

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

THE GAMBIA

13th - 29th October 2018

TOUR REPORT

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GROUP MEMBER: Michael Doyle.

The Gambia, Africa's Jewel in the Sun, has without a doubt the friendliest people in the world, plus a whole host of colourful, tropical birds, and at this time of year, a good sprinkling of wintering migrants from the the Western Palearctic. Put all of this together and you have a recipe for a tremendous birding tour, and that's exactly what we had. Highlights of the tour were many and varied, however, the greatest highlight of the tour has to be the group of half a dozen Egyptian Plovers, at the quayside, along the Gambia River at Basse. Other highlights included five species of owls, all observed at their daytime roosts, all 5 species of bee-eaters that occur in the Gambia, which included the spectacular Northern Carmine Bee-eater. We saw the very uncommon White-backed Night-Heron on two separate occasions, enjoyed good looks at the rarely observed Dwarf Bittern, and enjoyed very good looks at the normally difficult to observe, Stone Partridge. A Spotted Honeyguide was much appreciated, as were both the Fine-spotted and Brown-backed Woodpeckers, which we saw in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal. A particularly obliging Sun Lark was greatly admired, a Yellow-bellied Hyliota, a rarely observed species was much appreciated, as was the uncommon White-rumped Seedeater, and we also enjoyed observing a Western Bluebill in the Abuko Nature Reserve. We were also pleased to observe a sprinkling of migrants from the Western Palearctic, which included the very uncommon Eurasian Wryneck. Vagrants always add interest to any tour, and the Pectoral Sandpiper, an American species, which we observed at the Saloum Delta in Senegal, was a real treat, and a life bird for our wonderful local guide, Yaya.

Following a series of long and tiring flights from Australia, we arrived at Banjul, the capital city of the Gambia, in the middle of the night. Following some all too brief sleep, we began the tour with some birding in the grounds of our hotel in Banjul. Here we saw large numbers of resident Yellow-billed Kites, gorgeous Speckled Pigeons, good numbers of Red-eyed Doves, several Laughing Doves, the ever present Western Grey Plantain-eater, the range restricted Western Red-billed Hornbill, African Grey Hornbill, Common Bulbul, the stunning White-crowned Robin-Chat, the delightful Beautiful Sunbird, Pied Crow, both Greater Blue-eared and Long-tailed Glossy Starlings, and a small flock of Bronze Mannikins. While driving through Banjul, on our way to the Kotu bridge, we added Feral Pigeon, Broad-billed Roller and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. From the bridge at Kotu, we were able to observe a good variety of wetland birds, plus a few forest species as well. New birds for the tour included Long-tailed Cormorant, Squacco Heron, Western Cattle Egret, many superb Western Reef-Egrets, Great Egret, Grey Heron, Hamerkop, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Hooded Vulture, Senegal Thick-knee, Grey Plover, African Wattled and Spur-winged Lapwings, Whimbrel, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Common Sandpiper,

Royal, Lesser Crested, Sandwich and Common Terns, African Mourning and Vinaceous Doves, Senegal Coucal, African Palm-Swift, Woodland, Giant and Pied Kingfishers, Little Bee-eater, the simply stunning Blue-bellied Roller, Fanti Saw-wing, Wire-tailed Swallow, Northern Crombec, the splendid Oriole Warbler, the equally splendid Yellow-crowned Gonolek, White-billed Buffalo-Weaver, Village Weaver and Red-billed Firefinch.

Following lunch and a brief siesta, we drove to Brufut Woods. Here we took a seat close to some plastic containers, which are permanently full of water, in order to attract birds, large numbers of birds came into drink from the water troughs. We enjoyed splendid, close looks at Black-billed Wood-Dove, Didric Cuckoo, the jewel-like African Pygmy Kingfisher, the uncommon Yellow-throated Leaflove, African Thrush, both Brown and Blackcap Babblers, Variable Sunbird, Black-necked Weaver, the uncommon Lavender Waxbill and the stunningly beautiful Red-cheeked Cordonbleu. Best of all, was the very uncommon Spotted Honeyguide, which showed very well indeed. A walk along the main track and along some smaller side trails, produced Palm-nut Vulture, African Harrier-Hawk, Shikra, Long-crested Eagle, Lanner Falcon, Stone Partridge, Klaas's Cuckoo, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Singing Cisticola, Senegal Eremomela, the well named Splendid Sunbird, and we enjoyed our only sighting of the Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike, as well as Fork-tailed Drongo, Lesser Blue-eared Starling, Northern Red Bishop, Village Indigobird and Pin-tailed Whydah. We also observed our first mammal of the tour today, a troop of Green Monkeys were present in the grounds of our hotel at Banjul.

Farasuto Forest was our morning's destination the following day, and once again, we were immediately immersed in birds. New birds here included Striated Heron, Gabar Goshawk, Grey Kestrel, Double-spurred Francolin, Senegal Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, a stunningly beautiful Violet Turaco, Malachite Kingfisher, Rufous-crowned Roller, Green Wood-Hoopoe, Little Greenbul, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Common Redstart, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Cameroptera, Common Chiffchaff, Northern Black and Pied Flycatchers, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Common Wattle-eye, Black-crowned Tchagra, Little Weaver, Black-winged Red-Bishop and Black-rumped Waxbill.

