wire cable. Such things happen in Africa and we pitched in with the many other passengers.

Heading west, we stopped to admire a few Red Patas Monkeys crossing the road before setting up scopes under a Baobab which had six pairs of nesting Marabou in its crown. Not the prettiest of birds in appearance or habit, they were still strangely fascinating. Heading down to rice fields at Sapu village, a search produced six Painted Snipe which is by far the biggest group we have ever seen on this trip. They may have been a male and five youngsters as none showed particularly bright plumage. The fields also had lots of Wood Sandpipers.

Two Stone Partridges were seen by the roadside but flushed before we could get good views. They led us to a Spotted Thick-knee which was seen well in the scope my most people before it too flew off. An African Savannah Hare dashed off as we walked back to the bus. We must have passed within inches of it on the way out. A Long-crested Eagle was another road-side poser and again we were able to scope it before it flew away.

The rice fields at Jahally teem with birds, most of which were by now old friends. A careful search revealed five Pygmy Geese along a canal which was decked with white water lilies and populated by hosts of Jacanas. Imagine our surprise when a Marsh Mongoose swam across the scene. Collared Pratincoles were also numerous. A search for Black Coucal was unsuccessful for the third year following, possibly because they migrate east to Mali at this time of year.

We returned for a late lunch and after a snooze went by bus to explore the grounds of the now defunct Bird Safari Camp at the far end of the island. This was a super time with many old favourites plus reasonable views of Grey-headed Bush-shrike and Lavender Waxbill. The camp was a sorry sight but could have been terrific at one time. Four Rock Partridges posed for us on the road as we drove back to the Baobolong Camp and an immature Fish Eagle swooped past to complete the day's excitement.

Monday 11 December

To Tendaba

The worst roads of the trip were endured to day as we ground slowly westwards following the great River Gambia. The good Rains had increased the size, depth and number of potholes making this arterial road almost impassable in places.

Our rewards were considerable, however, as numerous raptors were seen well and difficult species such as African Pied Wagtail and Abyssinian Ground Hornbill were found. We were travelling so slowly that it was easy to stop the bus and pile out to watch such goodies as White-backed Vulture, African Hawk-eagle, Western Banded Snake-eagle, Bateleur and Brown Snake-eagle as they circled above us. The light makes

watching birds of prey a great delight and indeed, we were able to see one Brown Snake-eagle using its alular feathers as it hovered in the breeze.

The first stop we made was at Brikamaba where we investigated tall Mahogany trees and found a roosting Verreaux's Eagle-owl. It looked down on us from a great height (and distance as we did not want to disturb the bird) blinking its pink (or were they cinnamon?) eye-lids. The views through scopes were excellent and we left thrilled with the encounter.

The first of two European Bee-eater flocks was seen soon afterwards reminding us of summers past in southern France and Spain where they will soon be trilling out their calls.

A stop to look for more Spotted Thick-knees was unsuccessful but we did do well for other birds teasing out African Scrub-robin, Grey-backed Camaroptera and another Common Redstart. Dembo called three Little Green Bee-eaters in flight and happily one perched long enough for most of us to get good scope views.

A party of Dog-faced (Guinea) Baboons in the road turned out to be the last of a huge troop of animals estimated between 50 and 80 strong. It included some serious-looking males with huge shoulders and long fur which could almost be called manes, and some babies riding piggy-back on their mothers' backs. Another group was seen dispersed between three Baobab trees from which they were collecting fruit a little later in the day.

Lunch was eaten swiftly beside the road and we continued with a stop in Soma after which Dembo directed Baba along a 'short-cut' which was brilliant. We missed half of a terrible bit of road and arrived at Tendaba by 5.30, ready for a shower, drink and meal.

A stop in Soma for ice resulted in good views of a rare African Pied Wagtail in an industrial complex, a little like its British counterpart. This was the first we had ever seen in The Gambia.

It was another chance encounter which resulted in the bird of the day. Passing a cleared rice field Dave noticed a large black bird walking across the area. We screeched to a halt and there was a female

Ground Hornbill, seemingly as big as a young kid nearby. She was soon joined by a male, its splendid red face showing well even at a distance and the couple sauntered off together behind grass which hid them. We were elated and congratulated Dave on his sharp observation.

Tuesday 12 December

Pirogue trip and Kiang National Park

Tendaba is perched on the banks of the mighty River Gambia more than 100 miles upstream of Banjul but that does not stop the tidal effects from being felt and as light broke over our breakfast at 7am we were surprised to see the water up around the camp's jetty. By the time we returned from our pirogue trip the jetty was dry and we landed several hundred yards upstream at a large commercial pier.

The trip had been super with many birds seen well from the quiet boat as we slipped up through dense stands of mangroves. A Goliath Heron and several Pink-backed Pelicans were seen as we entered the mangroves after crossing the river, almost a mile wide at this point. Caspian and Lesser Crested Terns were seen on the way across but much hoped for African Fish Eagles were sadly missing [I thought you won £5 for that... Ed?].

