

**Trip Report: Birding Senegal
Montana Bird Advocacy
8–23 January 2020**



Beautiful Sunbird (Dubi Shapiro)

Participants: Peggy Harger-Allen (Indiana), Diane Kook (Oregon), Rose Leach (Montana), Jenna McCullough (New Mexico), Judy Meredith (Oregon), Nancy Moore (Idaho) Cay Ogden (Oregon), & Nick Vinciguerra (California)

Leaders: Solomon Jallow (The Gambia) and Jeff Marks (Oregon)

Honorary Leader: Ramiro Yábar (Peru)

**Prepared by Jeff Marks
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Tour Summary

Senegal has an official list of 674 bird species, which is quite impressive given that its land area is smaller than that of Idaho. Our tour began and ended in **Popenguine** on the outskirts of **Dakar** and spanned latitudes from 16.5° to 12.5°N and longitudes from 17° to 12°W. We were very close to the borders of Mauritania in the north and Guinea in the southeast. Weather was hot, dry, and mostly sunny, with occasional scattered clouds on the coast. Hotels and lodges were suitable for the most part, although lack of hot water was an issue at several places. We detected 313 species of birds, one of which was heard but not seen (**Guinea [Green] Turaco**), and two of which were seen only by **Solomon** (**Little Bittern** and **Mosque Swallow**). We owe the success of our trip to our skilled guide **Solomon Jallow** and to our expert driver **Moussa Dumbuya**, who navigated the roads safely and put us at ease at all times. Aside from nasty colds that three of us picked up before we arrived in Senegal, we stayed healthy throughout the trip. See page 28 for our respective top 10 lists of birds seen.

Day 1 (8 January), Popenguine

Because **Diane** and **Judy** arrived a day early, and all but **Cay** and **Ramiro** arrived this morning, we birded around **Popenguine** in the afternoon, including a hike to the cliffs east of the village in an unsuccessful attempt to find a **Blue Rock Thrush**. The small lake at the nearby reserve had lots of water, and we had great looks there at **Little Grebe**, **Western Reef-Egret**, **Striated Heron**, **Long-tailed Cormorant**, **Senegal Thick-knee**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Spur-winged Lapwing**, and **Gray-hooded Gull**. Other species seen well included **Namaqua Dove**, **Speckled Pigeon**, **Mottled Spinetail**, **Malachite Kingfisher**, **Little Bee-eater**, **Western Red-billed Hornbill**, **Rose-ringed Parakeet**, **Crested Lark**, **Common Redstart**, **Northern Crombec**, **Senegal Eremomela**, **Beautiful Sunbird**, **Woodchat Shrike**, **Yellow-crowned Gonolek**, **Pied Crow**, **Long-tailed Glossy Starling**, **Sudan Golden Sparrow**, **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu**, **African Silverbill**, **Cut-throat**, **Village Indigobird**, and **Sahel Paradise Whydah**. We ended the day with nearly 70 species.



Namaqua Dove (Jenna McCullough)



Map of Senegal showing most of the place names mentioned in the text.



Northern Crombec (Nik Borrow, Birdquest)



Sahel Paradise Whydah (Jeff Marks)

Day 2 (9 January), Popenguine to Saint Louis

Before breakfast we birded near the hotel and saw a nice mix of species that included **Black Scrub Robin**, **Common Redstart**, **Western Olivaceous Warbler**, **Green-backed Camaroptera**, **Brown Babbler**, **Beautiful Sunbird**, **Yellow-crowned Gonolek**, **Village Weaver**, **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu**, **Red-billed Firefinch**, and **Village Indigobird**. Diane also saw a large owl that we suspected was a **Grayish Eagle Owl**. We departed **Popenguine** at 0825 after breakfast at the hotel and headed to the airport to retrieve **Ramiro**, who was denied an entry visa and held overnight at immigration! After no small amount of hassling and haggling, **Ramiro** was released with a tourist visa at 1150, and we were on our way north. At the airport we saw **Crested Larks**, **White Wagtails**, **Northern Wheatears**, and a **Zitting Cisticola**. En route we stopped to view a group of carrion-eaters roosting in a tree that consisted of three **Hooded Vultures**, six **White-backed Vultures**, five **Eurasian Griffons**, and two **Rüppell's Griffons**. Other species seen during the drive and at several brief stops included the ubiquitous **Yellow-billed Kite**, **Eurasian Marsh Harrier**, **Black-headed Lapwing**, **African Palm Swift**, **Blue-naped Mousebird**, **Rufous-crowned Roller**, **Abyssinian Roller**, **Eurasian Kestrel**, **Greater Blue-eared Starling**, **Chestnut-bellied Starling**, **Long-tailed Glossy Starling**, and **White-billed Buffalo Weaver**. We arrived at the **Hotel la Palmeraie** in **Saint Louis** at 1930, ate a nice dinner at the hotel restaurant, and retired for the evening.



