

## THE GAMBIA 10 - 24 February 2023

Based at Mandina Lodges, Kabuneh  
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We've been to The Gambia many times, usually based somewhere along the coast, making day trips and sometimes going upriver. This time was different. We wanted to stay in one quiet location away from the hustle and bustle of the coast and let the wildlife come to us rather than pursuing species. We settled on Mandina River Lodge, about an hour's drive away from the coast, for a two-week stay and it worked perfectly for us. We weren't looking for a long species list and were happy with the 156 birds and all the other wildlife we encountered in and around the lodge. We never went further than about 2 kms from Mandina, sometimes with one of the lodge guides (Mass), more often on our own, walking in wooded and scrubby areas, around village 'allotments' (being prepared for vegetables following the rice harvest and full of birds), or being paddled along the creeks by Mass. We also spent time in the wooded grounds of the lodge and on our terrace with views across a mangrove-lined creek. As in previous years we chose to travel with The Gambia Experience for several reasons, not least their support for local communities and the country in general.

### BIRDS 156 sp

**Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus* 2 on one day..

**Double-spurred Spurrow** *Pternistis bicalcaratus* Common in small groups. Recorded most days but more often heard than seen.

**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* 4 (3 over Lodge, 1 on sandbank seen from canoe).

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* 1 in ricefield allotment.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* 1 in wet area of ricefield allotment.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* 1 seen from canoe.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* 5 singles, jetty and village allotments.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* 2 in allotments.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Very common with large numbers flying past Lodge at dusk each evening.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* 4 seen (3 from canoe, 1 at Lodge).

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* 6 seen over Lodge and in allotments.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* 7 sightings from jetty and from canoe.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Quite common - 18 seen, from canoe and flying past jetty.

**Great Egret** *Ardea akba* Common along river - 22 sightings from canoe and past jetty.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* Only 6 seen, jetty and allotments.

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca* 9 sightings. 8 from jetty (possibly just 2 birds), 1 from canoe, 1 at village pool.

**Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* Common, up to 6 flying to roost past Lodge each evening, singles frequent around mangroves at Lodge and in villages.

**Hammerkop** *Scopus umbretta* 4 seen in allotments.

**Great White Pelican** *Pelicanus onocrotalus* 7 over Lodge and another single next day.

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* 8 seen over lodge: 4 + 3 + 1.

**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa* 6 sightings on five days.

**Reed Cormorant** *Microcarbo africanus* At least 7 seen daily.

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Frequent sightings, up to 6 per day on 8 days (at least 3 birds involved).

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* 1 at allotments.

**African Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides typus* Frequent sightings. Singles/2s seen on 6 days including one apparently searching for roosting bats under a roof at Lodge.

**Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis* Singles over Lodge and from canoe on three days plus a pair with juvenile near Lodge.

**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* Very common with good numbers daily.

**Beaudouin's Snake Eagle** *Circaetus beaudouini* Singles low over Lodge on three days (min. 2 birds involved).

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* Singles on two days, over Lodge and allotments.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* Singles on 4 days in woodland areas, plus 2 in allotments.

**Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Meliarx metabates* 1 seen well.

**African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro* 1 seen to take a lizard from track close to Lodge.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* 1 in allotments.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* 1 male over Lodge, younger male seen from canoe.



**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* Very common, good numbers daily. (All seen well were yellow billed).

**African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* Single bird seen from jetty.

**Senegal Thick-knee** *Burhinus senegalensis* Common along mangroves, often in small groups. Pair regularly spending day under tiny mangrove by our room.

**Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* Fairly common in small numbers in villages, allotments and along creeks at low tide.

**African Wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus senegallus* 2 in allotments.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Up to 8 around mangroves on most days.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* 11 seen along sandbanks at low tide on three days.

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus* 4 seen. Pair with juvenile plus a single juvenile at allotments.