Following a siesta, during the hottest part of the day, we then paid a visit to Marakissa Woods. New birds here included Pink-backed Pelican, the seldom observed Dwarf Bittern, which we saw very well indeed, Little Egret, Black Crane, Little Swift, Yellow-billed Shrike, Piapiac and the attractive Orange-cheeked Waxbill. We also observed three separate species of owls at their daytime roosts, they were the diminutive African Scops-Owl, the Northern White-faced Owl and the attractive Pearl-spotted Owlet. While driving back to our hotel, we observed a Black-headed Heron, in flight.

Our first destination the following day was the nearby Tanji fishing village, where we enjoyed a leisurely walk along the beach. New birds here included Great White Pelican, one or two migratory Black Kites, and large numbers of gulls, which included Grey-headed, Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed. There were also good numbers of Caspian and Littler Terns. Our next destination was Batokunku, where we birded a patch of woodland, we were pleased to find three new birds for the tour, the attractive Dark Chanting Goshawk, a dark-morph Wahlberg's Eagle and Yellow-fronted Canary. Before lunch, we visited a sandy spit, and a small wetland at Kartong. Here we found Western Osprey, African Jacana, Black-winged Stilt, Sanderling, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Slender-billed Gull, Plain-backed Pipit, Black-headed Weaver and Yellow-crowned Bishop.

Following a short siesta, our late afternoon destination was Tujereng which has a reputation of producing a steady stream of interesting birds. Unfortunately, this area is now being developed, for

small scale farming, however, it did not disappoint us. We added five new birds to our ever growing list, all were uncommon birds, which we were very pleased to find. A pair of White-fronted Black-Chats showed incredibly well, a Melodious Warbler also performed well for us, we saw a beautiful male Scarlet-chested Sunbird and the uncommon Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver. However, our best sighting was of a Eurasian Wryneck, a very uncommon migrant to Africa. We also observed a Gambian Mongoose run across the road, just in front of our vehicle.

The following morning we visited the Abuko Nature Reserve, and followed the nature trail through the dense forest. We were well rewarded for our effort, new birds included Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Grey Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher, Copper Sunbird, Purple Glossy Starling and best of all, a delightful pair of Western Bluebills. We also saw a troop of Western Red Colobus and a Gambian Sun Squirrel, while birding in the reserve. In the afternoon we made a visit to the Banjul Sewage Farm, here we found a pair of Little Grebes, a single Black Tern and good numbers of Red-chested Swallows. We then continued on to the nearby Banjul Golf course, where a Red-necked Falcon flew within a few metres of us. Our last area for the day was Kotu Bridge, where we added Common Ringed Plover and Marsh Sandpiper.

We spent the following morning searching for a Marsh Owl, which had been reported by one of the local bird guides, at Ma Kharafi Farm, at Kuluro. Try as we may, we failed to find any sign of the Marsh Owl, however, we did find other new birds for the tour, which included Common Kestrel, Western Marsh-Harrier, Namaqua Dove, Whinchat, Siffling and Zitting Cisticolas and African Golden Oriole.

In the afternoon we visited the Pirang Shrimp Farm, a huge area of ponds with varying amounts of water in them, ideal habitat for all kinds of wetland birds. We enjoyed a wonderful afternoon's birding, new birds for the tour included Black Heron, Intermediate Egret, Yellow-billed Stork, a small flock of Lesser Flamingos, a huge flock of Pied Avocets, Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Gull-billed Tern, Bearded Barbet, Crested Lark, West African Swallow, Western Yellow Wagtail, Northern Wheatear and Quailfinch. We spent the latter part of the afternoon at the plastic water troughs, in Brufut Woods, where we were rewarded with great looks at a Greater Honeyguide and a Cardinal Woodpecker. On the drive back to our hotel, as we were driving through Banjul, we saw a small flock of House Sparrows along the roadside.

The following morning we set off for a short sojourn into neighbouring Senegal. Before entering Senegal we had to take a ferry across the mouth of the Gambia River. It was quite a hassle, mainly because we bribed the wrong person! However, we eventually got onto the ferry and during the crossing we enjoyed wonderful looks at both Pomarine and Arctic Skuas. Once we had crossed the river we had a short drive to the border crossing with Senegal, and en-route we added a Northern Anteater Chat, close to the village of Kerr Jatta, in the Gambia. Following formalities at the border crossing, we drove to our superb hotel and enjoyed a very fine lunch.

In the afternoon we enjoyed a splendid game and birding drive in the nearby Fathala Game Park. New birds for the tour came thick and fast, an African Hawk-Eagle perched out in the open in a bare tree, we found a family party of Black-headed Lapwings, a Striped Kingfisher performed well for us, we observed several delightful Abyssinian Rollers, we saw a small family party of Black Scimitar-bills, a fine looking Vieillot's Barbet perched out in the open for us, we saw two species of uncommon woodpeckers, the Fine-spotted and the smaller Brown-backed Woodpecker, we were very pleased to see the uncommon Yellow-bellied Hyliota, a diminutive Brubru responded well to

tape playback, we saw a good number of Yellow-billed Oxpeckers attending Roan Antelope, and last but not least, a Bush Petronia. We also enjoyed a family party of Common Warthogs.

We spent the whole of the following day birding in the bird-filled Saloum Delta, one of the finest birding areas in Senegal. New birds in this area included African Darter, a large flock of Greater Flamingos, half a dozen Northern Shovelers, a delightful Kittlitz's Plover, a single Ruff, a couple of Sun Larks, several Vitelline Masked Weavers, a huge flock of Red-billed Queleas and we enjoyed watching a single White-rumped Seedeater. However, the most surprising find of the day was a Pectoral Sandpiper, feeding amongst a large flock of Curlew Sandpipers. The Pectoral Sandpiper, an American species, is a rare vagrant, anywhere in Africa. We also saw a few Patas Monkeys today, in roadside vegetation.