Vulture tree en route to Saint Louis (Jenna McCullough)

Day 3 (10 January), Saint Louis to Richard Toll

Breakfast at the **Hotel la Palmeraie** was great! Among the birds seen from the third-story terrace outside the breakfast room were **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Gray-hooded Gull**, **Caspian Tern**, and **Lanner Falcon**. We got a rather late start and headed to the nearby area of **Marigos**, where we had excellent birds such as **African Spoonbill**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **African Sacred Ibis**, **Purple Heron**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **Kittlitz's Plover**, **Black Crowned-Crane**, **African Stonechat**, and **Zebra Waxbill**.



African Fish Eagle (Jenna McCullough)

We arrived at the **Hotel Gite d'Etape** in **Richard Toll** at 1330. After eating lunch outside along the **Senegal River**, with **Mauritania** clearly in view only 300 m to the north, and seeing a host of garden birds that included **Mourning Collared Dove**, **Laughing Dove**, **Pygmy Sunbird**, **Little Weaver**, **Black-headed Weaver**, **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu**, and **Red-billed Firefinch**, we headed south to the "airport road" to bird the arid thorn scrub. Some three hours later, we had succeeded in seeing some iconic birds of the Sahel, including **Eurasian Thick-knee** (15!), **African Green Bee-eater**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Black-crowned Sparrow Lark**, **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**, **Black Scrub Robin**, **Northern Anteater Chat**, **Western Olivaceous Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied Eremomela**, **Cricket Longtail**, **Greater Whitethroat**, **Subalpine Warbler** (Jeff's favorite Palearctic migrant), **Western Orphean Warbler**, **Great Gray Shrike**, **Chestnut-bellied Starling**, **Sahel Bush Sparrow** [**Bush Petronia**], and **Sudan Golden Sparrow**. We returned to **Hotel Gite d'Etape** just after 1900, eager to have a cold Gazelle beer and a nice dinner.



Cricket Longtail (Jeff Marks)



Western Orphean Warbler (Stanislav Harvancik)

Day 4 (11 January), Richard Toll

At breakfast, many of us remarked on the **Barn Owl** we heard calling in the night. We departed the hotel just before 0800 and headed for the open forest at **Keur M'baye**, which is only 20 minutes east of **Richard Toll**. The area is extremely overgrazed by sheep and goats, but the bare, sandy ground has no shortage of foraging doves, starlings, hoopoes, and other species, and it is one of the best places to find two of our main targets: **Little Gray Woodpecker** and **Sennar Penduline Tit**. We had a great morning, seeing **Blue-naped Mousebird**, **Striped Kingfisher**, **African Green Bee-eater**, **African Gray Hornbill**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Black Scimitarbill** (adult feeding a juvenile), **Vieillot's Barbet**, **Lanner Falcon**, **Western Bonelli's Warbler**, **Western Orphea Warbler**, **Senegal Batis**, **Brubru**, **Greater Blue-eared Starling**, **Long-tailed Glossy Starling**, and **Yellow-billed Oxpecker**, but we failed to find our two target birds.