Darters dropped like bricks into the water to disappear for ever while Mouse-brown Sunbirds darted across the creek giving reasonable though tantalising views. Lots of wintering waders calling loudly fled down the creeks as we approached: most were Whimbrel and Greenshanks but Common sandpipers and a few Redshanks joined the chorus of alarms.

A dainty Malachite Kingfisher knew how to entertain a crowd as it posed for us on a low root while its bigger Blue-breasted and Pied cousins also put on a show.

We pulled up against one stand to listen to the calls of a Little Green Woodpecker, a rare West African endemic which has been recorded in The Gambia only a couple of times in recent years. Sadly we could not get sight of it. Fairy Blue Flycatchers were heard and a couple seen briefly as they flitted through the mangroves.

One of the star birds was Woolly-necked Stork, seen as the mangroves gave way to muddy areas of grass-like plants. A total of 10 were seen, some perched on dead tree stumps offering crippling views. It was at this time that scores of Yellow-billed Kites were seen, augmented by a Sacred Ibis, one female Montagu's Harrier and two Marsh Harriers.

What two Nile Monitors were doing in Hamerkop nests we could not ascertain. The two nests were only 10 yards apart and seemed unused. Perhaps the reptiles had thrown out their occupants and taken them over as sunbathing platforms.

All too soon the boat was approaching the exit and main river once more and we thought it was all over. It was then we had a Bobby Moore moment as 11 African Spoonbills and 10 Pink-backed Pelicans were seen, approached and studied a short way down the river. What a score! It was (all over) then and we returned to the camp for a cuppa.

Our walk afterwards on the 'Up-hill Track' was both disappointing and exciting. We saw one of the rarest birds of the trip – Bronze-winged Courser, a super bird which posed for us – but the whole area had been burned to encourage grass growth and all the saplings and shrubs which had been so productive last year were destroyed.

A few birds were seen and as these included our second Bateleur, two African Hawk-eagles and a Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, we returned to lunch in reasonable heart.

The Tendaba 'Airstrip' was visited later in the afternoon but was quiet with Long-crested Eagle the best bird. Moving on to Kiang West national park, we walked a delightful track which was full of interest from the footprints of squirrels to an odd red-berried Mistletoe. Birds were quite obliging with a pair of White-winged Black-tits, Brubru and Senegal Batis.

The day ended with a reasonable meal although the soup appeared to be lunchtime's 'cream soup' (flour and water) with a few bits of pumpkin added.

Wednesday 13 December

Back to the coast and Pirang shrimp farm

We were rather dreading today's journey which goes along the South Bank on a terrible road to Pirang where we arrived in civilisation. In reality, the road had been improved and it was not a bad journey at all. The start was delayed with a wait for our lunchtime sandwiches but we were away by 8.15am and had stopped at an area with lots of flame-trees by 8.45.

This was an interesting area with Black Scimitarbill being located early on. Woodland and Striped Kingfishers were seen well as was a Northern Crombec, a character bird which makes up for its lack of tail by behaving like a nuthatch.

Several Green-backed Eremomelas were found close to the road and a wintering Spotted Flycatcher caused some debate as its striations were difficult to see. Daphne spotted a troop of Red Patas Monkeys soon after we set off again and quick stops were made to watch a Booted Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle and African Hawk-eagle. A Hoopoe did a disappearing act but most of us saw it in flight.

Highlight of the day came at the so-called Raptor Bridge, a spot much visited by birders. It was not a bird of prey which thrilled us, however, but a snake. Spotted swimming, it made its way into a culver under the road and was clearly about 7ft long. It was later identified as a probable ?? although Green Mamba and African House Snake were also considered.

And the raptors? Well, we had to contend with two Lanner Falcons and our third Bateleur.

Pirang shrimp farm was being put to its intended function and had attracted masses of birds. These included hundreds of Yellow-billed Kites, scores of Pink-backed and a few White Pelicans. There were several species of tern including Caspian, Gull-billed, Royal and Little. A pair of Plain-backed Pipits were seen well and three Crested Larks gave us a great deal of interest as two were extremely yellow in the plumage generally but especially on the head and flanks.

Sadly, the hoped for Crowned Cranes were not present at the ponds or at nearby rice fields where they often feed. We had to make do with good views of an African Hoopoe (which is considered by some to be a race of the Eurasian Hoopoe).

We returned to the Senegambia Hotel with some relief and enjoyed creature comforts such as hot showers, decent wine and 'happy hour' before a good dinner.

Thursday 14 December

Marakissa forest

Cool conditions and overcast skies meant that insect activity was inhibited and with it the birds. However, our last full day in The Gambia was spent pleasantly exploring the Marakissa Forest reserve where attendance fees subsidise the local people and (we hope) inhibit the cutting of wood.

A Lizard Buzzard perched in a bread-fruit tree was our first sighting, with clear views of its distinguishing black chin-stripe. A Fine-spotted Woodpecker was in a nearby tree and gave us good views as did several Senegal Parrots which were investigating or excavating nest holes in dead palm trees scattered around the area. Fork-tailed Drongos popped back onto our lists again, much more common near the coast.

A pair of Northern Puffbacks marked our entrance into the forest along with Green Pigeon and Long-tailed Shrikes. A Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher was difficult to watch in a dense cashew-nut tree but a Grey Woodpecker gave good views on a dead palm.

