

Trip report: The Gambia 12-19/2 1999

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Arrangements and weather

We booked our trip from Spies charter with departure from Copenhagen. We paid 5350 SEK (405£) per person which included bed and breakfast. We stayed at the Bakotu hotel in the Kotu area. The location was perfect with Kotu Stream, Fajara golf course and Casino cycle track in the surroundings. Room and services were fully satisfactory and the pool was much appreciated during the hot hours. Watch out for the monkeys though! We almost got one of them into our room trying to snatch oranges. It was our fault however, leaving oranges at the balcony rail to get them more ripe.

We changed all our money at the hotel. Rates: 1 SEK = 1,37 D, 1\$ = 10,60 D, 1£ = 17,75 D. You can get better rates at exchange offices in the street but they will charge you a commission fee. There is also private money exchangers offering 11.10 D/1\$.

The temperature in Sweden was -15°C when we left and $+34^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Banjul airport. So the heat was much appreciated even though we started with long trousers and sweater during the morning hours despite temperatures at c 20°C . However, one of our British fellow birdwatchers, Mick from Lincolnshire, started in shorts and t-shirts. But he has a solid background as footballer playing the whole winter through in a similar dress ☺. Most days were sunny with little wind and these proved to be the best for birdwatching. We had a couple of days with strong wind which made the birds keeping down low in bushes.

Bird guides

A month before departure we wrote a letter to Lamin Sidibeh, whom was recommended to us by Swedish birdwatchers, asking for a tour suggestion and prices. There are other guides trained by Lamin and among them Siidy Saidy was recommended to us by birdwatchers we met during the first day. Lamin has also a brother, Ebrimah, who has had a good reputation. This was not confirmed by birders we met. Obviously he is overcharging and even trying to raise an agreed price during the tour. According to Lamin he is also cheating, making observations up.

The first evening we met a guy called Lamin Touray, whom we booked for the next day. The rest of the week we engaged Lamin Sidibeh for a two day trip to Tendaba and two and a half day around the coastal area. He charged us D 1100:-/pers for the Tendaba trip including accommodation, supper, breakfast and creektour. For the rest we paid D 1200:-/pers. Lamin is very skilful with more than 15 years field experience of the Gambian birdlife. Several times he managed to draw out skulkers by imitating their calls. His guiding was top class and we strongly recommend him especially for first time visitors to West Africa. It is advisable to book him in advance, especially during high season. Of course the bargaining position will be better for groups. His price for tours in the coastal area is D 1200:- for a full day and D 700:- for a halfday.

Restaurants, hustlers etc

There are quite a few restaurants in the Kotu area. Our favourites were Kotu Bendula bar (try the barracuda steak!), the beach bar at Palma Rima (delicious prawns) and Sir Williams (expensive but the Chicken Yassa is well worth it) Prices for a meal ranged between D 45:- and 160:- and a small beer (Julbrew) from D 10:- to 17. There are three supermarkets in the area but its more favourable to shop at markets in the villages. We tried to support the locals by spending most of our money there.

You easily get a lot of "friends" in the Kotu area, following you wherever you go and asking for facts as your name, country and how long you are staying. They can be quite a nuisance and if you start a longer discussion with them it always ends up with them asking for money or addresses. We didn't want to be rude so our tactics was to start speaking Swedish with each other after having replied theirs "Hello my friends". This worked pretty good.

Books, addresses etc.

- A field guide to the birds of the Gambia and Senegal – *Barlow, Wacher, Disney*
- Field guide to the birds of Europe – *Jonsson*
- A birdwatchers' guide to the Gambia – *Ward*

- Lamin Sidibeh
Sani Ceesay
c/o Customs & Excise Dept.
Wellington Street, Banjul
the Gambia
- Tendaba Camp
Telephone: 541024 - Fax: 541030
Tourist-bed: D 135:-
Excursions 2 hour by boat or jeep: D 90:-
- Maps: Macmillan has a fairly good map. Sold at Bungalow Beach hotels supermarket; D 75:-.