Overgrazed forest at Keur M'baye (Jeff Marks)

We returned to **Richard Toll** for lunch and a siesta and then arrived back at **Keur M'baye** at 1600. After broadcasting the calls of the woodpecker and tit without success, **Jeff** got the idea to play the call of a **Pearl-spotted Owlet**, and in a few minutes we were rewarded with a response by a group of four **Sennar Penduline Tits**! To add icing to the cake, 5 minutes later a female **Little Gray Woodpecker** flew in and began vocalizing. Thus, in very short order we went from despondent to ecstatic as everyone got great looks at two species that typically are very difficult to find. We assembled for a celebratory group photo and then returned to the airport road site to try again for **Fulvous Chatterers**. Although we failed yet again to find this elusive species, we were rewarded by the nearby presence of two **Temminck's Coursers**, which beforehand had not really been on our radar screens. We stuck around until dark, hoping to see some nightjars along the sandy road, but no luck. We arrived back at **Hotel Gite d'Etape** at 1945 following an incredible day of birding in the arid thorn scrub that surrounds **Richard Toll**.



Looking north from Hotel Gite d'Etape, Richard Toll, across the Senegal River to Mauritania (Jeff Marks)



African Silverbill, which was fairly common at Hotel Gite d'Etape (Dubi Shapiro)



Little Gray Woodpecker (Andrew Spencer)



Sennar Penduline Tit (Jenna McCullough)



Happy group at Keur M'baye after finding Little Gray Woodpecker and Sennar Penduline Tit (photographer unknown)

Day 5 (12 January), Richard Toll to Podor

Owing to the late sunrise, we left **Richard Toll** at the civilized hour of 0750 and made a quick trip to the airport road, under beautiful clear conditions, to try once again for **Fulvous Chatterer**. Striking out once more, we headed east to **Podor**, which is the northernmost village in Senegal. The highway here continues to be in excellent shape, and we made good time. Rather than go directly to **Podor**, however, we went a bit farther east to **Gamadji Saré** along the **Doué River**, where **Bram Piot** discovered a small colony of **Horus Swifts** only two years ago. As it turns out, a nice lodge has been built here recently, and

while waiting for our lunch, we walked the short distance to the river and had no trouble seeing **Horus Swifts** foraging overhead near a sand bank dotted with nesting holes of bee-eaters, which presumably are also used for nesting by the swifts. We saw 20-30 **Horus Swifts** in all. Many of them flew within 10 m of us, and it was easy to see their forked tails that help distinguish them from the much more common white-rumped apodid, the **Little Swift**. As a bonus, **Judy** spotted an **Egyptian Plover** foraging along the river bank, and we also got great looks at **African Green Bee-eaters** and **Little Bee-eaters**.



Horus Swift above the Doué River at Gamadji Saré (Nick Vinciguerra)



Egyptian Plover along the Doué River (Nick Vinciguerra)

After lunch we birded north of the **Doué River** near **Ndioum**, still looking for the elusive **Fulvous Chatterer**. None was to be found, but we had great birding anyway, adding **Common Ringed Plover**, **Common Snipe**, and **Tawny Pipit** to the trip list and getting great second and third looks at a host of other species we'd seen a day or two earlier. From **Ndioum** we drove straight to the "Diatar track" for **Golden Nightjars**, arriving right at 1905 just as the sun was setting. In contrast to when **Jeff** and **Solomon** were here in December 2018, the birds were silent. Nonetheless, we succeeded in finding at least three different **Golden Nightjars** on the ground, and also saw several similarly perched **Long-tailed Nightjars**. We arrived at our hotel, **Auberge du Tékrou**, on the **Senegal River** in **Podor** at around 2030 and had a late dinner after doing the bird list.



Golden Nightjar (Andrew Spencer)

Day 6 (13 January), Podor to Djoudj National Park

As we loaded the van, a large group of **Little Swifts** foraged directly over the hotel and nearby river. We left **Podor** at 0830 and headed east toward **Gamadji Saré** in search of our nemesis bird, the **Fulvous Chatterer**. The arid habitat here consists of widely scattered trees and thorn bushes surrounded by lots of bare, sandy ground. We again failed to find the chatterers! A highlight here was the group of four **Little Ringed Plovers** that **Nick** spotted foraging on the bare sand far from water. Also seen well were **African Collared Doves**, **Namaqua Doves**, **Blue-naped Mousebirds**, **African Hoopoes** (pair at a likely nesting cavity), **Northern Wheatears**, **Northern Anteater Chats**, **Western Olivaceous Warblers**, **Subalpine Warblers**, **Chestnut-bellied Starlings**, **Sudan Golden Sparrows**, and a single **Cricket Longtail**. We left **Gamadji Saré** at 1120 and headed west to **Richard Toll** to have lunch at **Hotel Gite d'Etape**.