Mammals were seen too with several Sun Squirrels and a glimpse of a Gambian Mongoose. Three Pied Hornbills were our first new birds. They gave us several fly-past moments and occasionally perched high enough to be studied in distant trees.

Wire-tailed Swallows were feeding a youngster and giving us good views (we thought they might be renamed Five-amp Fuse-wire-tailed Swallows). A couple of Black Scimitarbills played hard to get but most of us won that game but a Melodious Warbler could not be seen.

Lunch and a siesta was taken at the Marakissa Riverside Lodge where a Nile Crocodile was spotted on the bank. (This is the second we have seen here despite protestations by the owner that they do not occur.)

A brief spell nearby revealed the presence of Oriole Warbler (which stopping singing the minute Dembo imitated its song) and a Grey-headed Bush-shrike which could not be located despite singing at us for 15 minutes.

The day ended with an early call-over which allowed us to make the most of Happy Hour, and a pleasant final dinner complete with Epauletted Fruit-bats and an Angolan Rousette.

Friday 15 December

Homeward Bound

Our last morning was spent walking the best trail in The Gambia: the Casino Cycle Track alongside the Kotu Stream and rice fields in Serakunda. It was a delightful stroll on which we added two species to our long Gambian list.

Thousands of Village Weavers had assembled at the start : the trees and bushes were thronging with birds and we wondered how local farmers ever took a crop of anything with so many hungry beaks around. A Black Egret was perched on a fence post close to the track and we had great views of this species – voted one of the top birds in The Gambia. Minutes later a Purple Heron was found in a mangrove bush making a good start to the walk. A flock of at least 20 Yellow-billed Shrikes was a surprise but the White-billed Buffalo-weavers were more expected.

The acacia bushes along the start of the track were where we found a Yellow-browed Warbler last year, a first for The Gambia. We searched these, more in hope, and saw lots of Beautiful Sunbirds before the first of several Chiffchaffs was found followed by a Bonelli's Warbler which did its utmost to delight us giving excellent views. One or two Subalpine warblers were also found in the bushes and an Olivaceous Warbler

was heard. Noisy Brown Babblers were common along the track and a Grey Woodpecker put in a brief appearance. A Lesser Honeyguide was seen and watched for a minute or two before it flew off.

We diverted off the pavement for a while to cross under the clothes-lines of a hand-laundry (in which two women were arguing ‘like washer-women’) and watch across a beautiful lily-pond. Several Jacanas were chasing each other around and there were the usual herons and egrets present. A large Nile Monitor was found on the bank.

Resuming our walk we tried calling up a Pearl-spotted Owlet but without success and were commenting on the absence of raptors when a Lizard Buzzard was found in a nearby palm. Once again we were able to study this species in fine detail. A pair of Shikras went past soon after proving that birds of prey like a lie-in until at least 10am.

The walk ended as it started with huge flocks of Village Weavers (several thousand) in the trees and bushes. We returned to the hotel for a shower before lunch. We left the hotel at 2.30 and although the flight was late in took off at 5.30pm, arriving at 11.30.

Footnote

We had a secret vote for the bird of the trip and most memorable event. Carmine Bee-eater beat Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Painted Snipe, Bearded Barbet, Verreaux’s Eagle-owl, Variable Sunbird, Red-throated bee-eater, Malachite Kingfisher and Scissor-tailed Kite, just.

The most memorable events included the roost of herons and egrets at Keur Saloum, visiting Bansang Quarry with its bee-eater colony, and the huge communal umbrella created by Black Egrets fishing.

My moments were the tiny shower-rooms at the Baobolong where we could sit on the loo, shower and use the wash basin all at the same time (providing the water was running), and Lamin Lodge restaurant (for the nasal singer* who ‘wore cowboy boots to die for’).

* author of The Birdwatchers’ Song which I will record in January 2008

BIRDS

	GREBES	Podicipediformes	Podicipedidae
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Seven on the Kotu ponds.
	PELICANS	Pelecaniformes	Pelecanidae
2	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	At least 20 on the Pirang shrimp ponds.
3	Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	Up to 80 recorded on 7 days.
	CORMORANTS	Pelecaniformes	Phalacrocoracidae
4	Long-tailed (Reed) Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	More than 60 at the Keur Saloum roost; up to 20 on eight other days.
	ANHINGAS	Pelecaniformes	Anhingidae
5	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	Recorded on four days, maximum eight on the Tendaba mangrove trip.
	HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNES	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
6	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 30.
7	Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Recorded on five days with 20 at Abuko nature reserve.
8	Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>	Singles at Keur Saloum on two days and one at Tendaba.
9	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Singles seen on three days.
10	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 30.
11	Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	Seen in marshes on three days. A group spread their wings to form a communal umbrella at the Keur marshes.
12	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	Seen in small numbers on eight days.
13	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Common, recorded on eight days.
14	Western Reef Heron	<i>Egretta gularis</i>	Abundant daily.
15	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a max of 30.

