

The Gambia

Jaap & Tom Westra

20-27 February 2022



Greater Painted-snipe, Kotu



Red-throated Bee-eater, Kaur

This was a very special trip. The first trip outside Europe in two years because of COVID 19 restrictions and the first birding trip outside the WP with my eighteen year old son, who got more and more eager in joining my efforts to finding all the birds we set out for. His focus on butterflies also helped in working out a butterfly list of up to 36 species and we were also lucky in finding several beautiful dragonflies and some awesome reptiles.

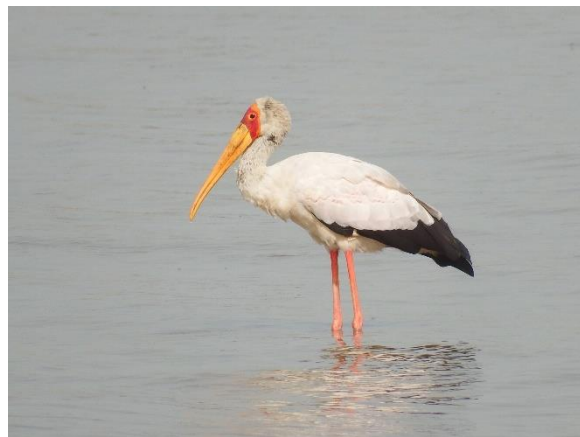
We hooked up with Senegambia Birding who gave us guides Fatou Colley and Abdoulie Ndure, the latter in a double role as guide and skillful driver. Both guides were pleasant company and well-informed to where the birds should be, but they certainly left room for finding my own birds such as *Black-crowned Crane*, *Abyssinian Ground Hornbill*, *African Hobby* and *Yellow Penduline Tit*, but the best find was a ***Dorst's Cisticola*** that was discussed in the Whatsapp Group of the Gambian Birders Association where Clive Barlow confirmed my identification of this hard to find bird. Our pictures of this species were the first on Observado and Dutchbirding.



I was in The Gambia before, in 2009, but that was in Gunjur, close to Kartong. We then visited Abuko, Tanji and Pirang, but this time we (Tom and I and our Senegambiabirding guides) turned our focus inland from February 22nd to 26th. **Kaur and Njau wetlands** we visited on February 22nd, spending the night at pleasant **Kaur Lodge**, situated on the top of a hill with astounding wide open views. The next day we visited **Kaur wetlands** again, then (after a stop at GPS 13.5856, -15.4603 for bustards) drove to **Tendaba Camp** which was our base camp for four days (three nights) from where we visited **Kiang West and Kiang Central, Kwinella** and the area around **Nema village**. The **Tendaba boat trip** gave us lifers *White-backed Night Heron* and *Yellow-billed Stork* and during mid-afternoon siestas Tom and I looked for butterflies and dragonlies in and around **Tendaba Camp**. We chose not to go the Jajanbureh or Basse in the five days we had available and decided to a less stressful approach. Driving back to Banjul on February 26th we visited **Farasutu Forest**, flying back to the Netherlands the next day.



Pygmy Sunbird, Kaur Lodge



Yellow-billed Stork, Tendaba Camp

We were lucky to reach The Gambia anyway, because Tom and I both had Corona in the week before our departure on Sunday. We were allowed to travel just in time, happy that this very week, our government decided to shorten the quarantine to just five days, so although testing positive on Corona on Tuesday, we were allowed to fly without Corona symptoms on Sunday, only five days later. The day before our departure the heaviest storm in years prevented planes from leaving Amsterdam, but on Sunday morning we were in between storms and were able to fly off without delays. In The Gambia COVID 19 was never an issue and apart from chaotic situations on our last night, when we struggled to get a PCR test, we never met any problems, only very nice people. At Tendaba Camp things were crowded and noisy with hundreds of students enjoying the camp and each other, our advantage was a spacious VIP room with fridge, airco and tv, since all the standard rooms were taken up by the students.

We saw most of the birds we set out for (see species list), with a trip list of 241 species in seven days, including 34 lifers.

20 February

Kotu

We left Amsterdam Schiphol at 7.45 am and reached Bunjul at 1pm and hasslefree we entered our Corendon transfer bus to our **Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu** not much later. After checking in we found out that **Kotu Bridge** was only ten minutes from our hotel and consequently we enjoyed an unexpected bonus two hour late afternoon walk that gave us 52 species. It was 35 degrees Celsius and the people were nice. Six *Greater Painted Snipes* (one male and five females) and a *Malachite Kingfisher* at a hide at the back of our hotel were early highlights, but several more species you

would expect for Kotu were seen including *African Spoonbill*, *Speckled Pigeon*, *Shikra*, three species of roller, five species of dove, *Piapiac*, *Long-tailed Glossy Starling*, *Beautiful Sunbird*, *White-billed Buffalo Weaver*, *Red-chested Swallow* and many more, with lots of *Hooded Vultures* and *Yellow-billed Kites* overhead. After diner we scrolled through our first pictures, whatsapped home and drank some beers over delicious local Gambian food at our pleasant birder-friendly Palm Beach Hotel.



Hooded Vulture



Broad-billed Roller

21 February

Kotu

An early morning walk around our hotel after our 7.30 breakfast gave us good pictures of *Black Heron*, *African Darter*, *African Jacana*, *Blue-cheeked Bee-eater*, *Blue-breasted Kingfisher*, *Western Red-billed Hornbill* and *Yellow-billed Shrike* and a butterfly species that is not often seen here, *Desert Babul Blue*, a new butterfly species for me. At ten we attended a Corendon meeting with tourist info about how to arrange a PCR test in The Gambia and after lunch we hooked up with local guide Ebrima who was already waiting for us at the hotel gate, no room for escape. We had a good birding afternoon at the **Cycle track**, **Kotu Ponds**, **Kotu Creek** and the adjacent golf course, Kotu Ponds also a good site for butterflies and dragonflies. We started at the bridge with 21 *Senegal Thick-knees* and some *African Wattled Plovers*, the inevitable *Pied Kingfishers*, *Hamerkop*, *Intermediate Egret*, *Reed Cormorants* and *Wire-tailed Swallows* and at nearby **Kotu Creek** we added *Grey Kestrel*, *African Harrier Hawk*, *African Grey Woodpecker*, *Little Bee-eaters*, *Yellow-crowned Gonolek*, *Oriole Warbler* and *Northern Crombec* to name but a few. Back at the hotel a *Woodland Kingfisher* was a good bird this time of year and *Grey-headed Gulls* gathered at the pool in front of the hotel before flying off.