At 1600 we were back near the airport road south of **Richard Toll**, acting on **Solomon's** hunch that **Fulvous Chatterers** were easier to find in the late afternoon than in the morning. After 20 minutes of searching, **Solomon** shouted "I have the babblers!" and in short order the entire group got on the small flock, which turned out to contain at least six individuals. We left the area at 1640 and headed back west toward our destination, **Djoudj National Park**.



Solomon and Ramiro near Gamadji Saré (Cay Ogden)



Fulvous Chatterers (Andrew Spencer)

Before we arrived at **Djoudj** we stopped by a large, rank grassy area where a dense murmuration of more than 5,000 **Ruffs** whirled about while **Eurasian Marsh Harriers** hunted on the wing and some 60 **White Storks** were amassed on the ground nearby. Feeding in an agriculture field near where we parked were a few **Northern Red Bishops** and several small flocks of **Quailfinches**. We pulled into our home for the next two nights, **Hôtel du Djoudj**, at 1830, shortly before sunrise. This very basic hotel had no hot water during our stay but is the only game in town and is surrounded by spectacular birding opportunities in **Djoudj National Park**.



Part of a large flock of Ruffs near Djoudj (Jenna McCullough)

Day 7 (14 January), Djoudj National Park

We began the day at a small wetland behind our hotel, where a local guide showed us six **Greater Painted Snipes**. Then, we took off in the van to look for bustards near the main lake and scan the lake for waterbirds. After lunch, we took the boat trip up the **Djoudj River** to the pelican colony. It was a great day of birding, and we found all of our targets except for **Pied Avocets**, which inexplicably seemed to be absent from many of the wetlands where **Jeff** and **Solomon** found them in December 2018. Among the 105 species we saw today were **Fulvous Whistling-Duck**, **White-faced Whistling Duck**, **Egyptian Goose**, **African Pygmy Goose**, **Garganey**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Northern Pintail**, **Little Grebe**, **Greater Flamingo**, **Lesser Flamingo**, **Yellow-billed Stork**, **Black Stork**, **African Spoonbill**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Glossy Ibis**, **African Sacred Ibis**, **Black Heron**, **Little Bittern (Solomon only)**, **Great White Pelican** (thousands at nesting colony), **Great Cormorant**, **African Darter**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Arabian Bustard**, **Lesser Moorhen**, **Allen's Gallinule**, **Black Crowned-Crane**, **Greater Painted Snipe**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Whiskered Tern**, **Little Tern**, **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse**, **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**, **Singing Bushlark**, **Black-crowned Sparrow Lark**, **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**, **African Stonechat**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Eurasian Reed Warbler**, **African Reed Warbler**, **River Prinia**, and **Zebra Waxbill**. We also saw **jackals**, **warthogs**, and two **Rock Pythons**.



Greater Painted Snipe at Djoudj NP (Jenna McCullough)



Arabian Bustard at Djoudj NP (Rafa Benjumea)



Great White Pelicans at nesting colony (Jeff Marks)



Allen's Gallinule on Djoudj River (Nick Vinciguerra)