16	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Abundant, recorded daily up to a maximum of 300.
17	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	Common, one or two seen on seven days.
18	Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Seen on only four days with a max of six.
	HAMERKOP	Ciconiiformes	Scopidae
19	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	Common, recorded daily up to a max of 10.
	STORKS	Ciconiiformes	Ciconiidae
20	Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Recorded on four days with 8 at Tendaba.
21	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Four seen distantly at the marsh in Senegal.
22	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	Ten on the Tendaba mangrove trip, one at Pirang shrimp farm.
23	Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Six pairs nesting in a huge Baobab tree at Brikamaba, two the following day probably from the same colony.
	IBIS & SPOONBILLS	Ciconiiformes	Threskiornithidae
24	Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	One or two recorded on five days.
25	African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	Two groups - one of seven in Senegal, 11 at Tendaba.
	WILDFOWL	Anseriformes	Anatidae
26	White-faced Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	Recorded on three days: 40 at Kotu ponds, 25 in the Keur marshes, six in the Jahally rice fields.
27	Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	Seen on four days with 13 in the Jahally rice fields.
28	Comb (Knob-billed) duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	Six in the Keur marshes.
29	African Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>	Two pairs and a single bird in the Jahally rice fields.
	OSPREY	Falconiformes	Pandionidae
30	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Common, recorded on eight days.
	HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES		Falconiformes Accipitridae
31	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Quite common, 11 seen over five days.
32	Scissor-tailed Kite *	<i>Chelictinia riocourii</i>	Seen only in Senegal - six at the salt marsh.
33	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Abundant, recorded daily.
34	African Fish-eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	Just one juvenile at Janjangbureh.
35	Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
36	Hooded Vulture	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily. Those up-river were larger than the coastal birds.
37	White-backed Vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	One in Senegal, two on the way to Tendaba.
38	Rüppell's Griffon	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>	One bird in Senegal.
39	Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	One bird in Senegal.
40	Beaudouin's Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus beaudouini</i>	Nine seen over six days.
41	Brown Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	Two on the way to Tendaba.
42	(Western) Banded Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus cinerascens</i>	One on the way to Tendaba.
43	Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	Four seen up river.
44	Eurasian Marsh-harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Common, 15 seen on seven days.
45	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Five birds (so graceful) on four days.
46	African Harrier-hawk (Gymnogene)	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily with a total of 17.
47	Lizard Buzzard	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>	Six on five days.
48	Dark Chanting-goshawk	<i>Melierax metabates</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of six in a day.
49	Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	One seen poorly after watching Carmine Bee-eaters at Basse.
50	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
51	Grasshopper Buzzard	<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	Quite common, eight on five days.
52	Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	Five over four days.
53	African Hawk-eagle	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	Seven over three days around Tendaba.
54	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	One pale-phased bird on the road down from Tendaba.
55	Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	Singles on five days. One or two excellent views.
	FALCONS	Falconiformes	Falconidae
56	Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Most seen in Senegal, one on the North Bank.
57	Grey Kestrel	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily with a total of 20.
58	Red-necked Falcon	<i>Falco chicquera</i>	Surprisingly few - 10 over six days.

59	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	Common, seen almost daily.
	PARTRIDGES	Galliformes	Phasianidae
60	Double-spurred Francolin	<i>Fraulinus bicalcaratus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
61	Stone Partridge	<i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	Great views of six at the Bird Safari Park, two others seen.
	BUTTONQUAILS	Gruiformes	Turnicidae
62	Quail-plover	<i>Ortyxelos meiffrenii</i>	One flushed at Missarah, Senegal, was seen by only two of us.
	BUSTARDS	Gruiformes	Otididae
63	Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>	One at the road-side on the North Bank.
	JACANAS	Charadriiformes	Jacanidae
64	African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily in suitable habitat up to a maximum of 200.
	PAINTED-SNIPES	Charadriiformes	Rostratulidae
65	Greater Painted-snipe *	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	Six together in the rice fields at Sapu village.
	OYSTERCATCHERS	Charadriiformes	Haematopodidae
66	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	A few seen at Keur Saloum.
	AVOCETS & STILTS	Charadriiformes	Recurvirostridae
67	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
	THICK-KNEES	Charadriiformes	Burhinidae
68	Senegal Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 100 in the Keur marshes.
69	Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	One on the North Bank.
	COURSERS & PRATINCOLES	Charadriiformes	Glareolidae
70	Egyptian Plover *	<i>Pluvianus aegyptius</i>	Two at the Keur marshes, a pair at Basse. One of the star birds.
71	Temminck's Courser *	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>	Two seen in a harvested peanut field (strange, as the peanuts were not that good) on the North Bank.
72	Bronze-winged Courser *	<i>Rhinoptilus chalcopterus</i>	Wow! A real rarity: a pair at Tendaba.
73	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	Common when found: 100 at the Keur marshes, 80 in the Jahally rice fields.
	LAPWINGS & PLOVERS	Charadriiformes	Charadriidae
74	Spur-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	Abundant daily.
75	Black-headed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus tectus</i>	Good numbers seen on four days.
76	(Senegal) Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 20.
77	Grey (Black-bellied) Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	A few on the coast and at Keur Saloum.
78	Greater Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	A few on the coast and at Keur Saloum.
	SANDPIPERS	Charadriiformes	Scolopacidae
79	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Seen on only two days on the coast.
80	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Common: a few on the coast and at Tendaba.
81	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	One at Keur Saloum.
82	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 40.
83	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Two in Senegal.
84	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 20.
85	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 4.
86	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	In large numbers when found: 20 at the Kotu ponds, 25 in the Sapu rice fields.
87	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 10.
88	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Seen on only three days with a maximum of 20 at Keur Saloum.
89	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Good numbers seen on three days at Keur Saloum.
90	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	More than 80 at the Keur marshes.
91	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Two at the Keur marshes.