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater



Grey-headed Gull

22 February:

Banjul – Barra ferry, Farafenni, Kauw wetlands, Njau wetlands

After an early breakfast at 7am Fatu Colley and Abdoulie Ndure from Senegambiabirding picked us up from our Palm Beach Hotel and drove us to the **Banjul - Barra ferry**. Quite a spectacle and at 10.30 am we reached the North Bank with four *Arctic* and two *Pomarine Skuas* among the *Grey-headed* and *Lesser Black-backed Gulls*. Terns were well-represented here with *Gull-billed*, *Sandwich*, *Caspian* and *West African Crested Terns* flying around. We had several *Pink-backed Pelicans* and on our way to Farafenni roadside stops yielded woodland birds such as *Viellot's Barbet*, *Purple Roller*, *Blackcap Babblers*, *White-fronted Black Chat* and our first *Pygmy Sunbirds* and healthy numbers of birds of prey: *Common* and *Grey Kestrels*, *African Harrier Hawks*, several *Wahlberg's Eagles* (an immature perched in a roadside tree), *Booted Eagle*, *Brown Snake-Eagle*, *Palmnut Vultures*, *White-backed Vultures*, *Grasshopper Buzzard*, three *Dark Chanting Goshawks*, my first *Gabar Goshawk* and omnipresent *Hooded Vultures* and *Yellow-billed Kites*. Near **Jokadu** we saw two *Anteater Chats* and at a stop at GPS 13.5822, -15.4571, northeast of **Farafenni**, we searched for bustards in dry bushy farmland, which gave us three lifers: two smart *Temminck's Coursers*, three *Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks* and a *Chestnut-crowned Sparrow- Weaver*. We did not see any bustards, but ran into a *Barn Owl* and several *Black-headed Lapwings*. *Guineafowl* butterflies were common in the area, we also saw many *African Migrants*, *Common Dotted Border* and *Desert Orange Tip* here. The **Kaur wetlands** were dry and disappointing, no cranes and no *Egyptian Plover*. *Collared Pratincoles* were nice though and driving on to **Njau pools**, a little further down the road, was far more productive. We had two male and two female *Sahel and Long-tailed Paradise Whydahs*, two *Red-throated Bee-eaters* and three *African Green Bee-eaters*, all lifers. Other highlights included a *Gabar Goshawk* on the ground under a palm tree, a *Beaudouin's Snake Eagle* flying over, *Bronze-tailed Starlings*, a *Western Olivaceous Warbler* and flocks of yellow wagtails, weavers, bishops, *Black-rumped Waxbills* and *Red-billed Queleas*. Uphill at nearby **Kaur Lodge** we enjoyed a magnificent view and a good evening meal. *Sahel Bush Sparrow* and *Pygmy Sunbird* proved photogenic near our diner table and *Double-spurred Francolin* was also around. At dusk *Stone Partridge* started calling and when it was dark we heard *Savile's Bustards* singing. After we had prepared our mosquito nets, we slept like a baby.



Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark



African Green Bee-eater

23 February

We woke up to the sound of calling cranes and walking up to the ridge soon enough we saw one flying down in the valley. When we walked downhill from the lodge we saw three *Black-crowned Cranes* perched on a tall tree, two adults and a juvenile bird, great stuff! During the 1.5 hour walk

around the lodge we obtained close views of two *Rufous-tailed Scrub Robins* and *Black-crowned Tchagra*, with seven *Bruce's Green Pigeons* and three *Bearded Barbets* in a fruiting tree. Near the lodge we had a lifer *Gosling's Bunting* and during breakfast we kept an eye on a bucket of water that attracted an *African Thrush*, *Cut-throat Finches* and another *Gosling's Bunting* with showy *West African Swallows* perched on a thorny bush right in front of our breakfast table.



Black-crowned Crane



Bearded Barbet

Back at **Kaur wetlands** we again tried for Egyptian and Kittlitz Plover, but it was dry and we were not successful. Raptors came to the rescue with an approachable and therefore photogenic *African Fish Eagle*, an adult *Bataleur* flying over and another *Gabar Goshawk* nearby. Back at the same site as yesterday we looked for bustards again and this time we were lucky with an adult *Savile's Bustard* that showed well, we also flushed a *Four-banded Sandgrouse* here. We then turned to Tendaba when at a roadside pond I spotted two adult *Black-crowned Cranes*, awesome! *Namaqua Doves* were very common here, and we counted at least 40 *Spur-winged Geese* and a *Hadedda Ibis* with two *Wahlberg's Eagles* circling the skies overhead, two *Red-winged Warblers* were also seen. At 2pm we reached **Tendaba Camp**, where it was lively and crowded with teenagers from two Gambian universities on a school trip and where all the standard rooms were taken, we consequently ended up in a VIP room. During siesta Tom found a *Common Tiger Blue*, a new butterfly for us and a muddy street was not only visited by butterflies and *Red Rock-dwellers*, but also by a *Red-winged Pytilia*, a new bird. At 4.30 pm we birded savanna woodland around the village of **Nema**, close to **Kiang West** that hosted two lifers, a *Brown-rumped Bunting* and a perched *African Hobby*, and other good birds such as *Fine-spotted Woodpecker*, *Swallow-tailed Bee-eater*, plenty of *Senegal Eremomelas* and flocks of lively *White-crested Helmetshrikes*.