In the afternoon we enjoyed a boat trip on the Saloum Delta, new birds included a couple of Purple Herons, a small flock of Eurasian Oystercatchers and a couple of Mouse Brown Sunbirds.

The following morning we bid farewell to the Saloum Delta, and began the drive back to the Gambia. A little roadside birding before we reached the border, produced good looks at both African Green and Bruce's Green-Pigeons. Once we had crossed back into the Gambia, we did some birding close to Berending, and were rewarded with good looks at a perched Lizard Buzzard, as a Mottled Spinetail flew overhead. Our next birding stop was at Karan Taba Tenda, where we observed a very close African Cuckoo, devouring a large green caterpillar, the rather splendid Blue-cheeked Bee-eater showed very well for us, and we also enjoyed good looks at a Lesser Honeyguide. We then made a quick stop at the Kerewan Wetlands, and here we watched a small flock of Sacred Ibis, and while doing so, a fine Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle flew overhead. Our next birding stop was at N'gain Sangal. Here we found a perched Grasshopper Buzzard, a Little Green Bee-eater, a very fine Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill and the range restricted Exclamatory Paradise-Whydah. A quick stop at the Kaur Wetlands produced large numbers of Collared Pratincoles, which unfortunately, had already moulted into non-breeding plumage. Our final birding stop for the day was at Wasso, where we found huge numbers of Red-throated Bee-eaters, several White-throated Bee-eaters and a single Northern Carmine Bee-eater. Our last new bird of the day was a splendid Mosque Swallow, perched on telegraph wires. We also added one new mammal today, the Striped Ground Squirrel.

The following morning we enjoyed a boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown, the former capital of the Gambia, during colonial times. New birds included a single Black-crowned Night-Heron, a few Hadada Ibis, a few Spur-winged Geese, a very fine African Fish-Eagle, a beautiful Grey-headed Kingfisher and the rather drab Swamp Flycatcher. In the afternoon we did some birding around Georgetown, the only new bird for the tour was a pair of splendid Four-banded Sandgrouse. We also enjoyed good looks at the Guinea Baboon, during the morning boat trip.

The following morning we were up early and out on the road heading for Basse, where we soon found our main quarry, the simply stunning Egyptian Plover. A flock of six of these birds were feeding along the edge of the Gambia River and were totally unafraid of our presence, it was undoubtedly the bird of the tour and was voted so, by the tour participants. In the afternoon we did some birding at the Tendaba airfield, where we enjoyed two very good new birds, a fine Ovambo Sparrowhawk flew overhead, and a solitary Levillant's Cuckoo perched in a nearby tree. We rounded off the day with a spot of birding along the Battling Track, where we added the very impressive Martial Eagle.

The following morning we enjoyed a splendid boat trip along the Gambia River at Tendaba. New

birds included White-breasted Cormorant, Goliath Heron, Woolly-necked Stork, Peregrine Falcon and European Bee-eater. In the afternoon we did some more birding along the Battling Track and we were rewarded with super looks at the very uncommon Brown-rumped Bunting. Our final birding spot for the day was the Kiang West National Park, where tsetse flies rather got the better of us, but not before we added a beautiful Senegal Batis and a brightly coloured Yellow White-eye to our ever growing trip list. Here we also saw a couple of Scrub Hares and after dark a Senegal Galago, ran directly in front of our vehicle, just a few metres ahead of us.

The following morning we set off for the long drive back to Banjul. We came to a screaming halt close to the village of Joreng, where a small group of African White-backed Vultures were flying overhead, and on closer inspection, there were also a pair of Lappet-faced Vultures flying with them. Before reaching Banjul, we did some birding in the Farasuto Forest where we added three splendid birds to the trip list. We saw a Guinea Turaco, and a pair of Greyish Eagle-Owls and an African Wood-Owl at their day-time roosts. In the afternoon we re-visited the Abuko Nature Reserve, where we added two shy and seldom seen species, the Ahanta Francolin and the Grey-headed Bristlebill.

Our final morning of the tour was spent birding at Tujereng, where we added three new species of birds, a Whistling Cisticola, a Red-winged Warbler and a Willow Warbler. In the afternoon we paid a second visit to the Banjul Sewage Farm, where the final two new birds for the tour were a single Green Sandpiper and a single Wood Sandpiper.

We had enjoyed a super tour to the Gambia, plus a couple of days in Senegal, the people of Gambia must be the friendliest people on earth. We had seen a large number of birds, as well as some very fine mammals. The tour had gone exactly as planned, without any major set backs, and this was all due to the very fine leadership of our very accommodating local guide Yaya Barry, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

GREBES

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Small numbers present, during both visits to Banjul Sewage Farm.

PELICANS

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Good numbers observed at a few of the wetlands we visited.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* This species was far more common than the previous species, it was particularly common along the coast.

CORMORANTS

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* We found a very large breeding colony of this species, during the Tendaba boat trip.

Long-tailed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus* Small numbers present at all the wetlands we visited.

DARTERS

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* Small numbers observed, at a few of the wetlands we visited.

HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNs

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Observed on almost every day of the tour.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* Once again, observed on almost every day of the tour.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* A single bird was observed well on one occasion, during the Tendaba boat trip.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Small numbers observed in both the Gambia and Senegal.

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

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* A single bird was observed well at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and then a few birds were observed in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* The scarcest egret, with single birds present, at a few of the wetlands we visited.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Small numbers present, at most of the wetlands we visited.