	SKUAS	Charadriiformes	Stercorariidae
92	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Several from the ferry to Barra.
93	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Two off the Senegambia Hotel, one from the ferry to Barra.
	GULLS	Charadriiformes	Laridae
94	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	One on the coast, 3 from the Barra ferry.
95	Grey-headed Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	Common on the coast, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 100.
96	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	two seen on the coast.
97	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	A good year for this delightful gull: 15 seen on four days.
	TERNs	Charadriiformes	Sternidae
98	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	A total of 28 on five days.
99	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Common, recorded on five days to a maximum of 20.
100	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily up to a maximum of 50.
101	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Common on the coast.
102	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>	Four seen on the coast, 10 at Pirang shrimp farm.
103	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Two on the coast.
104	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	About 20 at Pirang shrimp farm.
	SANDGROUSE	Pterocliiformes	Pteroclididae
105	Four-banded Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles quadricinctus</i>	Ten seen on five days.
	PIGEONS & DOVES	Columbiformes	Columbidae
106	Rock (Feral) Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Common in towns and villages.
107	Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily.
108	African Mourning Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>	Surprisingly few: seen on only seven days.
109	Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily.
110	Vinaceous Dove	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily.
111	Laughing (Palm) Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily.
112	Black-billed Wood-dove	<i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>	Common, seen most days.
113	Blue-spotted Wood-dove	<i>Turtur afer</i>	Less common, identified on just four days but probably overlooked.
114	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
115	Bruce's Green-pigeon	<i>Treron waalia</i>	Eight seen on three days.
116	African Green-pigeon	<i>Treroncalva</i>	More common: 12 identified over four days; overlooked.
	PARROTS	Psittaciformes	Psittacidae
117	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Abundant, numbers recorded almost daily.
118	Senegal Parrot	<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>	Common, a few recorded almost daily.
	TURACOS	Musophagiformes	Musophagidae
119	Guinea (Green-crested) Turaco	<i>Tauraco persa</i>	Two seen with neck-breaking difficulty high in trees at Abuko.
120	Violet Turaco	<i>Musophaga violacea</i>	Six in Abuko, probably overlooked.
121	Western Plantain-eater	<i>Crinifer piscator</i>	Abundant, numbers recorded almost daily.
	CUCKOOS & COUCALS	Cuculiformes	Cuculidae
122	Levaillant's Cuckoo	<i>Clamator levaillantii</i>	One juvenile being fed by Brown Babblers, two adults the next day.
123	Great spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	One on the 6th, two on the North Bank while beating for bustards.
124	Klaas' Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	Immature in Madiana Woods, two at Yundum fields.
125	Dideric Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	One at the hotel, immature at Yundum fields.
126	Senegal Coucal	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
	OWLS	Strigiformes	Strigidae
127	Northern White-faced (Scops-) Owl	<i>Ptilopsis leucotis</i>	One at the Kotu ponds.
128	Greyish Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo cinerascens</i>	Two roosting in a palm on the Farabanta bush track.
129	Verreaux's Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	One high in a Mahogany tree at Brikamaba.
130	Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	Heard commonly, one or two seen well.
	SWIFTS	Apodiformes	Apodidae