**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Common, seen in good numbers each day, constantly heard.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Up to 6 sightings around mangroves most days.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Occasional sightings of 1-2 around mangroves.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* Singles on three days.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Up to 6 around mangroves most days.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* 2 singles.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* 1 over mangroves.

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* 4 singles.

**Feral Rock Dove** *Columba livia* A few seen in towns.

**Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea* 4 regularly around Lodge plus occasional sightings in villages.

**Mourning Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens* Abundant around Lodge and villages.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata* Very common.

**Vinaceous Dove** *Streptopelia vinacea* Common.

**Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Common.

**Blue-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur afer* Common.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* 1 male seen.

**Bruce's Green Pigeon** *Treron waalia* Single in village.

**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calvus* Group of 4 in village.  
**Western Plantain-eater** *Crinifer piscator* Common.  
**Violet Turaco** *Tauraco violaceus* Group of 5 in Kambujeh allotments.  
**Guinea Turaco** *Tauraco persa* Small numbers occasionally heard in woodland near Lodge.  
**Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis* Frequent sightings around allotments.  
**Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas* 1 seen twice in Lodge grounds, occasionally heard there on other days.  
**Northern White-faced Owl** *Ptilopsis leucotis* Roosting pair at Makasutu.  
**Mottled Spinetail** *Telacanthura ussheri* 2 over Lodge.  
**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Common in small groups.  
**Common Swift** *Apus apus* 6 one day only.  
**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Fairly common in flocks.  
**Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinicus* Single bird in allotments.  
**Blue-bellied Roller** *Coracias cyanogaster* Common around allotments and woodland edge. Often in pairs but 4 together mobbing Lizard Buzzard.  
**Blue-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon malimbica* Common along mangroves and in allotments.  
**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Probably same individual seen three evenings by jetty.  
**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* Common.  
**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Common. Often plunge-bathing in swimming pool.  
**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* 6 (2 allotments, single from canoe 16<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup>).



**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* 10 seen (singles or pairs). Occasionally plunge-bathing in swimming pool.  
**White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis* Common. 80+ always around Lodge and frequently plunge-bathing in swimming pool. Smaller numbers around mangroves and allotments.  
**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* 2 at Lodge and 1 seen over mangroves.  
**Western Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus kemp* Common, especially around allotments (30 at one site).  
**African Pied Hornbill** *Lophoceros fasciatus* 4 seen (2+1+1).  
**African Grey Hornbill** *Lophoceros nasutus* Fairly common, more often heard than seen.  
**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* 2 seen, often heard.  
**Vieillot's Barbet** *Lybius vieilloti* 1 seen, occasionally heard.  
**Bearded Barbet** *Lybius dubius* Fairly common.  
**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* 2 seen, male and immature together.  
**Fine-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera punctuligera* 1 male seen.  
**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* 1 male seen.  
**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* 1 male seen.  
**African Grey Woodpecker** *Dendropicos goertae* Seen on two days, male + female.  
**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus* Fairly common. 6 seen on five days, including 2 together on 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**African Hobby** *Falco cuvierii* 1 from jetty.  
**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* 1 seen near Lodge.  
**Senegal Parrot** *Poicephalus senegalus* Common in small groups 2-8.  
**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* Fairly common in small groups or pairs.  
**Senegal Batis** *Batis senegalensis* Seen on three days in Lodge grounds (2+1+1)  
**Brown-throated Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea* Common. Seen most days, including adults feeding juveniles.  
**Grey-headed Bushshrike** *Malaconotus blanchoti* 1 seen at Lodge. Occasionally heard.  
**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* A few very brief glimpses but often heard.

**Northern Puffback** *Dryoscopus gambensis* 2 singles, male and female.

**Yellow-crowned Gonolek** *Laniarius barbarous* Common around mangroves and thickets, where more often heard than seen, but frequent sightings around Lodge.

**Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga phoenicea* 2 singles, male and female.

**Yellow-billed Shrike** *Corvinella corvine* Common in drier parts of allotments.

**African Golden Oriole** *Oriolus auratus* 3 seen, others heard.

**Glossy-backed Drongo** *Dicrurus divaricatus* 4 seen around allotments.

**Red-billed Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone rufiventer* 5, including female plunge-bathing in swimming pool.

**African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* 5 sightings, three males plus pair.

**Piapiac** *Ptilostomus afer* Flocks common around allotments.

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* Common, usually pairs.

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus* Common.

**Little Greenbul** *Eurillas virens* 2 in Makasutu woodland.

**Grey-headed Bristlebill** *Bleda canicapillus* 1 seen in thicket by Lodge, others heard.

**Yellow-throated Leaflove** *Atimastillas flavicollis* 3 seen in allotments, others heard.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Fairly common around mangroves and over woodland clearings. Some may have been **Red-chested Swallow** *H. lucida* but not seen well-enough to be sure.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* 1 perched bird seen on route out from airport.

**Northern Crombec** *Sylvietta brachyura* 1 seen.

**Willow Warbler** *Pytilioscopus trochilus* 1 seen by allotments and another heard at Lodge.

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus* 1 seen at Lodge.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* 2 Makasutu woodland.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* 1 seen, several more heard.

**Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brevicaudata* 1 seen, others heard.

**Brown Babbler** *Turdoides plebejus* Seen much more often than Blackcap Babbler *T. reinwardtii*.

**Blackcap Babbler** *Turdoides reinwardtii* Occasional sightings of flocks around allotments.

**Common Whitethroat** *Carruca communis* 5 seen.

**Northern Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis* 1 seen.

**Yellow-bellied Hylia** *Hylia flavigaster* 1 seen.

**Splendid Starling** *Lamprotornis splendidus* Only seen along the river: 9 from jetty, 8 + 12 from canoe.

**Long-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis caudatus* Common around allotments.

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* Flock of 20+ over woodland near Lodge.

**African Thrush** *Turdus pelios* Common.

**Northern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides* Singles on three days in allotments.

**Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla* 1 at Lodge.

**White-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha albicapilla* 2 singles in allotments.

**Mangrove Sunbird** *Anthreptes gabonicus* Singles/2s frequent around Lodge.

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* 5 sightings, pair plus 3 singles.

**Pygmy Sunbird** *Hedydipna platura* Pair plus single male seen near Lodge.

**Green-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra verticalis* 1 male in Lodge grounds.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis* 3 seen in villages and Makasutu woodland.

**Beautiful Sunbird** *Cinnyris pulchellus* Common, frequent daily sightings.

**Splendid Sunbird** *Cinnyris coccinigastrus* 2 singles, Makasutu woodland plus Mandina Lodge.

**Variable Sunbird** *Cinnyris venustus* 5 sightings around villages and Mandina Lodge.

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus* Small flock of 6 at Lodge seen one day only.

**White-billed Buffalo Weaver** *Bubalornis albirostris* Flocks fairly common around allotments.

**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis* Pairs fairly common around Mandina Lodge and allotments.

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus* Common in good numbers.

**Black-headed Weaver** *Ploceus melanocephalus* Occasional singles/2s Mandina Lodge and allotments.

**Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus* 3 near village.

**Northern Red Bishop** *Euplectes franciscanus* 10+ near village.

**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala* Common.

**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus* Common.

**Lavender Waxbill** *Glaucostrelda caerulea* 8+ in mixed sp. flock near Lodge.

**Orange-cheeked Waxbill** *Estrilda melpoda* 6 Makasutu scrub.

**Bronze Mannikin** *Spermestes cucullata* Common.

**Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata* 1 seen, with Bishops.



**Yellow-fronted Canary** *Crithagra mozambica* 1 briefly at Mandina Lodge.

## MAMMALS

**Guinea Baboon** *Papio papio* Large troop, only seen around Makasutu.

**Green Monkey** *Chlorocebus sabaeus* Common.

**Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat** *Epomophorus gambianus* Common around Mandina Lodge.

**Striped Ground Squirrel** *Euxerus erythropus* Occasional sightings.

**Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Helioscirus gambianus* Occasional sightings.



## REPTILES

**Cobra sp.** *Naja sp.* Freshly-shed skin probably from a cobra.

**Nile Monitor Lizard** *Varanus niloticus* Juvenile near Makasutu.

**Agama Lizard** *Agama agama* Occasional sightings.

**Chevron-throated Dwarf Gecko** probably *Lygodactylus gutturalis* Several sightings.

Other, unidentified geckos and lizards.