Brown-rumped Bunting



White-crested Helmetshrike

A skulking bird on the black recently burned forest floor with plumage details that in my point of view strongly pointed towards Dort's Cisticola was seen here and Fatou managed to get some photos that were shared in the Whatsapp group of Gambian Birding Guides. This species is rarely seen in The Gambia and there are hardly any sightings in the dry season, let alone pictures. After dinner we discussed the bird again and Fatou told us that there was agreement on Dorst's Cisticola, my ID confirmed by Clive Barlow. The rest of the evening we joined the festivities in the camp and talked over beers about birds, the Premier League and other important matters.

24 February

At 7.30 am we walked from **Tendaba Camp** uphill towards the **Kwinella** photo hide and found all the woodland birds we set out for en route: *White-rumped Seedeater* (5), *Yellow Penduline Tit* (3), *White-shouldered Black Tit* (4), *Northern Yellow White-eye* (2) and *Senegal Batis*, all lifers. *Red-necked Falcon*, *Pallid Swift* and *African Golden Oriole* were also seen before we spent 45 minutes inside the hide where we observed and photographed a female *Greater Honeyguide*, six species of dove, flocks of bishops, queleas, *Yellow-eyed Canaries*, *Sahel Bush Sparrows*, *Northern Grey-headed Sparrows* and a *Lesser Blue-eared Starling*. At lunch we discussed the Russian invasion in Ukraine, which was shocking news here in Africa too. In siesta time Tom and I went for butterflies and dragonflies again, a *Bushveld Emperor* an undisputed highlight. The **Tendaba boat trip** was scheduled for 4.30 pm and the start was promising with a closeby *Yellow-billed Stork* at the boat ramp, there was another one at the entrance to the creek. The trip was through pristine mangrove waters, but the birding was somewhat slow. Best bird was a *White-backed Night Heron* deep in the mangroves, African Finfoot however, did not show. *Tawny Eagle*, *Short-toed Snake Eagle*, *Woolly-necked Stork*, *Mangrove Sunbirds* were all new to the trip and Tom was thrilled by a huge *West African Crocodile* that showed close to the boat. Back at **Tendaba Camp** things got cheerful in the evening then rowdy deep into night. The band played till 2am, the pool parties lasted till 6am.



Lesser Blue-eared Starling



Greater Honeyguide

25 February

Quality over quantity today, with a start near **Kiang Central** where we needed several kilometers before I spotted a pair of distant *Abyssinian Ground Hornbill* that we approached for 500 meters in order to be able to make good pictures. On the way to **Kiang West** we photographed six confiding *Yellow-billed Oxpeckers* on cattle, a welcome new species for me. A covey of nine *Stone Partridge* along the same road was nice too and after our hornbill adventure one of the local guides (from the local village) who accompanied us (the other guide was from Tendaba camp) took us to a place in his village **Nema** with leaf-filled waterholes where reptiles were hiding. We saw *Puff Adder*, *Black Cobra* and *Nile Monitor* here and with plans for a start-up Reptile Farm he also showed us some *African*

Dwarf Crocodiles. At the back of the farm savanna woodland hosted a *Lesser Honeyguide* with a pair of *African Hawk Eagle* circling over us. We were then taken to a roost of two impressive *Verreaux's Eagle-Owls* and ended the first part of the day with an unsuccessful search for *Bronze-winged Courser*, with four *White-backed* and two *Rüppell's Vultures* overhead while working the area.



Abyssinian Ground Hornbill



Yellow-billed Oxpecker

After a siesta of three hours (highlights two *Gosling's Buntings*, *Brown Playboy* and *Woodland Skimmer*) we re-entered savanna woodland near **Nema** not far from Tendaba, where we encountered one lifer *Little Weaver* and mostly old friends, but also two new species for the trip: a *Brubru* and a *Brown-backed Woodpecker*. Local mister Snake Farm told us there was a roost of *Brown-necked Parrot* near his local settlement at Nema, but late afternoon it did not work out, no birds showed until dawn. While waiting for the parrots, one of the Tendaba bird guides searched the most reliable areas for *Bronze-winged Courser*, and would contact us if he found them, but he never called; *Martial Eagle* in a distant baobab tree brought some consolation on the way back.

26 February

After breakfast at 8am we tried for *Bronze-winged Courser* at **Nema** once more. No luck again, but two *Pearl-spotted Owlets* performed well with one chased away by a gorgeous big bully *Grey-headed Bushshrike* and with several more new birds for the trip turning up: *Lizard Buzzard*, a pair of *Northern Puffback*, *Northern Black Flycatcher*, *African Paradise Flycatcher* and *Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat*. We then drove back to Banjul, with a 2.5 hour stop at **Farasutu Forest**, where the local guide took us into the forest showing us a roosting *African Wood Owl* with *Little Greenbul*, *Violet Touraco* and *Western Bluebill* along the way. At the feeders we were lucky with a magnificent *Guinea Touraco* at ease and also saw *Black-necked* (plenty) and *Black-headed Weaver* (one) here and *Black-winged Red Bishop* and a showy male *Brown-throated Wattle-eye*.



Spotted Honeyguide would not show here, but at the other side of the forest there were also feeders and here there sure was a *Spotted Honeyguide* with two roosting *Greyish Eagle Owls* nearby. Roosting Standard-winged Nightjars in leaf litter are also almost guaranteed here, but unfortunately they had been disturbed by young kids collecting fire wood and seemed to have left the area. Back at **Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu** at diner time we heard that our PCR tests were rescheduled for tonight and after four hours of total chaos we managed to get tested and were told that we would obtain the test results the next morning just before our flight home.