Diary

Friday 12/2

We arrived at the hotel around 16.00, checked in and half an hour later we were heading for Fajara golf course. We soon had a handful of lifers such as Beautiful Sunbird, Western Grey Plantain-eater and Longtailed Glossy Starling and at the island in Kotu Stream a Giant Kingfisher briefly showed. There we were contacted by a birdguide called Lamin Touray. He offered us a full day guiding to Brufut, Tujering and Casino cycle track for D 600:-. We birded with him for an hour and then agreed for the next day.

Saturday 13/2

We left the hotel at 7.00 for Brufut Woods where we birded for two and a half hours. During the morning we got our single Senegal Batis and Violet-backed Sunbird. Brufut is an exciting area and a visit here is recommended. We went on to Tujering, a location for Verraux's Eagle Owl and ended up at Tanji Fishery where we found waders and gulls. Our guide was good at finding perched birds but he made a couple of mistakes mixing up Common Wattleye and Senegal Batis and Little Swift and Mottled Spinetail. At half past four we met Lamin Sidibeh at the Kotu bridge and made up the Tendaba trip. We spent the afternoon at the Casino cycle track where the Long-tailed Nightjars appeared at 19.20.

Sunday 14/2

After breakfast we walked to Kotu Stream where we came across Lamin Sidibeh. Apparently being out of work this morning he took us for a short walk along the stream and the old rice fields which resulted for instance in cisticolas and Greater Painted-Snipe. We went on birding on our own at the cycle track searching for birds like Yellow-throated Longclaw, Black-crowned Tchagra and warblers. At noon we were back for the midday rest at the hotel enjoying a nest-building Beautiful Sunbird from the pool. In the afternoon we made an attempt for White-faced Scops Owl at the golf course without result. We continued to Atlantic road and tried to get in to the MRC grounds, but without having made an appointment with the office we couldn't get in. Pity, because the grounds looked very interesting and through the fence we spotted White-crowned Robin-chat and Northern Puffback.

Monday 15/2

The first hour we spent at the golf course searching for owls. It resulted in our first Striped Kingfisher. At 9.00 Abdu Rahman, the driver, and Lamin picked us up for the Tendaba trip, which we made together with an English couple. The first stop was Pirang where the Black-crowned Cranes usually show up around 10 o'clock. Other longer stops were Faraba Banta fields, Brumen bridge and Kampanti rice fields. In addition to this we made short stops when Lamin spotted something perched or flying. One of those gave us a good view of an adult Bateleur. We arrived at Tendaba at 16.30, made a quick check-in and were soon off again for the old airfield. Here we made a two and a half hour walk in the savannah woodland. Viellot's Barbets were calling everywhere, Pygmy Sunbirds singing, Red-billed Quelea in a flock with bishops and Western Baboons foraging in the grassland. Lamin and his driver, Abdu Rahman, is maintaining a waterhole to keep the birds staying in the area. Around this we found Plain-backed Pipit, Fourbanded Sandgrouse and Longtailed Nightjar. In the southern part of the airfield we finally found a couple of Abyssinian Ground Hornbill.

Tuesday 16/2

Before breakfast we had an one hour walk behind the camp. New birds here were Blue-breasted Kingfisher and Brown-necked Parrot. After breakfast we boarded a pirogue for the creektour which lasted for almost three hours. It started off with a Peregrine Falcon crossing the river, we entered Kisi bolon where we soon encountered a male Finfoot, sitting on a mangrove root. A magnificent bird with much brighter colours than the fieldguide shows. It continued with a couple of Mosque Swallow, a White-backed Night Heron and Goliath Heron. There wasn't much singing during the tour which made us more alert on checking the calls we heard. And it finally paid off with two Blue Flycatchers crossing the creek in front of us.

The stay at Tendaba proved to be far better than we hoped for. The huts were good with mosquito net around the bed (the mosquitoes were uncommon though) and the meal we had was real tasty. An extra day here would have been needed to visit all the interesting locations around Tendaba.

At half past twelve we were off for the coast again making stops at the same locations as yesterday (except Pirang). Back at the hotel at 18.00.