**West African Crocodile** *Crocodylus suchus* Occasional sightings along the creeks at low tide.



## INVERTEBRATES

### Butterflies & Moths

**Citrus Swallowtail** *Papilio demodocus*

**African Monarch (Plain Tiger)** *Danaus chrysippus*

**African Wood White (Spirit)** *Leptosia alcesta*

**African Migrant (Emigrant)** *Catopsilia florella*

**Caper White (Brown-veined White)** *Belenois aurota*

**African Caper White** *Belenois creone*

**Desert Orange-tip (Tiny Orange-tip)** *Colotis evagore*

**Common Hairstreak (Purple-brown Hairstreak)** *Hypolycaena philippus*

**Lang's Short-tailed Blue (Common Zebra Blue)** *Leptotes pirithous*

**Long-tailed Blue (Pea Blue)** *Lampides boeticus*

**African Grass Blue** *Zizeeria knysna*

**African Wood White** *Leptosia alcesta*

**Small Grass Yellow** *Eurema brigitta*

**Common Grass Yellow** *Eurema hecabe*

**Golden Pansy** *Junonia chorimene*

**Zebra White** *Pinacopteryx eriphia*

**Grey Elfin** *Sarangesa laelius*

**Crimson-speckled Moth** *Utetheisa pulchella*

**Dragonflies and Damselflies** Seen frequently around Mandina Lodge and allotments but rarely well enough to identify. Tentative identification only:

**Dark Dropwing** *Trithemis grouti*

**Red-veined Dropwing** *Trithemis arteriosa*

**Black Percher** *Diplacodes lefebvrii*

**Broad Scarlet** *Crocothemis erythraea*



**Other Invertebrates** Many invertebrates seen, only a few were tentatively identified:

**Carpenter Bee sp.** *Xylocopa (callens?)*

**Black Mud Wasp** *Delta emarginatum*

**Green Milkweed Locust** *Phymateus viridipes*

**Garden Locust** *Acanthacris ruficornis*

**Grey Wall Jumping Spider** *Menemerus bivittatus*

**Horned Jumping Spider** *Hyllus* sp.

**Flat Crab Spider sp.** Probably *Slenops annulatus*

**"Giant" Centipede** *Scolopendra* sp.

**West African Fiddler Crab** *Afruca tangeri*

**Purple Mangrove Crab** *Goniopsis pelii*

**Atlantic Mudskipper** *Periophthalmus barbarus*



## PLANTS

**Red Mangrove sp.** *Rhizophora* sp.

**White Mangrove** *Avicennia* sp.

**Baobab Tree** *Adansonia digitata*

**White Silk-cotton Tree** *Ceiba pentandra*

**Flamboyant Tree** *Delonix regia*

**Gingerbread Plum** *Parinari macrophylla*

**Mango Tree** *Mangifera indica*

**Cashew Bush** *Anacardium occidentale*

**African Locust Bean Tree** *Parkia biglobosa*

**Camel's-foot Tree** *Piliostigma* sp.

**Oil Palm Tree** *Elaeis guineensis*

**Rhum (Fan) Palm** *Borassus flabellifer*

**Sansevieria** *Sansevieria senegambica*

**Sodom Apple** *Calotropis procera*

**Rattlebox** *Crotalaria retusa*

**Chinese Hibiscus** *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

**Gumbar** *Gmelina arborea*