Guinea Touraco



Spotted Honeyguide

27 February We were picked up at 11.30 am for our trip to the airport, so we still had some time to find a *Giant Kingfisher* at **Kotu Bridge** and after waiting for half an hour one appeared on wires overhead allowing great photos. Ebrima offered us to help us on a final attempt to find African Swampphen in the ponds at the **Cycle track**, but we could only find the usual suspects. At the hotel a visit to the official Gambian Covid 19 website learned that we both tested negative and with our COVID 19 certificate on our phones we were happy to fly back home, arriving in Amsterdam just before midnight.



Giant Kingfisher and African Jacana, Kotu



Species lists, lifers in **bold** print.

Birds

White-faced Whistling Duck, *dendrocygna viduata*; thirteen at Kotu.

Spur-winged Goose, *plectropterus gambensis*; 40 birds on a roadside pool between Kaur and Farafenni, North Bank Road. Two at Tendaba camp and 15 on our Tendaba boat trip.

Helmeted Guineafowl, *numida meleagris*; two at Nema , east of Tendaba.

Stone Partridge, *ptilopachus petrosus*; a roadside covey of nine at Kwinella, Tendaba. Three birds heard singing around Kaur Lodge.

Double-spurred Spurfowl, *pternistis bicalcaratus*: widespread.

Mottled Spinetail, *telacanthura ussheri*; one over over the Banjul Ferry terminal and one over Farasutu Forest.

African Palm Swift, *cypsiurus parvus*; four over Kotu Creek.

Common Swift, *apus apus*; two over Tendaba Camp.

Pallid Swift, *apus pallidus*; one south of Tendaba Camp.

Little Swift, *apus affinis*; 25 over over the Banjul Ferry terminal.

Western Plantain-eater, *crinifer piscator*; common in and around Kotu; eight north of Nema, east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Violet Turaco, *tauraco violaceus*; one Farasutu Forest.

Guinea Turaco, *tauraco persa*; one Farasutu Forest, showing up and showing well at the feeders.

Savile's Bustard, *lophotis savilei*; heard at Kaur Lodge in the afternoon and at dusk; one flushed at GPS 13.586, -15.460 North Bank Road, northeast of Dibba Kd.

Senegal Coucal, *centropus senegalensis*; widespread.

Four-banded Sandgrouse, *pterocles quadricinctus*; one flushed at 13.585, -15.459, bustard site.

Speckled Pigeon, *columba guinea*; common in the Banjul and Kotu area.

Namaqua Dove, *oena capensis*; common.



Bruce's Green Pigeon, *treron waalia*; seven in fruiting trees near Kaur Lodge.

European Turtle Dove, *streptopelia turtur*; one Njau wetlands.

Mourning Collared Dove, *streptopelia decipiens*; common.

Red-eyed Dove, *streptopelia semitorquata*; common.

Vinaceous Dove, *streptopelia vinacea*; very common.

Laughing Dove, *spilopelia senegalensis*; common.

Black-billed Wood Dove, *turtur abyssinicus*; common.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove, *turtur afer*; one Tendaba Camp; one Farasutu Forest.

Common Moorhen, *gallinula chloropus*; one at a roadside pond at North Bank Road, see info Black-crowned Crane; one at Cycle Track Lily Pond, Kotu.

Black Crake, *zapornia flavirostra*; one at a roadside pond at North Bank Road, see next species; one at Cycle Track Lily Pond, Kotu.

Black Crowned Crane, *balearica pavonina*; seven birds in total in the Kaur area: two adults and a juvenile near Kaur Lodge, another two birds flying over here. Two adult birds performed well at a roadside pond along North Bank Road, GPS 13.571, -15.564.

Little Grebe, *tachybaptus ruficollis*; one at Kaur.

Senegal Thick-knee, *burhinus senegalensis*; common at Kotu.

Black-winged Stilt, *himantopus himantopus*; Kotu.

Spur-winged Lapwing, *vanellus spinosus*; Kotu.

Black-headed Lapwing, *vanellus tectus*; common in dry farmland along North Bank Road, four at Kaur Lodge and several pairs around Nema east of Tendaba.

African Wattled Lapwing, *vanellus senegallus*; common.

Grey Plover, *pluvialis squatarola*; 20+ Tendaba Old Airport.

Common Ringed Plover, *charadrius hiaticula*; small numbers Kotu Creek.

Little Ringed Plover, *charadrius dubius*; small numbers Kotu Creek.

Greater Painted-snipe, *rostratula benghalensis*; five female and a male seen from the ramshackle 'hide' at the Cycle track behind the Kunta Kinteh Beach Complex in Kotu, GPS 13.459, -16.709. On the approach Ebrima will come up to you and show you the birds; he will be waiting for you, send him our best regards. We also flushed a bird at nearby Kalima Beach Resort.



African Jacana, *actophilornis africanus*; common.

Eurasian Whimbrel, *numenius phaeopus*; one Banjul Ferry and one Kotu Creek.

Ruff, *calidris pugnax*; one North Bank.

Common Sandpiper, *actitis hypoleucos*; common migrant.

Green Sandpiper, *tringa ochropus*; widespread migrant.

Common Redshank, *tringa totanus*; four Tendaba Old Airport.

Common Greenshank, *tringa nebularia*; one Kotu Creek.

Temminck's Courser, *cursorius temminckii*; two in dry bushy farmland along North Bank Road at GPS 13.582, -15.457.

Collared Pratincole, *glareola pratincola*; four at Kaur wetland and three at Njau wetlands.

Grey-headed Gull, *chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*; 100+ from the Banjul-Barra ferry; a few birds at Kotu, in front of our Palm Beach Hotel.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, *larus fuscus*; at least 80 from the Banjul-Barra ferry.

Gull-billed Tern, *gelochelidon nilotica*; three the Banjul Ferry terminal; five at Kaur wetlands.