Wednesday 17/2

Lamin picked us up at 7.30 and together with Mick (who accompanied us during the rest of Lamins guiding) we went to Marakissa. Marakissa is a combination of wetland, farmland and woodland situated c 25 km SSE of Kotu. We were told that it is a very good place for raptors and we had our single African Hobby here together with eleven other species. A Broad-billed Roller passed us quickly and in the woodland Lamin heard a Spotted Honeyguide calling far away. We located it to a Mahogany tree but weren't able to find it among the confusing spotted leaves. All Herons and Egrets except the Night Herons were present in the wetland and in the reeds we found Black Crake. Marakissa is a must for a schedule to the Gambia!

The afternoon we planned having a break from birdwatching. However, when Abdu suggested a trip to Banjul and Bund road we accepted right away. He picked us up at 16.00 and we first made a go for the Pygmy Kingfisher Mick had announced in the Senegambia hotel gardens without finding it. At Bund road we got most of our terns and gulls, African Spoonbills, Sacred Ibis's and Pink-backed Pelicans. Sorting out Lesser Crested Terns from Royal was real tricky. Since we never got to see their rumps we refrained from identifying any Lesser Crested. The tide was low so the distance to the waders at the waterline was too far.

In Banjul Abdu showed us the local market where we spent an hour. We paid D 250:- for the trip.

Thursday 18/2

We were off for Yundum at the usual time, 7.30. At the first stop we found Yellow Penduline Tits in some acacias and a Red-necked Falcon perched some hundred meters away. Red-winged warbler showed up well and in the bushes Lamin heard Red-faced Cisticola which we got a good view at. Yundum is mainly a farmland area and thus quite open. There was little wind this morning so we got good numbers of passerines showing up well. Later on when we searched a peanut field for Temminck's Courser and White-fronted Black Chat the wind had increased so we didn't get the latter.

After the usual midday rest we went to Abuko. Lamin suggested an afternoon visit since the reserve is less visited then and the birds will come to the pool for drinking. The time was perfect. We were almost alone in the reserve and got a lot of good views of birds like Grey-headed Bristlebill, Oriole Warbler, Diederik Cuckoo, Common Wattleeeye, Snowy-crowned Robin-chat and African Paradise Flycatcher. Ahanta Francolin were calling from the thickets but hard to get a view at. On the way back we finally tracked down a couple of Western Bluebill. The entrance fee for the reserve was D 31:50.

Friday 19/2

Our last morning we spent at Brufut Woods and Tanji Reserve. where we hoped to fill in some missing species like Brubru and White-crested Helmet Shrike. The former we got at Brufut but when we arrived at Tanji around 10.00 the wind was too strong so no Shrikes were found.

At Brufut Lamin imitated Klaas's Cuckoo which paid off with a female coming to us. Good comparison could be made with yesterdays Diederik's. A Yellow-bellied Hyliota went in to the same tree while we were waiting for the Klaas's to show up.

On the way to Tanji we stopped at a place for Greater Painted Snipe. Lamin told us that they keep this place secret for protecting the birds. It is hosting up to 10-12 birds and we easily found three in the shades.

At Tanji we first headed for the lagoon where we found the two White-fronted Plovers that Lamin had promised. But due to the strong wind the rest of the birding was poor. The entrance fee was D 35:-. We were back at the hotel at 11.30 and our flight for Copenhagen took off at 16.20.

Itinerary

Friday 12/2	16.30–19.00: Kotu Stream
Saturday 13/2	7.00–12.00: Brufut Woods, Tujering, Tanji Fishery 16.30–19.30: Casino Cycle Track
Sunday 14/2	7.30-12.00: Kotu Stream, Casino Cycle Track 16.30-19.00: Fajara golf course, Atlantic road
Monday 15/2	7.30-8.30: Fajara golf course 9.00-16.30: Pirang, Faraba Banta fields, Brumen bridge, Kampanti rice fields 17.00-20.00: Tendaba Airfield with surrounds
Tuesday 16/2	7.30-8.30: Tendaba rice fields 9.00-12.00: The creeks Kisi Bolon and Tanku Bolon 12.30-18.00: Kampanti rice fields, Brumen bridge, Faraba Banta fields
Wednesday 17/2	7.30-11.30: Marakissa 16.00-18.00: Senegambia Hotel gardens, Bund road
Thursday 18/2	7.30-11.30: Yundum south and north 15.00-18.00: Abuko
Friday 19/2	7.30-11.30: Brufut Woods, Tanji Reserve