131	Mottled Spinetail	<i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>	Ten seen over five days.
132	African Palm-swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
133	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	More than 100 over the hotel at breakfast on the 5 th were followed by similar numbers of Pallid Swifts at Yundum fields. They may have been following insect-rich weather fronts.
134	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	See Common Swift above.
135	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
	KINGFISHERS	Coraciiformes	Alcedinidae
136	Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	Singles seen on three days. One on the Tendaba pirogue trip was particularly close.
137	African Pygmy-kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>	One seen brilliantly in Senegal: an uncommon sighting.
138	Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	Singles seen on two days.
139	Blue-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon malimbica</i>	Six seen over three days.
140	Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	Six seen over four days.
141	Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	Three seen over two days: only one in Abuko nature reserve.
142	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
	BEE-EATERS	Coraciiformes	Meropidae
143	Red-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops bulocki</i>	At least 150 pairs in Bansang Quarry: one of the highlights of the trip.
144	Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	A few seen most days near the coast.
145	Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>	Seen on three days.
146	White-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops albicollis</i>	Five seen at Bijilo Forest.
147	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	Two seen on the South Bank.
148	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	Common over mangrove swamps.
149	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Three flock seen up-river.
150	Northern Carmine Bee-eater	<i>Merops nubicus</i>	Nine alone at Basse were voted bird of the trip. Wonderful views.
	ROLLERS	Coraciiformes	Coraciidae
151	Abyssinian Roller	<i>Coracias abyssinica</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
152	Rufous-crowned Roller	<i>Coracias naevia</i>	Common, singles recorded almost daily.
153	Blue-bellied Roller	<i>Coracias cyanogaster</i>	Common on the coast, recorded daily.
154	Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	Common: lots roosting at the Senegambia.
	HOOPOES	Coraciiformes	Upupidae
155	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Four seen on three days.
156	African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africanus</i>	One at Pirang shrimp farm. Considered a sub-species of European Hoopoe by some.
	WOODHOOPES & SCIMITARBILLS		Coraciiformes Phoeniculidae
157	Green Woodhoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	Common, recorded in numbers almost daily.
158	Black Scimitar-bill	<i>Rhinopomastus aterrimus</i>	Five seen with difficulty on our return to the coast.
	HORNBILLS	Coraciiformes	Bucerotidae
159	Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	Common, recorded in numbers daily.
161	African Grey Hornbill	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	Common, recorded in numbers almost daily.
162	Abyssinian Ground-hornbill	<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>	A pair spotted on the way to Tendaba. Brilliant.
	BARBETS	Piciformes	Capitonidae
163	Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>	Common, recorded almost daily.
164	Vicillot's Barbet	<i>Lybius vieilloti</i>	Four seen in total.
165	Bearded Barbet *	<i>Lybius dubius</i>	Common, a few seen almost daily.
	HONEYGUIDES	Piciformes	Indicatoridae
166	Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>	Four seen in coastal woodland.
167	Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>	One seen at the Casino Cycle Track.
	WOODPECKERS	Piciformes	Picidae
168	Fine-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Campethera punctuligera</i>	Singles recorded on three days.
169	Grey Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos goertae</i>	Seen on five days; max five in Bijilo Forest.
170	Brown-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos obsoletus</i>	One seen in Tujereng Woods.

LARKS		Passeriformes	Alaudidae
171	Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>	Common, recorded in numbers almost daily up-river.
172	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	A few seen on three days.
SWALLOWS		Passeriformes	Hirundinidae
173	Sand Martin (Bank Swallow)	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	More than 70 seen on four days.
174	Red-chested Swallow	<i>Hirundo lucida</i>	Common, seen almost daily.
175	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	One at Bansang Quarry; a few daily afterwards.
176	Pied-winged Swallow	<i>Hirundo leucosoma</i>	Surprisingly few: seven seen over three days.
177	Mosque Swallow	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	Ten seen over three days up-river.
178	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	A few daily up-river.
179	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Seen on three days: hundreds at Keur Saloum.
180	Fanti Sawwing	<i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i>	Two seen really well at Abuko nature reserve.
WAGTAILS & PIPITS		Passeriformes	Motacillidae
181	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Four seen on three days up-river.
182	African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	A pair seen in Soma were the first for this trip ever.
183	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Lots around cattle in fields up-river.
184	Plain-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>	Two at Pirang shrimp farm.
185	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	One in Senegal was an uncommon species for this trip.
BULBULS		Passeriformes	Pycnonotidae
186	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	Abundant, recorded in numbers daily.
187	Yellow-throated Greenbul (Leaflove)	<i>Chlorocichla flavicollis</i>	Seen in trees over our heads at Baobolong Camp each breakfast.
THRUSHES		Passeriformes	Turdidae
188	African Thrush	<i>Turdus pelios</i>	Common in the grounds of the Senegambia Hotel.
CISTICOLAS & ALLIES		Passeriformes	Cisticolidae
189	Singing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cantans</i>	One at Yundum fields.
190	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Two at Yundum fields.
191	Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	Common, seen almost daily.
192	Red-winged Prinia (Warbler)	<i>Prinia erythroptera</i>	Tow in Yundum fields.
193	Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flavida</i>	Two in Abuko nature reserve.
194	Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>	Three singles seen on three days.
OLD WORLD WARBLERS		Passeriformes	Sylviidae
195	Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>	Common winter visitor, one/two most days.
196	Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	Three recorded on three days.
197	Senegal (Green-backed) Eremomela	<i>Eremomela pusilla</i>	Ten recorded on five days.
198	Northern Crombec	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>	Singles seen on two days up-river.
199	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybeta</i>	A few seen on three days.
200	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	One at the Casino Cycle Track.
201	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	One at Jahally rice fields.
202	Greater Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	One in Bijilo Forest.
203	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	Several seen on three days. Illusive.
OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS		Passeriformes	Muscicapidae
204	Northern Black-flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>	Six seen over five days.
205	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	One just after leaving Janjangbureh.
206	White-crowned Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha albicapilla</i>	Common at the Senegambia Hotel; a few elsewhere.
207	African scrub-robin (Bush-Chat)	<i>Cercotrichas minor</i>	One west of Janjangbureh. Considered to be a race of Rufous Bush-chat by some.
208	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	One or two found wintering.
209	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	One at Yundum fields.
210	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	One or two found wintering.
211	Northern Anteater-chat	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>	One on the North Bank, a pair with the Temminck's Coursers..
212	White-fronted Black-chat	<i>Myrmecocichla albifrons</i>	One on the Tendaba – Coast road.