Caspian Tern, *hydroprogne caspia*; one over Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu and two at the Banjul Ferry terminal.

West African Crested Tern, *thalasseus albididorsalis*; one seen from the Banjul Ferry terminal and sixteen seen on the Banjul-Barra ferry crossing.

Sandwich Tern, *thalasseus sandwicensis*; one seen from the Banjul Ferry terminal and one seen on the Banjul-Barra ferry crossing.

Pomarine Jaeger, *stercorarius pomarinus*; two from the Banjul-Barra ferry.

Parasitic Jaeger, *stercorarius parasiticus*; three from the Banjul-Barra ferry.

Yellow-billed Stork, *mycteria ibis*; one at Tendaba Camp, near the boat ramp and one on the Tendaba boat trip.

Woolly-necked Stork, *ciconia episcopus*; one on our Tendaba boat trip.

African Darter, *anhinga rufa*; one Cycle track, Lilly Pond; two flying over Kaur wetlands; common in the Tendaba Mangrove Area.

Reed Cormorant, *microcarbo africanus*; common Kotu.

White-breasted Cormorant, *phalacrocorax lucidus*; two over Kololi; two from the Banjul-Barra ferry; two at Tendaba Camp and common during the Tendaba boat trip.

African Sacred Ibis, *threskiornis aethiopicus*; nine at the Cycle track, Kotu.

Hadada Ibis, *bostrychia hagedash*; one at a pond along North Bank Road, Black-crowned Crane site.

African Spoonbill, *platalea alba*; six at Tendaba Old Airport; three at Cycle track, Kotu.

White-backed Night Heron, *gorsachius leuconotus*; one in the mangroves on the Tendaba boat trip.

Black-crowned Night Heron, *nycticorax nycticorax*; common.

Striated Heron, *butorides striata*; two at Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu.

Squacco Heron, *ardeola ralloides*; common, e.g. seven Cycle track, Lilly Pond, Kotu

Grey Heron, *ardea cinerea*; one Banjul Ferry terminal; two at Cycle track, Kotu.

Black-headed Heron, *ardea melanocephala*; widespread.

Purple Heron, *ardea purpurea*; one at Njau wetlands; one at Cycle track, Lilly Pond, Kotu.

Great Egret, *ardea alba*; one Banjul Ferry terminal.

Intermediate Egret, *ardea intermedia*; a few birds Kotu.

Black Heron, *egretta ardesiaca*; common at Kotu. A flock of 30 birds at Kaur wetlands.

Little Egret, *egretta garzetta*; widespread.

Western Reef Heron, *egretta gularis*; common.

Hamerkop, *scopus umbretta*; widespread.



Pink-backed Pelican, *elecanus rufescens*; one seen during the Banjul-Barra ferry crossing; eight on the Gambia River, Tendaba camp; one over Kaur.

Western Osprey, *pandion haliaetus*; one over Kotu Bridge.

African Harrier-Hawk, *polyboroides typus*; common.

Palm-nut Vulture, *gypohierax angolensi*; one over Banjul; two North Bank Road, Kerr Fodeba; two over our Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu.

Hooded Vulture, *necrosyrtes monachus*; fortunately, still common in The Gambia.

White-backed Vulture, *gyps africanus*; two North Bank Road, west of Farafenni; one South Bank Road, Foni Bondali; four over Kiang Central, just east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Rüppell's Vulture, *gyps rueppelli*; one over Kiang Central, just east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Short-toed Snake Eagle, *circaetus gallicus*; one over Tendaba Mangrove Area.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, *circaetus beaudouini*; one over Njau wetlands near Kaur.

Brown Snake Eagle, *circaetus cinereus*; one over Farafenni, North bank Road; one at Kiang Central.

Bateleur, *terathopius ecaudatus*; adults over Kaur and Kiang West.

Martial Eagle, *polemaetus bellicosus*; one perched just east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Long-crested Eagle, *lophaetus occipitalis*; one at Tendaba Old Airport.

Wahlberg's Eagle, *hieraaetus wahlbergi*; widespread, at least four seen.

Booted Eagle, *hieraaetus pennatus*; one North Bank.

Tawny Eagle, *aquila rapax*; one high over Tendaba Mangrove Area.

African Hawk-Eagle, *aquila spilogaster*; two circling over Nema, Kiang Central, east of Tendaba.



African Fish Eagle, *haliaeetus vocifer*; two at Kaur wetlands.

Lizard Buzzard, *kaupifalco monogrammicus*; one near King West National Park.

Gabar Goshawk, *micronisus gabar*; one on the ground at Njau wetlands and on two occasions roadside birds along North Bank Road in the Kaur area.

Dark Chanting Goshawk, *melierax metabates*; two along North Bank Road on our way to Kaur; two near Kaur Lodge; one east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Shikra, *accipiter badius*; widespread.

Western Marsh Harrier, *circus aeruginosus*; two at Kaur wetland.

Yellow-billed Kite, *milvus aegyptius*; very common.

Black Kite, *milvus migrans*; a few birds seen.

Grasshopper Buzzard, *butastur rufipennis*; one along North Bank Road en route to Kaur wetlands.

Lesser Honeyguide, *indicator minor*; one north of Nema, just east of Tendaba.

Spotted Honeyguide, *indicator maculatus*; one Farasutu Forest; reliable at the feeders there.

Greater Honeyguide, *indicator indicator*; female at the Kwinella hide, Tendaba.

Fine-spotted Woodpecker, *campethera punctuligera*; one in dry savanna woodland just east of Nema, Kiang Central.

African Grey Woodpecker, *dendropicos goertae*; a male at Kotu Creek.

Brown-backed Woodpecker, *dendropicos obsoletus*; one east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Common Kestrel, *falco tinnunculus*; a female along North Bank Road.

Grey Kestrel, *falco ardosiaceus*; one Cycle track, Lily Pond in Kotu; three along North Bank Road.