Birds

(in order according to plates in "A field guide to birds of the Gambia and Senegal")

- 1. Little Grebe**, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Eight at the Kotu Ponds
- 2. Pink-backed Pelican**, *Pelecanus rufescens*
Seen at Pirang, Tendaba Bund road and Tanji. Largest numbers at Bund road.
- 3. Long-tailed Cormorant**, *Phalacrocorax africanus*
Seen in small numbers wherever there is water.
- 4. African Darter** *Anhinga rufa*
Singles at Pirang and Abuko. Common at Tendaba.
- 5. White-backed Night Heron** *Gorsachius leuconotus*
One skulking in a small channel connecting Kisi and Tanku bolons.
- 6. Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Common at Brumen bridge and Abuko.
- 7. Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
Singles seen at Kotu, Tendaba, Marakissa and Abuko.
- 8. Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
Common throughout.
- 9. Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus*
One flying at Kotu, two in the creek and two at Marakissa.
- 10. Black Egret** *Egretta ardesiaca*
Seen with singles at Kotu and Marakissa.
- 11. Western Reef-Egret** *Egretta gularis*
Seen daily at almost all wetland areas.
- 12. Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
A few were seen at most wetland areas.
- 13. Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*
Two at Kotu and one at Marakissa.
- 14. Great White Egret** *Egretta alba*
Seen at almost all wetlands with highest numbers at Tendaba.
- 15. Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
One at Marakissa.
- 16. Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*
Singles seen at Kotu, Pirang, Marakissa, Yundum (passing) and Abuko.
- 17. Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
Seen with small numbers throughout.
- 18. Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath*
One in Tanku bolon during the creek tour.

- 19.Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*
A few seen at every location near water. Highest numbers at Tendaba and Marakissa.
- 20.Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis*
One at Pirang, two at Tendaba and four at Bund road.
- 21.African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*
Five at Bund road and one passing at Yundum.
- 22.Black Crowned Crane** *Balearica pavonina*
Two coming in at Pirang around 10.30.
- 23.Spur-winged goose** *Plectropterus gambensis*
Two flying at Tendaba airfield.
- 23.Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
Common at Bund road. Seen with singles at Kotu and Marakissa.
- 24.Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
Up to five at Tendaba. One at Marakissa and two at Brufut.
- 25.African Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides typus*
Seen at Brufut and Marakissa and along the road to Tendaba. The majority was adults.
- 26.Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis*
Seen almost daily. We confused one immature at Brumen bridge with African Fish Eagle but the tail colour identified it.
- 27.Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*
Abundant
- 28.Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus*
Abundant
- 29.White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus*
Small groups were seen along the road close to Tendaba. Two perched in a tree at Kwinella village.
- 30.African Hawk Eagle** *Hieraaetus spilogaster*
Two adults were displaying diving and climbing in air along the road to Tendaba.
- 31.Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*
One at Pirang.
- 32.Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis*
Brief views of drinking birds at Kampanti and Marakissa.
- 33.Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus*
Three adults along the road after Brumen bridge to Tendaba.
- 34. Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Common everywhere. We checked the birds we got close and all were of the yellowbilled race *m.m. parasitus*.
- 35.Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis*
One perched at Faraba Banta. Beautiful colours!
- 36.Black-shouldered Kite**
Singles along the road near Brufut and Yundum. One at Pirang.
- 37. Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*
One female behind Tendaba camp.
- 38.Eurasian Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*
Two at Pirang and Marakissa respectively and one at Yundum.
- 39.Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates*
Singles seen from the roadsides and four at Yundum.
- 40.Gabar Goshawk** *Melierax gabar*
Two at Yundum easily separated from the previous specie by the white rump.
- 41.Shikra** *Accipiter badius*
A few seen along the road.
- 42.Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*
Three at Marakissa and three along the road to Brufut.
- 43.Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
One adult at Tendaba and one immature at Abuko.
- 44.Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*
One perched at Pirang, one with prey at Marakissa and one circling over Abuko.
- 45.African Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*
One at Marakissa.
- 46.Red-necked Falcon** *Falco chicquera*

One perched at Yundum. Rarer than we expected.

47. Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*

Seen daily along the roadsides.

48. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

One at Pirang, two at Yundum and one at Tanji.

49. Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*

Common in the Kotu area, Brufut and Tendaba. Easily seen.

50. Ahanta Francolin *Francolinus ahantensis*

Three parties at Abuko were heard but we didn't spot them in the dense thickets.

51. Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*

Three at Brufut crossing the path in front of us.

52. Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus*

Two drinking at a waterhole at Tendaba airfield.

53. Black Crane *Amaurornis flavirostra*

One at Kampanti and three at Marakissa.

54. Greater Painted-Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

One flushed at the old rice fields at Kotu lower bridge and three seen near Brufut.

55. African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

Found at all wetlands with highest numbers at Marakissa.

56. African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

One male in Kisi bolon during the creektour.

57. Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*

Four seen at Yundum in peanut fields.

58. Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis*

Common at Kotu and Tendaba

59. Black-headed Plover *Vanellus tectus*

Common at Fajara and Yundum. Singles seen along the road from Tendaba.

60. Spur-winged Plover *Vanellus spinosus*

The most common plover, seen daily.

61. Wattled Plover *Vanellus senegllus*

Seen almost daily but in fewer numbers than the previous specie.

62. Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common at Kotu and Tanji Fishery.

63. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Two found in a pond near Kotu lower bridge.

64. Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Common at Tanji Fishery and Bund road. Singles at Pirang and Tendaba.

65. White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

Two at the lagoon at Tanji Reserve.

66. Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Seen and heard in small numbers at Kotu and Bund road.

67. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Seen and heard in small numbers at Kotu, Tendaba and Bund road.

68. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Found with up to tens at Kotu. One at Bund road and one at Tanji Reserve.

69. Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Frequent at all wetland sites visited. Seen almost daily.

70. Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Two seen at Kotu.

71. Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

Common at most wetlands.

72. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Singles seen at Kotu and Marakissa.

73. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common at all wetlands.

74. Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Common at Kotu. Singles at Tendaba and Tanji Reserve.

75. Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Large numbers at Bund road. Up to four at Kotu.

- 76.Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
Very common at Kotu. Small numbers at Pirang and Tendaba.
- 77.Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
Up to five at Kotu. Two at Pirang.
- 78.Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
Common at Tanji Fishery. Small numbers at Kotu, Tendaba and Bund road.
- 79.Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
Very common at Tanji. Singles at Bund road.
- 80.Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
Small numbers at Bund road.
- 81.Grey-headed Gull** *Larus cirrhocephalus*
Abundant along the coast.
- 82.Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*
Very common at Bund road.
- 83.Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus*
One at Bund road.
- 84.Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus cachinnans*
Singles at Bund road.
- 85. Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*
Three at Tanji Fishery and singles at Bund road.
- 86.Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*
Two at Kotu, one at Tendaba. Common at Bund road.
- 87.Royal Tern** *Sterna maxima*
Common at Bund road.
- 88.Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*
Seen at Bund Road and one at Tendaba.
- 89.Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*
Singles at Tanji, Kotu and Tendaba.
- 90.Black Tern** *Chlidonias nigra*
One at Bund road.
- 91.Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*
Common throughout.
- 92.Blue-spotted Wood-Dove** *Turtur afer*
One seen at Brufut and one at Abuko. Easily separated from the next by red bill. Red-billed Wood-Dove is a more appropriate name.
- 93.Black-billed Wood-Dove** *Turtur abyssinicus*
Seen or heard daily at most locations.
- 94.Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea*
Seen daily.
- 95.Bruce's Green-Pigeon** *Treron waalia*
First seen at Faraba Banta. Small numbers at Tendaba.
- 96.African Green-Pigeon** *Treron calva*
Seen in the same tree as Bruce's at Faraba Banta. Also seen at Brufut.
- 97.Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*
Seen with ones or twos along the road to Tendaba, Bund road and Yundum.
- 98.Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*
Common everywhere.
- 99.African Mourning-Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens*
Most common at Tendaba. Singles at Marakissa.
- 100.Vinaceous Dove** *Streptopelia vinacea*
Abundant.
- 101.Piapiac** *Ptilostomus afer*
Seen in small groups at Kotu.
- 102.Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis*
Common at Kotu and along the road to Tendaba. Singles at Marakissa.
- 103.Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas*
One couple seen and heard at Brufut.
- 104.Diederik Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius*
A good view of a female at Abuko. The field guide is wrong about the status for this species.