Western Reef-Egret *Egretta gularis* Common in any mangrove or coastal wetland habitat and recorded almost daily, in small numbers.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* This species also proved to be common, with small numbers recorded, at most of the wetlands we visited.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A common species which we saw on almost a daily basis, it was particularly common in farmland.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A fairly common resident, which we saw well on several occasions, throughout the tour.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* We saw a beautiful adult bird, during the boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown.

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* We observed this uncommon species, on two separate occasions. The first sighting, of a single bird, took place in Farasuto Forest, and this was followed by a second sighting, during the Tendaba boat trip.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii* We were very pleased to observe this uncommon intra-African migrant at Marakissa Woods. Where a juvenile bird, who had not yet learned to avoid humans, was observed very well, walking along the edge of a large river.

HAMERKOP

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Small numbers observed, on most days of the tour.

STORKS

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* We enjoyed a few good sightings throughout the tour.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* An uncommon species in this part of the world, we observed a single bird very well during the Tendaba boat trip.

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* We saw a few birds at Kerewan Wetlands, and then we saw a few more during the Tendaba boat trip.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* A few birds observed during the boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown, and a few more, on the Tendaba boat trip.

FLAMINGOS

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* We noted a flock of 50 or so birds, on one occasion, while birding in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus nain* We observed a single flock of a dozen or so birds, in the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Small numbers recorded, at several of the wetlands we visited.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* A few birds observed during the boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown, and a few more, on the Tendaba boat trip.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a small flock of half a dozen or so birds, at the Saloum Delta in Senegal.

OSPREYS

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Common along the coast with birds seen regularly ferrying fish overhead.

KITES, HAWKS AND EAGLES

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed it well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* The resident species of Black Kite in Africa. It was an abundant species, which we saw on every day of the tour.

African Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* Small numbers observed along the larger rivers, in the Gambia.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* This is a common resident in West Africa, we saw it very well on several occasions.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* The common vulture of West Africa, we observed good numbers, on every day of the tour.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* While driving close to the village of Joreng, we noticed a flock of vultures flying overhead. On closer inspection, we found it to be a flock of six of this species, and two of the following species.

- Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos* We were very fortunate while driving close to the village of Joreng, to observe a flock of vultures flying overhead. On closer inspection, we found it to be a flock of six White-backed Vultures, and a pair of Lappet-faced Vultures. This species is classified as 'Endangered' by Birdlife International. It is estimated that there are approximately 5,700 individuals, and unfortunately declining. The main threats to this species are deliberate poisoning by humans, local extinctions of wild ungulates through habitat modification, and over-hunting.
- Beaudouin's Snake Eagle** *Circaetus beaudouini* We enjoyed super looks at a single adult soaring overhead at the Kerewan Wetlands, and then we saw a second bird, also soaring overhead, in Kiang West National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. It is estimated that there are between 2,500 and 10,000 individuals, and it is unfortunately, declining. Over the past 30 years West African raptors have declined owing to a number of threats associated with a three-fold increase in the human population within the region. The main threat to this species is destruction of habitat, due to agricultural intensification, overgrazing, deforestation, and desertification. **M. Beaudouin** was a professional collector employed by Verreaux. Around 1862 he was collecting in Portuguese Guinea, now known as Guinea-Bissau.
- Western Marsh-Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, we observed several birds very well, at scattered locations throughout the tour.
- African Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides typus* This African endemic is more common in West Africa, than elsewhere in Africa. We observed this species on almost a daily basis.
- Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* While driving close to the village of Berending, we observed a single bird very well, perched on overhead wires.
- Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* Small numbers observed, on almost every day of the tour.
- Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* Single birds were observed in flight in the Farasuto Forest and at Karan Taba Tenda.
- Shikra** *Epervier shikra* By far the commonest *accipiter* in this part of the world, which we saw very well on several occasions.
- Ovambo Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter ovampensis* We were very fortunate to observed an immature of this rare bird, in flight, at the Tendaba airfield.
- Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis* Observed very well sat in a tree along the roadside, at N'gain Sangal. We also had a second sighting, of a bird in flight, during the Tendaba boat trip.
- Wahlberg's Eagle** *hieraaetus wahlbergi* We enjoyed a few good sightings throughout the tour. **Johan August Wahlberg** (1810-1856) was a Swedish naturalist and collector. He travelled and collected widely in southern Africa between 1838 and 1856, sending thousands of specimens home to Sweden. He was exploring the headwaters of the Limpopo River, when like Prince Eugenio Ruspoli, he was killed by a wounded elephant.
- African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster* This uncommon species was observed very well, perched in a nearby tree, in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal. We also enjoyed a second sighting, also of a perched bird, in the Farasuto Forest, in Gambia.
- Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* We enjoyed super looks at this uncommon and very large species, as it perched in a tree along the Battleing Track. We found a second bird, also perched in a large tree in the Farasuto Forest. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. The population is unknown, but unfortunately, it is thought to be declining. The main threats to this species are shooting and trapping by farmers, and indirect poisoning, from eating carcasses of animals, that have been deliberately poisoned by farmers.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* We enjoyed several very good sightings of this attractive species, at scattered locations throughout the tour.

CARACARS AND FALCONS

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A single bird was observed very well, flying over farmland, at the Ma Kharafi Farm at Kuluro. This bird was probably a non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus* We enjoyed several very good looks at scattered locations throughout the tour.

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera* An adult bird flew past us at breakneck speed, while we were birding on the Banjul golf course. We saw a second bird perched in a nearby tree, at Tendaba airfield.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* Only observed on the first day of the tour, when an adult bird flew directly above our heads, while we were walking along a track, in Brufut Woods at Banjul.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* A superb adult bird was observed perched in mangroves, during the Tendaba boat trip.