	WATTLE-EYES	Passeriformes	Platysteiridae
213	Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>	Five at Abuko nature reserve, one at Tendaba.
214	Senegal Batis	<i>Batis senegalensis</i>	One in Kiang National Park,
	MONARCH FLYCATCHERS	Passeriformes	Monarchidae
215	African Blue-flycatcher	<i>Elminia longicauda</i>	One or two seen briefly on the Tendaba mangrove trip.
216	Black-headed (Red-bellied) Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i>	Two at Abuko nature reserve; one at Marakissa Forest.
	BABLERS	Passeriformes	Timaliidae
217	Blackcap Babbler	<i>Turdoides reinwardtii</i>	Four at Bijilo Forest.
218	Brown Babbler	<i>Turdoides plebejus</i>	Common; a party or two seen and heard most days (unlike Victorian children).
	TITS & CHICKADEES	Passeriformes	Paridae
219	White-shouldered Black-tit	<i>Parus guineensis</i>	One in Tujereng Woods; a pair in Kiang National Park.
	SUNBIRDS	Passeriformes	Nectariniidae
220	Mouse-brown Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes gabonicus</i>	Eight on the Tendaba mangrove trip.
221	Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	A female in Tujereng Woods.
222	Pygmy Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna platura</i>	Four at Tendaba.
223	Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	Four seen on three days.
224	Beautiful Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>	Common a few seen most days.
225	Variable (Yellow-bellied) Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>	About 14 seen on five days.
	WHITE-EYES	Passeriformes	Zosteropidae
226	African Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	Two in Yundum fields.
	ORIOLES	Passeriformes	Oriolidae
227	African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>	Surprisingly few: two on the road from Tendaba.
	SHRIKES	Passeriformes	Laniidae
228	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Twelve seen over six days.
229	Yellow-billed (Long-tailed) Shrike	<i>Corvinella corvina</i>	Common: seen on eight days with a maximum of 40 on our last morning.
	BUSHSHRIKES & ALLIES	Passeriformes	Malaconotidae
230	Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	Singles seen up-river on two days.
231	Northern Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>	Female at the Bird Safari Camp; five in Marakissa Forest.
232	Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>	Surprisingly difficult to see this year: recorded on five days.
233	Yellow-crowned Gonolek	<i>Laniarius barbarus</i>	Common: heard and seen most days.
234	Grey-headed Bushshrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	One seen at the Bird Safari Camp; one heard at Marakissa bridge.
	DRONGOS	Passeriformes	Dicruridae
235	Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	About 25 over five days.
	CORVIDS (including JAYS)	Passeriformes	Corvidae
236	Piapiac	<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	Abundant at inland coastal sites.
237	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Abundant except up-river.
	STARLINGS	Passeriformes	Sturnidae
238	Greater blue-eared Glossy-Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>	Recorded on five days.
239	Lesser Blue-eared Glossy-Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chloropterus</i>	Recorded on five days.
240	Bronze-tailed Glossy-starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalcurus</i>	Singles at the Senegambia Hotel and on the road from Tendaba.
241	Purple Glossy-starling	<i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i>	Common, a few seen most days.
242	Long-tailed Glossy-starling	<i>Lamprotornis caudatus</i>	Abundant daily.
243	Chestnut-bellied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis pulcher</i>	Seen only in Senegal and on the western North Bank.
244	Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>	A few seen on cattle over five days.
	OLD WORLD SPARROWS	Passeriformes	Passeridae

245	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Not so common, a few around the hotel and in the occasional village.
246	Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer griseus</i>	Common, lots seen most days.
247	Sudan golden-sparrow	<i>Passer luteus</i>	Several females and a male seen at a North Bank water-hole.
248	Bush Petronia	<i>Petronia dentata</i>	Common up-river, seen on six days.
	WEAVERS & ALLIES	Passeriformes	Ploceidae
249	White-billed Buffalo-weaver	<i>Bubalornis albirostris</i>	Abundant daily, huge nests seen commonly.
250	Little Weaver	<i>Ploceus luteolus</i>	Seen on four days, three of those in Senegal.
251	Black-necked Weaver	<i>Ploceus nigricollis</i>	Two in Abuko nature reserve.
252	Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	Super abundant, nearly 10,000 on the last morning alone.
253	Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Scores seen far up-river.
254	Yellow-crowned Bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>	Many seen roosting in the Janjangbureh rice fields.
255	Orange (Northern Red) Bishop	<i>Euplectes franciscanus</i>	Common, seen in numbers on seven days.
	WAXBILLS & ALLIES	Passeriformes	Estrildidae
256	Bar-breasted Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rufopicta</i>	One drinking at the bridge in Basse was a first for this trip ever.
257	Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	Common, seen on seven days.
258	Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	Common, seen almost daily.
259	Lavender Waxbill	<i>Estrilda caerulescens</i>	Seen in Brufut Woods and Bird Safari Camp in small flocks; one at the Senegambia Hotel.
260	Orange-cheeked Waxbill	<i>Estrilda melpoda</i>	Six in Brufut Woods.
261	Black-rumped Waxbill	<i>Estrilda troglodytes</i>	Common in big flocks high up-river.
262	African Quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	A few seen briefly when flushed at Basse rice fields.
263	African Silverbill	<i>Lonchura cantans</i>	Five in a flock of mixed waxbills in Senegal.
264	Bronze Mannikin	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	Common, seen in numbers on seven days.
265	Cut-throat	<i>Amadina fasciata</i>	Uncommon, but three flocks amounting to 17 birds over three days.
266	Village Indigobird	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>	Seen on seven days, mostly up-river.
267	Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Ten seen in Yundum fields.
268	Long-tailed (Exclamatory) Paradise-whydah	<i>Vidua interjecta</i>	More than 20 at Bansang quarry.
269	Northern (Sahel) Paradise-whydah	<i>Vidua orientalis</i>	Three males seen along the North Bank.
	FINCHES	Passeriformes	Fringillidae
270	Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	Common, seen on nine days.
	TRUE BUNTINGS, SEEDEATERS & ALLIES		Passeriformes Emberizidae
271	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	Two at a pool on the North Bank; six drinking in Bansang quarry.