Red-necked Falcon, *falco chicquera*; one Tendaba Camp.

African Hobby, *falco cuvierii*; one in savanna woodland near the village of Nema, Kiang Central, GPS 13.410, -15.746 .

Lanner Falcon, *falco biarmicus*; one Kiang Central.

Senegal Parrot, *poicephalus senegalus*; widespread.

Rose-ringed Parakeet, *psittacula krameri*; two Kotu; two Njau wetlands.

Western Barn Owl, *tyto alba*; one flushed while looking for coursers and bustards along North Bank Road; one flying over Tendaba Camp.

Pearl-spotted Owlet, *glucidium perlatum*; one near Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu, one Kiang Central, two near Nema the next day.

Greyish Eagle-Owl, *bubo cinerascens*; two roosting at Farasutu Forest.



Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, *bubo lacteus*; two roosting just outside Nema village, east of Tendaba at GPS 13.416, -15.747.

African Wood Owl, *strix woodfordii*; a roosting bird at Farasutu Forest.

Eurasian Hoopoe, *upupa epops*; one at Nema.

Green Wood Hoopoe, *phoeniculus purpureus*; two in the Kotu area; one near Tendaba Camp.

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, *bucorvus abyssinicus*; it took some searching, but I finally spotted a pair at GPS 13.418, -15.772, between Tendaba Camp and Nema.

Western Red-billed Hornbill, *tockus kempj*; common.

African Grey Hornbill, *lophoceros nasutus*; one Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu; four Kaur Lodge; six north of Nema, east of Tendaba.

Purple Roller, *coracias naevius*; one roadside bird North Bank Road.

Abyssinian Roller, *coracias abyssinicus*; common.



Blue-bellied Roller, *coracias cyanogaster*; common Kotu, at least six seen around the hotel. The Cycle track is a very good site to find this species.

Broad-billed Roller, *eurystomus glaucurus*; one behind our Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu.

Striped Kingfisher, *halcyon chelicuti*; one along North Bank Road; one Kwinella, Tendaba.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher, *halcyon malimbica*; common at Kotu; three Tendaba Mangrove Area.

Woodland Kingfisher, *halcyon senegalensis*; one near our Palm Beach Hotel in Kotu.

Malachite Kingfisher, *corythornis cristatus*; one behind Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu; one Njau wetlands; one Farasutu Forest.

Giant Kingfisher, *megaceryle maxima*; hard to miss at Kotu Bridge.

Pied Kingfisher, *ceryle rudis*; common.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, *merops hirundineus*; one in dry forest near Nema, just east of Tendaba Camp.

Little Bee-eater, *merops pusillus*; five at Kotu.

Red-throated Bee-eater, *merops bulocki*; two at Njau wetlands, GPS 13.740, -15.207.

White-throated Bee-eater, *merops albicollis*; one on the Tendaba boat trip.

African Green Bee-eater, *merops viridissimus*; three at Njau wetlands.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, *merops persicus*; common, (20+, biggest flock 7) at Kotu; six at Banjul.

European Bee-eater, *merops apiaster*; three over Tendaba Camp.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, *pogoniulus chrysoconus*; three in the Tendaba area.

Vieillot's Barbet, *lybius vieillotii*; one near Ndungu Kebbe, North Bank Road; one near the Kwinella hide, Tendaba.

Bearded Barbet, *lybius dubius*; three in fruiting trees near Kaur Lodge.

Senegal Batis, *batis senegalensis*; one at Kwinella, Tendaba.

Brown-throated Wattle-eye, *platysteira cyanea*; a male at Farasutu Forest.

Grey-headed Bushshrike, *malaconotus blanchoti*; one Kiang Central and one attacking a Pearl-spotted Owlet at Kiang West National Park.

Black-crowned Tchagra, *tchagra senegalus*; one near Kaur Lodge.

Northern Puffback, *dryoscopus gambensis*; two Kiang West National Park.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek, *lanarius barbarus*; one Kotu Bridge; one in dry woodland forest Kiang Central; two Kiang West National Park.

Brubru, *nilaus afer*; two at Kwinella, Tendaba.

White-crested Helmetshrike, *prionops plumatus*; flock of eight birds in Kiang Central, west of Nema.

Yellow-billed Shrike, *corvinella corvina*; easily seen at Kotu.

Woodchat Shrike, *lanius senator*; one along North Bank Road; one near Kaur Lodge.

African Golden Oriole, *oriolus auratus*; one Kwinella, Tendaba.

Glossy-backed Drongo, *dicrurus divaricatus*; several birds seen at Njau wetlands and at Kotu, the Cycle track is a good area to find them.

African Paradise Flycatcher, *terpsiphone viridis*; a male Kiang West National Park.

Piapiac, *ptilostomus afer*; common in the Kotu area.

Pied Crow, *corvus albus*; common.

White-shouldered Black Tit, *melaniparus guineensis*; two at Kwinella, Tendaba.

Yellow Penduline Tit, *anthoscopus parvulus*; two at Kwinella, Tendaba, one Tendaba Camp Soccerfields.

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, *eremopterix leucotis*; two in dry bushy farmland along North Bank Road, GPS 13.583, -15.458.

Common Bulbul, *pycnonotus barbatus*; common.

Little Greenbul, *eurillas virens*; one at Farasutu Forest.

Sand Martin, *riparia riparia*; one at Kaur wetlands; 50 at Njau wetlands.

Barn Swallow, *hirundo rustica*; six over Kaur Lodge.

Red-chested Swallow, *hirundo lucida*; one at Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu.

Wire-tailed Swallow, *hirundo smithii*; easy to find at Kotu Bridge; two birds near the swimming pool of Palm Beach Hotel; two at the Banjul Ferry terminal.

Common House Martin, *delichon urbicum*; one at Kaur wetlands.

West African Swallow, *cecropis domicella*; five at Banjul International Airport; nine at Kaur Lodge.