105. Verreaux's Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*

One flushed at Brufut, one perched at Tujering and one seen perched and flying at Abuko.

106. Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*

One responding to imitation and found at Brufut. One mobbed by smaller birds at Tendaba airfield and one at Marakissa.

107. Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus*

Three behind the Palma Rima hotel, about 100 m from the beach south of the Swamp Date Palm grove. Two sitting at the ground at Tendaba airfield close to the waterhole.

108. Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Very common at Tendaba and Banjul.

109. Mottled Spinetail *Telecanthura ussheri*

Two at Tujering and a small group at Abuko.

110. African Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Seen in small numbers at Tendaba, Yundum and Abuko

111. Green Wood-Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

Common in the Kotu area. Also found at Tendaba, Marakissa and Abuko.

112. Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*

One at Kotu on our first day. One couple at Marakissa.

113. Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*

Most common at Tendaba with up to five. Singles found at Marakissa and Abuko.

114. Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*

Found with singles in farmland and woodland.

115. Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Seen almost daily at all wetland areas visited and at the Gambia River.

116. African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*

One glimpsed when fishing at the Crocodile pool at Abuko.

117. Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

Two at Kotu and four during the creek tour.

118. Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

One at Marakissa. The rarest roller during dry season.

119. Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster*

Seen at most locations with numbers up to five at each. The most common roller during our trip.

120. Rufous-crowned Roller *Coracias naevia*

Singles were seen along the roadsides to Tendaba. One at Tujering and one at Yundum.

121. Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinica*

Seen every day in small numbers.

122. European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

One along the road to Tendaba.

123. Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*

Several at Abuko. Singles at Brufut, and Tendaba.

124. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

Seen almost daily near water, often in high-flying flocks calling frequently.

125. European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Two perched in a tree along the roadside from Tendaba.

126. Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

Common in the Kotu area, Yundum and Brufut.

127. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Seen on most locations with highest numbers at Tendaba and Brufut.

128. Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*

Seen in small numbers at most locations.

129. Brown-necked Parrot *Poicephalus robustus*

Two birds flying at Tendaba. The larger size compared to the previous was apparent in flight with longer neck and larger head.

130. Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea*

A brief view of one at Brufut. Good views of couples at Marakissa and at the Crocodile pool at Abuko.

132. Western Grey Plantain-Eater *Crinifer piscator*

Seen daily in couples at most locations where there were fruiting trees.

133. Guinea Turaco *Tauraco persa*

Seen in trees at Brufut and near the Crocodile Pool at Abuko.

- 134. Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*
Singles heard and seen at Abuko. One at Brufut.
- 135. Bearded Barbet** *Lybius dubius*
Found in small numbers at Brufut, Marakissa, Yundum and along the road to Tendaba. Silent, colourful birds.
- 136. Vieillot's Barbet** *Lybius vielloti*
Parties of five or more found at Tendaba and Yundum. Vocal with a far-carrying voice.
- 137. African Pied Hornbill** *Tockus fasciatus*
Small numbers at Brufut and Abuko.
- 138. Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus*
Seen daily in all habitats.
- 139. African Grey Hornbill** *Tockus nasutus*
Seen most days in small numbers.
- 140. Abyssinian Ground Hornbill** *Bucorvus abyssinicus*
A couple at the old airfield at Tendaba around 19.00. The best time for these strange-looking birds is early morning and late afternoon.
- 141. Grey Woodpecker** *Dendropicos goertae*
Single males seen at Casino cycle track, Tendaba and Yundum.
- 142. Fine-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera punctuligera*
A couple at Brufut and a female at the cycle track.
- 143. Brown-backed Woodpecker** *Picoidis obsoletus*
A couple at Yundum.
- 144. Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator*
One male was heard and seen at a random stop along the road from Tendaba. One female seen at Abuko.
- 145. Spotted Honeyguide** *Indicator maculatus*
One was calling from a Mahogany tree at Marakissa.
- 146. Crested Lark** *Galerida cristatus*
Common at Pirang.
- 147. Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys*
Four at the old airfield at Tendaba close to the waterhole.
- 148. Fanti Sawwing** *Psalidoprocne obscura*
Seen at Brufut and Abuko.
- 149. Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*
One at Faraba Banta.
- 150. Pied-winged swallow** *Hirundo leucosoma*
One at Tanji Fish compound and one at Faraba Banta.
- 151. Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii*
One at Pirang.
- 152. Mosque Swallow** *Hirundo senegalensis*
Two overhead during the creektour.
- 153. Red-chested Swallow** *Hirundo lucida*
Commonest swallow. Now and then we were looking for Barn Swallows among them but didn't find any.
- 154. African Golden Oriole** *Oriolus auratus*
One singing at Tendaba camp and one seen at Faraba Banta.
- 155. Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina pectoralis*
One female found high up in a tree at Abuko.
- 156. Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*
Found with small numbers most of the days.
- 157. Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
Singles at Tanji, Casino cycle track, Yundum and along the roadside to Yundum.
- 158. Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
One was in the dry ponds at Pirang.
- 159. White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
Seen at Tanji and Tendaba in small numbers.
- 160. Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus*
Two adults and one immature at Casino cycle track. Found in high grass.
- 161. Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*
Abundant everywhere.
- 162. Yellow-throated Leaflove** *Chlorocichla flavicollis*