MAMMALS

	RABBITS & HARES	Lagomorpha	Leporidae
1	African Savannah Hare	<i>Lepus victoriae</i>	Singles on the North Bank 'Rock Partridge stop' and at Marakissa.
	SQUIRRELS	Rodentia	Scuridae
2	Striped (Geoffroy's) Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus erythropus</i>	Nine seen over six days.
3	Gambian Sun Squirrel	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>	Nine seen on three days, six at Marakissa.
	MICE, RATS, VOLES & GERBILS	Rodentia	Muridae
4	Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	One at the Senegambia Hotel.
	MONGOUSES	Carnivora	Herpestidae

5	Marsh Mongoose	<i>Atilax paludinosus</i>	One watched for some time on the mud at Keur Saloum; one swimming across the Pygmy Goose pond at Jahally rice fields.
6	Gambian Mongoose	<i>Mungos gambianus</i>	One seen briefly at Marakissa.
OLD WORLD FRUIT BATS Chiroptera			Pteropodidae
7	Angolan Rousette	<i>Rousettus angolensis</i>	A large fruit-bat seen on dusk each evening at the Senegambia Hotel.
8	Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat	<i>Epomophorus gambianus</i>	Three or four nightly at the Senegambia Hotel; one or two drinking from the swimming pool at Keur Saloum each evening.
OLD WORLD MONKEYS Primates			Cercopithecidae
9	Western Red Colobus	<i>Colobus badius</i>	Two troops seen, in Madiana Woods and Abuko nature reserve.
10	Guinea (Dog-faced) Baboon	<i>Papio hamadryas</i>	Two troops, one with about 80 animals, seen on the South Bank on our way to Tendaba.
11	Green Vervet (Savannah) Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>	Common, seen on 12 days in troops of up to 10 animals.
12	Red Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	A good year for this animal which was seen on five days with the biggest troop of 20 animals on the way to Tendaba.
HYRAXES Hyracoidea			
13	Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	One seen at a water-hole in Senegal.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

1	African (Square-marked) Toad	<i>Bufo regularis</i>	Common at the Hotel Senegambia and a few at Baobolong Camp.
2	African Bullfrog	<i>Rana occipitalis</i>	Common at the Hotel Senegambia.
3	Frog sp		Two at Baobolong Camp, one in a bathroom.
4	Yellow-headed Agama	<i>Agama agama</i>	Common daily but none in breeding attire.
5	Brook's House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus brooki angulatus</i>	A gecko probably of this species seen inside rooms at the Baobolong Camp and on another five days.
6	Skink sp		Three seen on at least two days.
7	Nile Monitor Lizard	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	Common daily. Some huge specimens seen.
8	Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	One at Marakissa River Camp; three at Abuko nature reserve.
9	West African House Snake (also suggested: Black Mamba)	<i>Boaedon virgatum</i>	A huge specimen, about 7ft long, at the 'raptor bridge' on the South Bank, now renamed 'snake bridge'.

Other Taxa

FISH

1	Mud skipper sp	Seen commonly on mangrove mud banks throughout the trip.
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CRABS

1	Fiddler crab	Common in mangrove swamps; millions on the beach at Kaur Saloum.
2	Swimming crab	Lots of these were being caught by boys from piers.

DAMSELFLIES

1	'Helicopter' damselfly	Seen commonly daily.
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FLUTS

The following butterflies were recorded:

1	African monarch	<i>Danus chrysippus</i>	
2	African veined white	<i>Belenois gidica</i>	
3	African white	<i>Belenois creona</i>	(Huge numbers when we first arrived)
4	Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	
5	Tiny orange-tip	<i>Colotis evagore</i>	
6	Small grass yellow	<i>Eurema brigitta</i>	

7	Dark blue pansy	Junonia oenone
8	Guinea-fowl	Hamanumida daedalus
9	White lady swallowtail	Graphium angolanus
10	Pea Blue	Lampides boeticus
11	Citrus swallowtail	Papilio demodocus
12	Painted lady	Vanessa cardui

Tim Earl, Guernsey, December 2006

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