PARTRIDGES AND PHEASANTS

Ahanta Francolin *Pternistis achantensis* We had really good close looks at a single individual, in the Abuko Nature Reserve, in Banjul.

Double-spurred Francolin *Pternistis bicalcaratus* Seen very well on many occasions throughout the tour.

Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus* Observed very well, on three separate occasions, at scattered locations throughout the tour.

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS

Black Crane *Amaurornis flavirostra* A single individual was observed very well on one occasion, walking along the edge of a small wetland in Marakissa Woods.

JANCANAS

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

OYSTERCATCHERS

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, three individuals were observed during the boat trip on the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

STILTS AND AVOCETS

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Regularly encountered, in all wetland areas.

THICK-KNEES

Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis* Observed on almost every day of the tour.

COURSERS AND PRATINCOLES

Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius* This magnificent species was voted 'Bird of the Tour' by tour participants. We saw half a dozen birds along the edge of the Gambia River, at Basse.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* We observed a very large flock, of up to 100 birds, which were moulting into non-breeding plumage, at the Karr Wetlands. Many were perched on the ground and others were flying all around us.

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* An abundant resident of wetland areas, which we saw on every day of the tour.

Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus* Small numbers observed on a few occasions.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* Observed well, in small numbers, on most days of the tour.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we saw small numbers, at scattered locations along the coast.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* This species is also a non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, once again we observed small numbers, at scattered locations along the coast.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* This species is an uncommon non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed two birds at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius dubius* We observed an adult of this attractive species, on one occasion, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal. **Friedrich Heninrich Freiherr von Kittlitz** (1799-1874) was a Polish-born German artist, naval officer, explorer and ornithologist. He was a friend of Edward Ruppell, who encouraged his interest in natural history and he went with him to North Africa in 1831. Although he was not responsible for either collecting or describing this plover, his illustrations made from specimens that he shot in Egypt, established the link between them.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we saw a flock of 20 or so birds at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and this was followed by a flock of 12 birds in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed up to 20 birds at Kartong, on the coast.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed small numbers on most days of the tour.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed small numbers at various wetland sites, throughout the tour.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird, on the last day of the tour, at the Banjul Sewage Farm.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed small numbers at all the wetland areas we visited.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird at Kotu, in Banjul and then saw half a dozen or so, at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird, on the last day of the tour, at the Banjul Sewage Farm.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we saw small numbers at scattered locations along the coast.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, a single bird was observed along the coast at Kartong.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, a flock of half a dozen birds, were observed well, at Kartong.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a few birds at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and this was followed by the sighting of up to 200 birds, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, this species is a very rare vagrant to Africa. It breeds in North America, and winters mainly on the Pampas, in Argentina. We saw a single bird very well in the scope, amongst a huge flock of waders, in the Saloum Delta, of Senegal.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we saw a flock of 20 or so at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and this was followed by flocks of hundreds in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a flock of a dozen or so birds, in brilliant breeding plumage, at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird, at very close quarters, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

GULLS

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed small numbers, at a number of coastal wetlands, throughout the tour.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, a few were noted amongst the Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Tanji.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* An abundant breeding resident, we observed large numbers at all the coastal areas we visited.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* Commonly encountered along the coast, with many in breeding plumage with shiny black bills and pink-washed underparts. It is a non-breeding visitor to Gambia, but breeds in good numbers in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

TERNs

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* A few were observed close inshore, at Tanji, and we also enjoyed good close looks at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Small numbers present, at several locations along the coast.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Noted regularly at a few wetland sites and it was particularly common along the coast at Tanji.

Black Tern *Chilodrias niger* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird in non-breeding plumage, at the Banjul Sewage Farm.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Up to four birds were observed flying offshore, at Kotu.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* Very much tied to the coast, with small numbers observed regularly on the beaches.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, good numbers were present at scattered localities along the coast.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* Small numbers seen offshore at Kotu, and then we observed good numbers during the boat trip on the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

SKUAS AND JAEGERs

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, up to half a dozen birds were present at the mouth of the Gambia River.

Arctic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, up to a dozen birds were present at the mouth of the Gambia River.

SANDGROUSE

Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus* This bird is possibly nocturnal, we saw three small flocks, in the spotlight, just after dark, at scattered locations throughout the tour.

PIGEONS AND DOVES

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* Observed on a daily basis, in the cities and villages we visited.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* An abundant resident, which we saw on every single day of the tour.

African Mourning Dove *Streptopelia decipiens* Commonly encountered, especially in wetland areas.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Common and widespread, seen on every day of the tour, and its call, 'I am a red-eyed dove', was the common background noise, for much of the tour.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea* Another very common species, the smaller, lighter-coloured dove of the region, which we saw on a daily basis.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* Common, especially in semi-rural areas and in cultivated farmland, seen on every day of the tour.

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus* A widespread bird of dry savanna woodland, which we saw on most days of the tour.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus* This far less common species, is a bird of woodland areas, we only observed this species in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Only observed at Ma Kharafi Farm at Kuluro.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* An uncommon species, which we saw well in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal, and along the Battling Track, in the Gambia. The Reverend **Henry James Bruce** (1835-1909) was an American missionary in India from 1862 until his death. He was born at Hardwick, Massachusetts and died at Panchgani (India). He published several books in the Marathi language.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* Small numbers observed in the Saloum Delta, of Senegal, and a pair observed at Berending, in the Gambia.