Day 8 (15 January), Djoudj NP to Touba/Mbacke

Because we saw all of the target birds that reasonably could be found only at **Djoudj**, and because we had a long drive to our next hotel at **Kaolack**, **Solomon** and **Jeff** made a command decision to leave **Djoudj** a day early and spend the night partway to **Kaolack**. As it turned out, suitable hotels were few and far between in **Touba** and the surrounding area, and the best option turned out to be poor. Simply put, **Campement Touristique le Baol** in **Mbacke** just outside of **Touba**, had seen better days, although no one seemed to lose sleep there. What was worse, the dinner was largely inedible (although breakfast was fine). The birding on the way to **Mbacke** was not bad, however. Not too far outside **Djoudj** we stopped at a wetland recommended by the local guide and found more **Black Herons**, **Pied Avocets** (finally), and a **Marsh Sandpiper**. Shortly before arriving at the wetland we saw numerous **Eurasian Marsh Harriers**, several **Montagu's Harriers**, and the first **Black-winged Kite** of the trip. Along the shore in **Saint Louis** we added **Eurasian Oystercatcher** and **Ruddy Turnstone** to the trip list. Farther south, the road between **Louga** and **Touba** was great for vultures, with minimum counts of 20 **Eurasian Griffons**, six **Hooded Vultures**, six **Rüppell's Griffons**, 10 **White-backed Vultures**, and one **Lappet-faced Vulture**.



Lappet-faced Vulture (Jeff Marks)

But the best birds of the day, arguably, were the three **Abyssinian Ground Hornbills** (adult female, adult male, and fully grown juvenile) that foraged calmly in an open field less than 200 m from the road, which afforded us prolonged looks at these gorgeous birds. As it turned out, today was the first of four separate sightings of ground hornbills that we logged during the trip (10 birds in total). Other species seen en route to **Mbacke** included **Striped Kingfisher**, **African Wood Hoopoe** (singing), **African Gray Woodpecker**, **Cricket Longtail**, **Brubru**, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker**, and **Speckle-fronted Weaver**.

Day 9 (16 January), Touba to Kaolack

Today's drive to **Kaolack** was rather short. We stopped twice to search unsuccessfully in weedy savanna for **Savile's Bustard**, **Quail-plover**, and **Desert Cisticola**. We flushed two **Common Quails**, a new species for the trip, and also saw **Singing Bushlarks**, **Chestnut-backed Sparrow Larks**, **Black-crowned Sparrow Larks**, **Yellow-bellied Eremomelas**, **Sudan Golden Sparrows**, and **Red-billed Queleas**. We checked into the lovely **Hôtel le Relais du Kaolack** shortly before noon, had lunch, and took a long siesta before heading out in the evening to view the spectacular communal roost of **Scissor-tailed Kites** that amasses each night at this time of year on an island in the **Saloum River**. About two hours before sundown we searched the savanna south of the island and found our main target, the **Savile's Bustard**, and also saw a **Peregrine Falcon** and **Red-necked Falcon**. The **Scissor-tailed Kite** roost did not disappoint, with more than 10,000 birds dropping into the trees along with smaller numbers of **Lesser Kestrels**. Small flocks of vocal **Slender-billed Gulls** flew upriver as we watched the kites. Four **White-bellied Bustards** that Jeff spotted in his scope some 400 m south of us were a completely unexpected bonus to end the evening.



Scissor-tailed Kite roost near Kaolack (Jeff Marks)

Day 10 (17 January), Kaolack to Wassadou

We left **Kaolack** at 0745 and headed east for the long drive to **Tambacounda**, where we ate lunch, and then turned south to our home for the next two nights, **Campement Hôtel de Wassadou** on the upper **River Gambia**. We stopped briefly a couple of times to bird, hoping to find **Green-winged Pytilias**, but struck out on that score. **Black Kite**, **Brown Snake Eagle**, and **White Helmetshrike** were new birds for us. We arrived at **Wassadou** at 1615 and discovered the birding was quite good within sight of our rooms. New birds included **Stone Partridge** (heard only), **Double-spurred Francolin**, and **Greater Honeyguide**.

Boat trips at **Wassadou** are spectacular but have one problem: only one boat exists here, and it safely holds no more than eight people. Thus, at 1800 Jenna, **Nick, Nancy, Diane, Ramiro, and Solomon** set out downriver from the camp, and returned at 1945 some 30 minutes after it got dark. This vanguard group saw great birds that included **Hadada Ibis, African Fish Eagle, African Finfoot**, at least 12 **Egyptian Plovers, White-headed Lapwing, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Red-throated Bee-eater, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Gray-headed Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, and Giant Kingfisher**. But the best birds were two **Pel's Fishing Owls** that appeared shortly after sundown. As soon as the group returned to camp, the rest of us (**Jeff, Rose, Peggy, Judy, and Cay**) hopped on the boat right away and headed directly to where the owls had been seen. But alas, we could not find them!