Two at the Fajara golf course close to the little island. Two at Marakissa.

163. Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*

Small numbers at Abuko.

164. Leaflove *Pyrrhurus scandens*

One at Brufut.

165. Grey-headed Bristlebill *Bleda canicapilla*

One seen drinking at the Crocodile pool at Abuko.

166. Oriole Warbler *Hypergerus atriceps*

One was singing at Kotu lower bridge and one was singing at Casino cycle track, close to the walled building site. Eventually we got a good view at a couple close to the photo hide at Abuko.

167. Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardii*

Small parties at Brufut and Marakissa.

168. Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*

Found in larger parties than the previous at Kotu and Brufut. Singles at Tanji.

169. Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Four were seen around Yundum.

170. Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

One at the Casino cycle track. Common around Yundum.

171. White-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*

Two in the MRC grounds at Atlantic road, singles at Tendaba, Faraba Banta and Senegambia hotel.

172. Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*

Three seen at Abuko.

173. African Thrush *Turdus pelios*

Singles seen at Brufut, Casino cycle track, MRC grounds and Abuko.

174. Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*

One at Yundum.

175. Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

Three were seen at Brufut and the Casino cycle track.

176. Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

One in bush at the Casino cycle track.

177. Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

Two found in bushes in the old rice fields at Casino cycle track.

178. Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Two at Atlantic road.

179. Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

Singles at Tendaba and Yundum.

180. Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

Good views of three at Yundum.

181. Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*

Singles at Casino cycle track, Marakissa and Yundum.

182. Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes*

Found on our last day at Brufut. Obviously larger than the three other cisticolas. Favouring drier areas with bush.

183. Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Singles at Casino cycle track and Marakissa.

184. Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythroptera*

Seen well near Yundum.

185. Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

Seen daily. Frequently heard.

186. Green-backed Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla*

A small group mobbing a Pearl-spotted Owlet at Tendaba. Singles at Yundum and Brufut.

187. Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*

One at Abuko and one at Brufut. A bit hard to find.

188. Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicauda*

Seen and heard at Tendaba and Abuko. Wren-like appearance and behaviour.

189. Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

Seen and heard from the canopy at Abuko.

190. Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*

One heard near the photo hide at Abuko but we didn't manage to get to see it.