Northern Crombec, *sylvietta brachyura*; two near Kotu Bridge; one Kiang Central.

Western Bonelli's Warbler, *phylloscopus bonelli*; one Tendaba Mangrove Area.

Sedge Warbler, *acrocephalus schoenobaenus*; one at Njau wetlands.

Western Olivaceous Warbler, *iduna opaca*; one Njau wetlands; one Farasutu Forest.

Dorst's Cisticola, *cisticola guinea*; a bird often hard to connect with in The Gambia. We found one in savanna woodland of Kiang Central, east of Nema, GPS 13.408, -15.744.

Zitting Cisticola, *cisticola juncidis*; one Kiang Central.

Rufous Cisticola, *cisticola rufus*; one Kiang Central.

Tawny-flanked Prinia, *prinia subflava*; two Kotu, two Kaur Lodge.

Red-winged Prinia, *prinia erythroptera*; two near a big roadside pond along North Bank Road, GPS 13.571, -15.564.

Oriole Warbler, *hypergerus atriceps*; singing at Kotu Bridge.

Grey-backed Camaroptera, *camaroptera brevicaudata*, two Kiang Central.

Senegal Eremomela, *eremomela pusilla*; three at Kwinella, Tendaba, six Kiang Central.

Common Whitethroat, *curruca communis*; one near Kaur Lodge.

Northern Yellow White-eye, *zosterops senegalensis*; two at Kwinella, Tendaba, two Kiang Central.

Blackcap Babbler, *turdoides reinwardtii*; in dry woodland along North Bank Road, GPS 13.499, -16.430.

Brown Babbler, *turdoides plebejus*; one in Kololi; one Kiang Central; three Kiang West NP.

Greater Blue-eared Starling, *lamprotornis chalybaeus*; one Tendaba Camp, in flock of Lesser Blue-eared Starlings.

Lesser Blue-eared Starling, *lamprotornis chloropterus*; one Banjul; 19 Tendaba Camp; one Kwinella hide.

Bronze-tailed Starling, *lamprotornis chalcurus*; three Njau wetlands; two north of Nema, Kiang Central.

Purple Starling, *lamprotornis purpureus*; two near Kaur Lodge.

Long-tailed Glossy Starling, *lamprotornis caudatus*; common in hotel gardens at Kotu.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker, *buphagus africanus*; six on cattle at Kwinella Mosque, Tendaba, GPS 13.404, -15.803.



African Thrush, *turdus pelios*; one at Kaur Lodge; two Farasutu Forest.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, *cercotrichas galactotes*; two near Kaur Lodge.

Northern Black Flycatcher, *melaenornis edolioides*; one Kiang Central and a pair at Kiang West National Park.

White-crowned Robin-Chat, *cosypha albicapillus*; one Farasutu Forest.

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, *cosypha niveicapilla*; one Kiang West NP.

Common Redstart, *phoenicurus phoenicurus*; one Tendaba Camp.

Anteater Chat, *myrmecocichla aethiops*; two along North Bank Road, GPS 13.533, -16.253.

Northern Wheatear, *oenanthe oenanthe*; one along North Bank Road.

White-fronted Black Chat, *oenanthe albifrons*; one in open woodland along North Bank Road, GPS 13.533, -16.213.

Mangrove Sunbird, *anthreptes gabonicus*; three Tendaba Mangrove Area.

Pygmy Sunbird, *hedydipna platura*; a pair in dry woodland North Bank Road, GPS 13.499, -16.430 and a male along the same road to the east near Ndungu Kebbe; two Njau wetlands; a male at Kaur Lodge; four Kwinella, Tendaba; one Kiang Central.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird, *chacomitra senegalensis*; one Kaur Lodge; 13 Kiang Central.

Beautiful Sunbird, *cinnyris pulchellus*; common.

Splendid Sunbird, *cinnyris coccinigastrus*; one Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu; two Kotu ponds.

Variable Sunbird, *cinnyris venustus*; one along North Bank Road; one at Kwinella, Tendaba; three Kiang Central.

Sahel Bush Sparrow, *gymnoris dentata*; one at Kaur Lodge; five Kwinella hide, Tendaba; four Tendaba Camp.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, *passer griseus*; common.

White-billed Buffalo Weaver, *bubalornis albirostris*; common Kotu.

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, *plocepasser superciliosus*; one North Bank Road, GPS 13.582, -15.458.

Little Weaver, *ploceus luteolus*; one in savanna woodland in non-breeding plumage just east of Kwinella, Tendaba.

Black-necked Weaver, *ploceus nigricollis*; eight at the feeders in Farasutu Forest.

Black-headed Weaver, *ploceus melanocephalus*; one at the feeders in Farasutu Forest.

Vitelline Masked Weaver, *ploceus vitellinus*; one in non-breeding plumage in mixed flock with bishops and canaries at Kwinella hide near Tendaba Camp.

Village Weaver, *ploceus cucullatus*; common.

Red-billed Quelea, *quelea quelea*; 25 Njau wetlands; flock of 500+ at Kaur wetlands.

Black-winged Red Bishop, *euplectes hordeaceus*; one Farasutu Forest in non-breeding plumage.

Northern Red Bishop, *euplectes franciscanus*; two Kotu Bridge, non-breeding plumage, several flocks Kwinella, Tendaba.

Red-winged Pytilia, *pytilia phoenicoptera*; good numbers in and around Tendaba Camp, biggest flock held eight birds.



Cut-throat Finch, *amadina fasciata*; two Njau wetlands, four Tendaba Camp.

Western Bluebill, *spermophaga haematina*; one Farasutu Forest.

Red-billed Firefinch, *lagonosticta senegala*; common.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, *uraeginthus bengalus*; small flock Palm Beach Hotel, Kotu; a few birds in a mixed flock at Kwinella hide, Tendaba.