PARROTS

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* A very common bird, which we observed well, on most days of the tour.

Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus* Another very common species, and once again, we observed it well, on most days of the tour.

TURACOS

Guinea Turaco *Tauraco persa* We were very pleased to observe this uncommon species, on one occasion, in the Farasuto Forest.

Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea* More common than the above species, we enjoyed several good sightings, at a few different places throughout the tour.

Western Grey Plantain-eater *Crinifer piscator* This is a particularly common species, which we observed on every day of the tour.

CUCKOOS

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii* A single bird, of this intra-African migrant species, was observed extremely well at the Tendaba airfield. **Francois Le Vaillant** (1753-1824) was a French traveller, explorer, collector and naturalist. He was born in Dutch Guiana (Suriname), the son of the French consul there. Birds attracted his interest from an early age and he spent a lot of his time collecting specimens. As a result, he became acquainted with many of Europe's private collectors. He went to the Cape Province of South Africa, in 1781, in the employ of the Dutch East India Company, the first real ornithologist to visit the area. Here he both explored and collected specimens, eventually publishing, a six volume book, *Historie Naturelle des Oiseaux d'Africa*, which is a classic of African ornithology. This work was published between the years 1801 and 1806, in Paris, and contained 144 colour-printed engravings. Le Vaillant sent over 2,000 skins of birds to Jacob Temminck, who financed his expeditions.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* An adult of this uncommon intra-African migrant, was observed for an extended period of time, as it perched in roadside vegetation, at Karan Taba Tenda.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* A couple were observed very well, on the first day of the tour, in Brufut Woods, at Banjul. **Klaas** was the Hottenot manservant of the ornithologist and collector Levaillant. The story goes that his wife was a beautiful servant girl named Narina, the Narina Trogon is named in her honour, she also just happened to be Levaillant's mistress.

Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* This species is an intra-African migrant, which breeds in the Gambia. We observed it well on several occasions, at a few different localities.

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* A common and widespread species, we observed singles and pairs, on a daily basis.

OWLS

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* A single bird showed spectacularly well in a dense tangle of riverside vegetation, while we were birding in the Marakissa Woods.

Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis* We found a single bird perched in dense bamboo, in the Marakissa Woods.

Greyish Eagle Owl *Bubo cinerascens* A pair of birds was observed extremely well, in the Farasuto Forest.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* A single bird, inside dense vegetation, was pointed out to us by a local guide, in the Farasuto Forest.

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* We saw one very well in the Marakissa Woods, and then we saw a second bird, close to Georgetown.

SWIFTS

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri* A small flock was first observed flying overhead, at Berending, and we saw a second small flock later in the tour, at Tujereng.

African Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* A widespread and common species, which we observed on most days of the tour.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* An extremely common species, which we observed on most days of the tour.

KINGFISHERS

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* A common species, which we saw very well, on several occasions.

African Pygmy-Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus* Seen particularly well, on several occasions, throughout the tour.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* Our first sighting, was of a perched bird during the boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown. This was followed by a second sighting, of a couple of birds during the Tendaba boat trip.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* This beautiful species, was observed very well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* Small numbers were observed at scattered localities, throughout the tour.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* A few birds were observed very well, at scattered locations throughout the tour.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* This magnificent species, was observed very well, at a few locations throughout the tour.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A widespread and common species, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

BEE-EATERS

Red-throated Bee-eater *Merops bulocki* We found an enormous breeding colony, in a disused quarry, at Wasso. This is a particularly beautiful species.

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

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* We enjoyed a few good sightings throughout the tour.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* We observed good numbers of this attractive species at Wasso, and in the Georgetown area.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* A small number were observed in dry country, at N'gain Sangal.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* A non-breeding visitor from northwest Africa, we observed a small flock, at the Kerewan Wetlands.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* A non-breeding migrant from Europe, a small flock was observed during the Tendaba boat trip.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops rubicus* A solitary bird of this spectacular species, was observed perched on overhead wires, at Wasso.

ROLLERS

Abbyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus* Became increasingly common as we moved inland, in the Gambia.

Rufous-crowned Roller *Coracias naevius* We enjoyed several good sightings throughout the tour.

Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster* This superb species of roller, proved common, and we observed it on most days of the tour.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* Observed regularly throughout the tour.

WOODHOOPES AND SCIMITAR-BILLS

Green Woodhoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Commonly encountered, particularly along the coast.

Black Scimitar-bill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* First encountered in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal, and then observed once more, in the Farasuto Forest, in the Gambia.

HORNBILLS

Western Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus kempfi* Very common and seen daily, with habituated birds at the hotel putting on a particularly good show.

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus* A common species, which we observed on most days of the tour.

Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus* A pair of these magnificent birds was observed at close quarters, at N'gain Sangal. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. The population is unknown, but unfortunately, it is thought to be decreasing. The main threat to this species is loss of habitat, with this species now being largely restricted to protected areas.

BARBETS

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Seen well at Brufut Woods, and again in Marakissa Woods.

Vieillot's Barbet *Lybius vieilloti* We enjoyed a few good sightings of this attractive species.

Louis Jean Pierre **Vieillot** (1748-1831) was a French ornithologist and businessman who lived in Haiti for a number of years. He and his family eventually fled to the United States during the French Revolution, but later he returned to France, where he died in poverty. His fellow Frenchmen Buffon and Cuvier largely overshadowed him, but his contributions to ornithology are very significant and Lesson described him as a genius. In Vieillot's time a number of ornithologists mistook juveniles, females or moulting individuals of known birds, for new species. Vieillot was the first to study these plumage changes, which was in itself a major breakthrough in accurate identification. He was also an early proponent of studying live birds and not only the dead skins housed in museum collections. During his lifetime he described a great many species and his name appears in the scientific name of many more, such as that of the Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo *Saurothera vieilloti*.

Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius* This particularly attractive species, was seen well at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and again, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

HONEYGUIDES

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* First observed at Karan Taba Tenda, and then a second bird was observed well, in the Farasuto Forest.

Spotted Honeyguide *Indicator maculatus* Observed particularly well at Brufut Woods, on two separate occasions.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* A pair of birds were observed very well, on one occasion, in Brufut Woods.

WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* A rare non-breeding migrant from Europe and Asia. We were very fortunate, to enjoy good close looks at this spectacular species, in farmland, at Tujereng.

Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera* A single male was observed extremely well, on one occasion, in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* A female was observed very well, on one occasion in Brufut Woods.

African Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae* We enjoyed scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Brown-backed Woodpecker *Dendropicos obsoletus* A male of this uncommon species, was observed well in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.

LARKS

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* We saw an individual very well at the Pirang Shrimp Farm, and then we saw a second bird, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

Sun Lark *Galerida modesta* We observed this uncommon resident on one occasion, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

SWALLOWS

Fanti Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne obscura* This attractive 'black swallow', was observed very well, on most days of the tour.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* An uncommon resident, we first saw a single bird perched on overhead telegraph wires at Wasso, then we saw a couple more, in the Farasuto Forest.

West African Swallow *Cecropis domicella* A recent split from Red-rumped Swallow, we saw it very well on several occasions.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* We observed this uncommon resident, on several occasions throughout the tour.

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida* Another uncommon resident, which we saw well on many occasions.

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, which we saw well, on a few occasions.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* This uncommon resident, also showed well, on a few occasions.

BULBULS

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens* Observed very well, on a few occasions, throughout the tour.

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Altimastillas flavicollis* This attractive species was seen well, on two separate occasions, as they came down to drink at the drinking station at Brufut Woods.

Grey-headed Bristlebill *Bleda canicapilla* A shy forest resident, we observed one extremely well, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* Probably the most common and widespread bird in Gambia, which we observed on every single day of the tour.

THRUSHES AND ALLIES

African Thrush *Turdus pelios* We observed small numbers of this unassuming bird, throughout the tour.

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* Seen well on a few occasions throughout the tour.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis* After some encouragement one was seen at Tujereng, with a second bird calling nearby.

Siffling Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus* A grassland cisticola which we saw very well at Ma Kharafi Farm, at Kuluro, and then again, at Tujereng.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few were observed well, while birding at the Ma Kharafi Farm, at Kuluro.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* A common species, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythropterus* A single bird sat up for us, on the last day of the tour, at Tujereng.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* A single bird showed well, on one occasion, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Seen well on two occasions, firstly, in the Farasuto Forest, and secondly, during the boat trip on the in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

- Senegal Eremomela** *Eremomela puilla* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
- Northern Crombec** *Sylvietta brachyura* Seen well on one occasion, at Kotu, in Banjul.
- Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, which we saw well at Tujereng, and along the Battleing Track.
- Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, a single bird was observed well, on the last day of the tour, at Tujereng.
- Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* A non-breeding migrant from the northern hemisphere, which we saw well in Farasuto Forest.
- Oriole Warbler** *Hypergerus atriceps* This spectacular and beautiful resident, was seen very well on a few occasions during the tour.
- Yellow-bellied Hyliota** *Hyliota flavigaster* A real little stunner, and without doubt, one of the scarcest birds of the trip. We enjoyed super close looks at a single bird, in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS

- Northern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides* Seen well on one occasion, in the Farasuto Forest, and again in Brufut Woods.
- Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* This uncommon flycatcher was observed very well, during the boat trip on the Gambia River, at Georgetown.
- Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, we saw a stunning male, on one occasion, in the Farasuto Forest.
- White-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha albicapilla* Seen well in the grounds of our hotel, in Banjul, and in the Abuko Nature Reserve.
- Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla* This elusive species, was observed well, in the Farasuto Forest.
- Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, we saw a female very well, in the Farasuto Forest.
- Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird very well, while birding at the Ma Kharafi Farm, at Kuluro.
- Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* A non-breeding visitor from the northern hemisphere, we observed a single bird, at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.
- Northern Anteater Chat** *Myrmecocichla aethiops* We observed this uncommon species on a few occasions, throughout the tour.
- White-fronted Black Chat** *Oenanthe albifrons* We saw a very co-operative bird on a compound wall at Tujereng, on two separate occasions.

WATTLE-EYES

- Common Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea* Seen well on several occasions throughout the tour.
- Senegal Batis** *Batis senegalensis* Seen well on one occasion, in the Kiang West National Park.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS

- African Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* This scarce resident, was observed on one occasion, in the Farasuto Forest.
- Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone rufiventer* Seen very well on one occasion, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

BABLERS

- Brown Babbler** *Turdoides reinwardtii* Family groups were observed frequently throughout the tour.

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii* Also recorded regularly throughout the tour.

SINBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS

Mouse-brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus* Observed very well in mangroves, during our boat trips on the Saloum Delta, in Senegal, and on the Tendaba boat trip.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Seen well on several occasions throughout the tour.

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus* Widespread and very common, with birds seen on most days of the tour, including many gorgeous, breeding-plumaged males.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* Widespread but more localised than Beautiful Sunbird, but still seen on several occasions.

Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigastrus* Widespread in small numbers with birds seen most days, including a number of stunning males in full plumage.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus* We enjoyed a few scattered sightings throughout the tour.

WHITE-EYES

African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis* Observed very well, on one occasion, in the Kiang West National Park.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus* Seen well on a few occasions, throughout the tour.

SHRIKES

Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvine* Observed well in Marakissa Woods, and again in Brufut Woods.

BUSHSHRIKES AND ALLIES

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* We enjoyed super looks at this stunning bird, on one occasion, in Brufut Woods.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* We enjoyed scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarous* We observed this extremely attractive species, on several occasions throughout the tour.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* This diminutive species of shrike, was first observed in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal, and then again, along the Battleing Track.

HELMETSHRIKES AND ALLIES

White Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus* This spectacular species was observed well, when a small flock of four birds, suddenly appeared in a nearby tree, while birding in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.

DRONGOS

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

JAYS, MAGPIES AND CROWS

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

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* Flocks of these roadside birds were encountered regularly throughout the tour.

STARLINGS

Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus* This species was only observed, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Only observed in the grounds of our hotel, at Banjul.

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotonis chloropterus* Observed on almost every day of the tour.

Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus* Large flocks of this particularly handsome species, were observed on every single day of the tour.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* Several observed during our visit to the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal, and then we saw a few more, at the Tendaba airfield.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Introduced, but very localised and only noted on a few occasions.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* An abundant resident, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

Bush Petronia *Gymnoris dentata* Small numbers observed, on a few separate occasions.

WEAVERS AND ALLIES

White-billed Buffalo-Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris* Small parties seen here and there along roadsides, on most days.

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus* We were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at this scarce resident, firstly, at Tujereng, and then again in the Farasuto Forest.

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus* Recorded frequently throughout the tour.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* Widespread in more thickly wooded areas, and seen regularly throughout the tour.

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus* Small numbers observed well, on a few occasions.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* An abundant species, which we saw on every day of the tour.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus* This species only occurs where there is water, we saw it well on a number of occasions.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* We saw a large flock in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal, and a smaller flock, close to N'gain Sangal, in Gambia.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* We enjoyed watching breeding plumaged birds, on a few occasions throughout the tour.

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus* We enjoyed several small flocks, at scattered locations throughout the tour.

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus* An abundant species, which we observed very well, on most days of the tour.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES

Western Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina* We observed a pair of these very beautiful birds at very close quarters, in the Abuko Nature Reserve.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* A very common and widespread species, which we saw well, on several occasions throughout the tour.

Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens* A range restricted species, which we saw well on many occasions throughout the tour.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda* We enjoyed good looks at a pair of birds in Marakissa Woods, and this sighting was followed by views of a small flock, at Tujereng.

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes* Seen exceptionally well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

Red-cheeked Cordonbleu *Uraeginthus bengalus* A common and widespread species, which we observed on most days of the tour.

African Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* We observed a flock of half a dozen or so birds, feeding on the ground, at the Pirang Shrimp Farm.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullatus* We enjoyed regular sightings of small flocks, throughout the tour.

INDIGOBIRDS

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeate* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Small numbers observed, at regular intervals, throughout the tour.

Exclamatory Paradise Whydah *Vidua interjecta* We observed males of this uncommon species, in splendid breeding plumage, flying along the roadside at N'gain Sangal.

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS AND ALLIES

Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus* Small numbers were regularly encountered, throughout the tour.

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS AND ALLIES

Brown-rumped Bunting *Emberiza affinis* An uncommon resident, we watched a singing male, for an extended period of time, on one occasion, along the Batlleing Track.

White-rumped Seedeater *Crithagra leucopygia* A scarce resident, we observed a single bird very well, feeding on the ground, in the Saloum Delta, in Senegal.

MAMMALS

- African Savanna Hare** *Lepus victoriae* One individual seen well, along the Battling Track.
- Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus gambianus* Small numbers encountered in forest habitat, throughout the tour.
- Striped Ground Squirrel** *Euxerus erythropus* Observed along the roadside, close to Karan Taba Tenda, and also along the roadside, in the Farasuto Forest.
- Gambian Mongoose** *Mungos gambianus* One ran across the road in front of our vehicle, close to Batokuaku.
- Northern Lesser Galago** *Galago senegalensis* An individual was observed dancing across a small dirt track, after dark, in the Kiang West National Park.
- Temminck's Red Colobus** *Piliocolobus temminckii* We were very fortunate to enjoy three separate sightings of this rare species during the tour. This species is classified as 'Endangered' by the IUCN. Its population is unknown, but it is estimated to be less than 1,000 individuals and unfortunately, decreasing. The main threats to this species are the destruction of its forest habitat and hunting. **Coenraad Jacob Temminck** (1778-1858) was a Dutch ornithologist, illustrator and collector. He was appointed the first Director of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, in Leiden, in 1820 and held that post until his death. He was a wealthy man who had a very large collection of specimens and live birds. His first task as an ornithologist was to catalogue his father's very extensive collection. His father was Jacob Temminck, for whom Le Vaillant collected specimens.
- Guinea Baboon** *Papio papio* A small troop was observed sitting in trees along the edge of the Gambia River, during the boat trip at Georgetown. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by the IUCN.
- Green Monkey** *Chlorocebus sabaues* A widespread and common species, which we observed on almost every day of the tour.
- Patas Monkey** *Erythrocebus patas* Small numbers observed at regular intervals throughout the tour.
- Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus* Small numbers were observed during our safari in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.
- Roan Antelope** *Hippotragus equinus* Once again, small numbers were observed during our safari in the Fathala Game Park, in Senegal.