Pel's Fishing Owl at Wassadou (Andrew Spencer)



African Finfoot (Dubi Shapiro)

Day 11 (18 January), Wassadou

After breakfast we walked the trail that heads upriver from camp. Highlights included **Double-spurred Francolin, Wahlberg's Eagle, European Turtle Dove, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Black-billed Wood Dove, Senegal Coucal, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Brown Babbler, Blackcap Babbler, African Yellow White-eye, Purple Starling**, and perhaps the best bird of the morning, a gorgeous male **Western Violet-backed Sunbird**. After lunch we did two "hippo" trips on the boat, again dividing into two groups, each of which saw six **Common Hippopotamuses**. We also saw **Hadada Ibis, Hamerkop, Shikra**, more **African Finfoots** (at least 6) and **Egyptian Plovers** (at least 10), **Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Common House Martin, African Pied Wagtail, White-crowned Robin Chat, African Blue Flycatcher, Northern Black Flycatcher, and Swamp Flycatcher**. Mammals besides hippos were **Yellow-winged Bats, Green Monkeys, Guinea Baboons**, and IUCN **Endangered Western Red Colobuses**.



Red-throated Bee-eaters (Dubi Shapiro)



Western Violet-backed Sunbird (Jenna McCullough)

The evening boat group struck out again on **Pel's Fishing Owl**. Indeed, the local guide said that last night was the first time the species had been seen since Christmas Eve nearly a month earlier. We did have great looks at all the other specialties, however, such as **African Finfoot, Egyptian Plover, White-headed Lapwing, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Broad-billed Roller, Gray-headed Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher, and Northern Carmine Bee-eater**.

Day 12 (19 January), Wassadou to Kedougou

We left **Wassadou** at 0815. During the drive through **Niokolo-Koba National Park** we had great looks at two perched **Bateleurs** that had been feeding on a road-killed mongoose (we saw 10 **Bateleurs** in all today) and also ticked **Lizard Buzzard, Red-necked Buzzard, African Hawk Eagle**, and closer to **Kedougou**, a perched **Fox Kestrel!** A flyover **Black Stork** and a **Black Kite, Brown Snake Eagle, Dark Chanting Goshawk**, a small flock of **Bruce's Green Pigeons**, two groups of **Abyssinian Ground Hornbills, Black Scimitarbill**, a pair of **Bearded Barbets**, a **Fine-spotted Woodpecker**, an **African Golden Oriole**, and multiple small flocks of **Yellow-fronted Canaries** rounded out the morning's highlights. We arrived at **Hôtel Relais de Kédougou** at 1310 and had a late lunch. A few members of the group spotted **Fanti Saw-wings** near the pool.

After lunch we walked along the **Gambia River** near **Kedougou**. This area had lots of people, and the birding was not exceptional. Nonetheless, we obtained good views of **Violet Turaco, Western Gray Plantain-eater, Senegal Coucal, Klaas's Cuckoo, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Western Red-billed Hornbill, African Gray Hornbill**, more **Bearded Barbets, Senegal Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Northern Crombec, Melodious Warbler, Senegal Eremomela, Green-backed Camaroptera, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Beautiful Sunbird, and Red-billed Firefinch**.



Male Abyssinian Ground Hornbill north of Kedougou (Jenna McCullough)



Dubi Shapiro

Bruce's Green Pigeon (Dubi Shapiro)



Dubi Shapiro

Yellow-crowned Gonolek



Dubi Shapiro

Bearded Barbet (both Dubi Shapiro)

Day 13 (20 January), Kedougou Area

The morning's birding began on the road into **Tako Mayo** followed by two hot hikes to the Gambia River in search of **Mali Firefinches**. We found a nice mix of species in the forest that bordered the road, including **Stone Partridge**, **Bruce's Green Pigeon**, **Senegal Coucal**, **Yellow-throated Leaflove**, **Familiar Chat**, **Brown Babbler**, **Scarlet-chested Sunbird**, **Northern Puffback**, **Glossy-backed Drongo**, **Lavender Waxbill**, **Orange-cheeked Waxbill**, **Bar-breasted Firefinch** (Solomon and Nick only), **Pin-tailed Whydah** (nonbreeding plumage), and **White-rumped Seedeater**.