Lavender Waxbill, *laucestrilda caerulescens*; one Tendaba Camp.

Black-rumped Waxbill, *estrilda troglodytes*; common, biggest flocks at Njau wetlands (seven) and at Tendaba Camp (eleven).

Bronze Mannikin, *spermestes cucullata*; flock of eight birds near Kotu Bridge; three at Tendaba Camp soccerfields.

Village Indigobird, *vidua chalybeata*; a male near Kaur Lodge; one at Tendaba Camp.

Sahel / Long-tailed Paradise Whydah, *vidua orientalis/interjecta*; males were Long-tailed (two adult summer plumage Njau wetlands), female birds (two along North Bank Road near Ngeyen Sanjal, GPS 13.613, -15.435) might have been Sahel Paradise Whydah.

Western Yellow Wagtail, *motacilla flava*; eight at Njau wetlands: seven flava, one male flavissima; 20 at Kaur wetlands.

White Wagtail, *motacilla alba*; two at the beach in front of the Banjul Ferry terminal.

White-rumped Seedeater, *crithagra leucopygia*; one Kaur Lodge; five at Tendaba Camp.

Yellow-fronted Canary, *crithagra mozambica*; 20+ Kwinella hide, three Kiang Central. -

Gosling's Bunting, *emberiza goslingi*; a male at Kaur Lodge; a pair at Tendaba Camp.



Gosling's Buntings at Kaur and Tendaba Camp

Brown-rumped Bunting, *emberiza affinis*; one at Kiang Central, east of Nema, GPS 13.408, -15.745.

Butterflies



Grey Elfin



Desert Babul Blue

Foolish Swift of Long-horned Swift, *borbo fatuellus*; Kotu.

Lesser Millet Skipper, *pelopidas mathias*; Kotu.

Prosopalpus styla; Kotu.

Grey Elfin, *sarangesa loelius*; Kwinella and Kiang Central.

Clouded Forester, *tagiades flesus*; Farasutu Forest.

Angola White-lady Swordtail, *graphium angolanus*; Kotu.

Veined Swallowtail, *graphium leonidas*; Kotu.

Christmas Butterfly, *papilio demodocus*; Kotu.

Round-winged Orange Tip, *colotis euippe*; Tendaba Camp.

Desert Orange-tip, *colotis evagore*; North Bank.

African Migrant, *catopsilia florella*; Kotu and North Bank.

African Albatross, *appias epaphia*; Kotu.

African Caper White, *belenois aurota*; Kotu.

Creamy Small White, *dixeia orbona*; Kotu and Tendaba Camp.

Small Grass Yellow, *eurema brigitta*; Tendaba Camp.

Common Grass Yellow, *eurema hecabe*; Kotu.

Common Dotted Border, *mylothris chloris*; North Bank.

Zebra White, *pinacopteryx eriphia*; Tendaba Camp and Kiang Central.

Common Tiger Blue, *tarucus theophrastus*; Kotu, Tendaba Camp and Kiang Central.

Long-tailed Blue, *lampides boeticus*; Kotu and Tendaba Camp.

Lang's Short-tailed Blue, *leptotes pirithous*; Kaur Lodge and Tendaba Camp.

Babault's Blue, *leptotes babaulti*; Tendaba Camp.

African Grass Blue, *zizeeria knysna*; Kotu and Tendaba Camp.

Sky-blue Cupid, *chilades eleusis*; Kotu.

Desert Babul Blue, *azanus ubaldus*; Kotu.

Brown Playboy, *deudorix antalus*; Tendaba Camp.

Smoky Bean Cupid, *euchrysops malathana*; Tendaba Camp.

Savanna Pied Pierrot, *tuxentius cretosus*; Kotu.

Clover Blue, *zizina antanossa*; Tendaba Camp.

African Monarch, *danaus chrysippus*; Kotu.

Elegant Acraea, *acraea egina*; Farasutu Forest.

Bushveld Emperor, *charaxes achaemenes*; Tendaba Camp.

Guineafowl, *hamanumida daedalus*; North Bank Road and Kwinella.



Little Comodore, *junonia sophia*; Kotu.

Dark Blue Pansy, *junonia oenone*; Kotu.

Swamp Ringlet, *ypthimomorpha itonia*; Kotu.

Dragonflies



Northern Banded Groundling



Portia Widow

Common Orange, *ceriagrion glabrum*; Kotu.

Northern Banded Groundling, *brachythemis impartita*; Njau wetlands.

Broad Scarlet, *crocothemis erythraea*; Kotu.

Black Percher, *dipladoes lefebvrii*; Kotu.

Red Rock-dweller, *bradinopyga strachani*; Tendaba camp.

Spectacled Skimmer, *orthetrum icteromelas*; Tendaba camp.

Woodland Skimmer, *orthetrum monardi*; Tendaba camp.

Portia Widow, *palpopleura portia*; common.

Reptiles



Senegambia Wall Gecko, *tarentola senegambiae*

African Wall Gecko, *tarentola ehippata*

Agama Lizard, *agama agama*

Nile Monitor, *varanus niloticus*

Puff Adder, *bitis arietans*

Forest Cobra, *naja melanoleuca*

West African Crocodile, *crocodylus suchus*

Mammals

Green Monkey, *chlorocebus sabaeus*

Patas Monkey, *erythrocebus patas*

Guinea Baboon, *papio papio*

Gambian Sun Squirrel, *heliosciurus gambianus*

Striped Ground Squirrel, *xerus erythropus*

Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat, *epomophorus gambianus*

Written by Jaap Westra, jaapwestra@icloud.com

Photos by Jaap & Tom westra

Extra pictures:

Little Bee-eater, Kotu

Greater Painted-snipes, Kotu

Savile's Bustard Site

North Bank Road

Tom and view from Kaur Lodge (2x)

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

Tendaba Boat trip, Tom, Fatou, Jaap, Abdoulie (2x)