- 191. Yellow Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus parvulus*
Five heard and seen in acacias at Yundum.
- 192. Yellow-bellied Hyliota** *Hyliota flavigaster*
A lucky find at Brufut. We were searching a tree for Klaas's Cuckoo when this one appeared!
- 193. African Blue Flycatcher** *Elminia longicauda*
Two crossed the creek in front of us. Flashing blue with an undulating flight.
- 194. Common Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea*
Singles were heard at Abuko and good views of two males.
- 195. Senegal Batis** *Batis senegalensis*
One adult in a tree at Brufut.
- 196. Northern Black-Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides*
One at the Senegambia hotel and two at Brufut.
- 197. African Paradise-Flycatcher** *Tersiphone viridis*
Heard but not seen at Kampanti. Good views of a male at Abuko.
- 198. Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher** *Tersiphone rufiventer*
One female at Brufut.
- 199. Pygmy Sunbird** *Anthreptes platurus*
Found in small numbers at Tendaba.
- 200. Collared Sunbird** *Anthreptes collaris*
One female at Brufut.
- 201. Variable Sunbird** *Nectarinia venusta*
Seen with small numbers at several locations during the week, often in couples.
- 202. Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Nectarinia senegalensis*
Found with two or three mainly at Brufut and Abuko
- 203. Western Violet-backed Sunbird** *Anthreptes longuemarei*
One male in the same tree as the Batis at Brufut.
- 204. Splendid Sunbird** *Nectarinia coccinigastra*
One male at Atlantic road, a couple at Marakissa and small numbers at Abuko.
- 205. Beautiful Sunbird** *Nectarinia pulchella*
Seen daily at almost all locations.
- 206. Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegala*
Good view of three at the Casino cycle track, singles skulking at Tendaba, Yundum and Brufut.
- 207. Brubru** *Nilaus afer*
Found on our last day at Brufut.
- 208. Northern Puffback** *Dryoscopus gambensis*
One male at Atlantic road and one passing in Kisi bolon during the creektour.
- 209. Yellow-crowned Gonolek** *Laniarus barbarus*
Singles at most locations. More heard than seen.
- 210. Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*
Common at Yundum. Elsewhere one or two in drier habitats.
- 211. Yellow-billed Shrike** *Corvinella corvina*
Quite common and seen at Brufut, Casino cycle track, Tendaba and Marakissa.
- 212. Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*
One at Tendaba. Best separated from Purple Glossy by wingtip/tail relation. Blackish earcoverts were of little use.
- 213. Lesser Blue-eared Glossy-Starling** *Lamprotornis chloropterus*
One at Brufut.
- 214. Purple Glossy-Starling** *Lamprotornis purpureus*
Common around Tendaba. Seen at the Senegambia hotel. Singles at Kotu and Yundum. Not as purple underparts as indicated in the book.
- 215. Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis chalcurus*
One at Faraba Banta.
- 216. Long-tailed Glossy-Starling** *Lamprotornis caudatus*
A common roadside bird, seen daily at most locations.
- 217. Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus*
Seen in 5-10 at Kotu and along the roadside to Tendaba.
- 218. Yellow-fronted Canary** *Serinus mozambicus*
Two at Faraba Banta.
- 219. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Seen at most civilized areas.

220. Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*

Common throughout.

221. Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata*

Common along the roadsides to Tendaba and at Yundum and Brufut.

222. White-billed Buffalo-Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*

Seen in parties at most locations.

223. Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*

Found in large parties at most locations. We searched for Black-winged Red Bishops among them but we didn't manage to make a reliable identification.

224. Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

Abundant.

225. Little Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

One during the creektour, two at Yundum and one at Brufut.

226. Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*

Several seen at Abuko. The easiest weaver to identify.

227. Yellow-backed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus*

Singles at the creektour and 5-10 at Marakissa. All near water.

228. Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*

Seen in small parties at Casino cycle track and Marakissa.

229. Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens*

Singles at Senegambia hotel, larger numbers at Brufut.

230. Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*

Seen in large parties at Tendaba camp.

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

Seen in small parties at most locations.

232. Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*

Seen in small parties at most locations.

233. African Silverbill *Lonchura cantans*

Two turned up regularly just outside our hotelroom during the hot hours for drinking.

234. Bronze Mannakin *Lonchura cucullata*

Seen in flocks at various locations.

235. Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

Three seen well at Abuko

236. Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*

One seen during a brief stop in a village on the way to Tendaba.

237. Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*

A couple in a tree at Faraba Banta.

238. Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

Two found in a flock with Northern Red Bishops at the Tendaba airfield.

239. Western Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina*

Found at Abuko. Hard to see if you are walking in the back of a group since it dashes in to the thickets when you approach them. We had to stop and wait for them to leave the thickets.