Lavender Waxbill



Orange-cheeked Waxbill (both Dubi Shapiro)

We had a lovely lunch at **Campement Tako Mayo**, took a bit of a siesta, and then drove to **Dindéfelo** for the one-hour hike through very nice forest to the waterfall, about 5 km north of the **Guinea** border. We had several targets here, including **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** and **Neumann's Starling**, both of which everyone saw. We also heard but did not see **Guinea Turaco**, which was the sole "heard-only" species of the trip. Other great birds seen on the walk included **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**, **Snowy-crowned Robin Chat**, a male **African Paradise Flycatcher**, and **Brown-throated Wattle-eye**. We also saw a small falcon on the cliff near where the starlings were that may have been another **Fox Kestrel**, but we just couldn't be certain owing to the great distance. We returned to **Kedougou** at 1940 and had a nice dinner and beers at our hotel.



Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird



Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird (both Dubi Shapiro)

Day 14 (21 January), Kedougou to Kaolack

We left the **Hôtel Relais de Kédougou** at 0740 for the long drive back to **Kaolack**. But first, we made a quick detour on the outskirts of **Kedougou** in search of the elusive **Mali Firefinch** but failed to find the birds. As we headed back north along the RN 7 highway toward **Tambacounda**, we stopped a couple of times within the boundaries of **Niokolo-Koba National Park**. During our last such stop, we were

questioned by a warden who was passing by and told us it was illegal to get out of the vehicle within the park, unbeknownst to us. To make matters worse, he confiscated the paperwork for our vehicle and demanded we meet him at park headquarters. We eventually got the paperwork back without a fine, but the incident took up more than an hour of our time. We continued on to **Tambacounda** and again had lunch at **Hôtel Relais du Tambacounda**. We arrived at **Hôtel le Relais du Kaolack** at 1935 and had a great fish dinner. Birds we saw during the drive and at several short stops between here and **Kedougou** included **Helmeted Guineafowl**, **Hooded Vulture**, **White-backed Vulture**, **Eurasian Griffon**, **Beaudoin's Snake Eagle**, **Brown Snake Eagle** (4), **Bateleur** (6), **Dark Chanting Goshawk**, **Spotted Thick-knee** (found by **Solomon** from the moving vehicle!), **Pearl-spotted Owlet** (2), **African Palm Swift**, **Blue-bellied Roller** (spotted by **Cay!**), **Abyssinian Roller** (dozens!), **Green Woodhoopoe**, **Bearded Barbet**, **Red-necked Falcon**, **Scarlet-chested Sunbird**, **Yellow-billed Shrike**, **Yellow-crowned Gonolek**, **Northern Puffback**, **White Helmetshrike**, **Piapiac**, **Purple Starling**, and **Bronze Mannikin**.



Spotted Thick-knee (Nick Vinciguerra)

Day 15 (22 January), Kaolack to Popenguine

We left **Kaolack** shortly after 0800, headed west toward **Popenguine** for our last night in Senegal. We stopped a couple of times to bird and also for the fourth and final group of **Abyssinian Ground Hornbills** for the trip. We arrived a **Popenguine** at 1300. **Diane** returned to the place where a large owl had flushed back on 9 January and found the bird roosting amidst the green foliage. After more confusion than there should have been (which included **Jeff** trying to make it into a **Verreaux's Eagle Owl**), we identified the bird correctly as a **Grayish Eagle Owl**, which here is very close to the northern edge of its range in West Africa. We had a wonderful lunch of peanut soup with meat, eggplant, and rice at our hotel (**Auberge de Popenguine**) and then birded around town. Right at sundown we drove to the hill



Grayish Eagle Owl found at Popenguine by Diane Kook (Jeff Marks)

above town where **Solomon** had seen a **Standard-winged Nightjar** the night we arrived. After some searching, we succeeded in finding a male and female, the former with fully grown standards! Among the birds seen during the day between here and **Kaolack**, including our birding efforts at **Popenguine**, were **Black Stork, Gray Heron, Little Egret, Western Reef Egret, Great White Pelican, Pink-backed Pelican, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, Osprey, Spur-winged Lapwing, Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Slender-billed Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Little Swift, Rufous-crowned Roller, Pied Kingfisher, Little Bee-eater, Western Red-billed Hornbill, African Gray Hornbill, Bearded Barbet, Senegal Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Crested Lark, Common Redstart, Green-backed Camaroptera, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Willow Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Pygmy Sunbird, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Beautiful Sunbird, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Piapiac, Pied Crow, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Little Weaver, Village Weaver, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Red-billed Firefinch, African Silverbill, Village Indigobird, Pin-tailed Whydah, and Sahel Paradise Whydah.**

Day 16 (23 January), Popenguine and Flight Home

We birded on foot around **Popenguine**, including another trek to the cliffs for a successful search for the **Blue Rock Thrush**. We left for the airport at 1800 and boarded the flight to **Paris** later that evening. Birds seen today included **Black Kite, Yellow-billed Kite, African Jacana, Ruddy Turnstone, Barn Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Blue-naped Mousebird, Malachite Kingfisher, Vieillot's Barbet, Eurasian Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Black Scrub Robin, Blue Rock Thrush (female), African Thrush, Sedge Warbler, Greater Whitethroat, Subalpine Warbler, Senegal Batis, Woodchat Shrike, Black-crowned Tchagra, Green-winged Pytilia (not seen by all), African Silverbill, Cut-throat, and Gosling's Bunting.**



Female Blue Rock Thrush at Popenguine (Jeff Marks)



Dubi Shapiro

Gosling's Bunting (Dubi Shapiro)



Brown Snake Eagle (Jenna McCullough)



Northern Carmine Bee-eater (Jenna McCullough)



Juvenile Dark Chanting Goshawk (Jenna McCullough)



Scissor-tailed Kite near Kaolack (Jenna McCullough)



Red-throated Bee-eater colony near Wassadou (Jenna McCullough)



Male Pygmy Sunbird (Jenna McCullough)

Top 10 List of Bird Species Seen

Species	PH	DK	RL	JMa	JMc	JMe	NM	CO	NV	RY
African Pygmy Goose										X
Great White Pelican							X			
Eurasian Griffon			X		X			X		
Rüppell's Griffon								X		
Lappet-faced Vulture								X		
Scissor-tailed Kite						X				
Bateleur						X		X		
Shikra								X		
Arabian Bustard				X		X			X	
Savile's Bustard						X				
White-bellied Bustard						X				
African Finfoot					X					
Allen's Gallinule				X						
Black Crowned-Crane	X									
Egyptian Plover	X								X	X
Greater Painted Snipe	X		X							
Temminck's Courser	X		X			X				
Slender-billed Gull							X			
Violet Turaco					X		X			X
Senegal Coucal	X									
Grayish Eagle-Owl				X				X		
Pel's Fishing-Owl		X			X		X		X	X
Golden Nightjar	X		X							
Standard-winged Nightjar	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Horus Swift									X	
Blue-naped Mousebird	X					X				
Blue-bellied Roller					X			X		
Abyssinian Roller					X		X			
Gray-headed Kingfisher					X					
Malachite Kingfisher							X			
Red-throated Bee-eater							X			
Northern Carmine Bee-eater					X					X
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill	X			X	X		X	X	X	X
Green Woodhoopoe						X				
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird									X	
Bearded Barbet								X	X	X
Little Gray Woodpecker		X		X						
Fox Kestrel		X								
Lanner Falcon	X									
Tawny Pipit			X							
Blue Rock-Thrush		X	X							
African Blue Flycatcher		X								
Cricket Longtail		X	X	X		X				
Subalpine Warbler				X						
African Paradise-Flycatcher									X	
Fulvous Chatterer				X					X	
Sennar Penduline Tit		X		X						
Beautiful Sunbird										X
Purple Starling		X								X
Neumann's Starling		X		X						
Speckle-fronted Weaver			X							
Green-winged Pytilia			X							
Sahel Paradise-Whydah							X			



Blue-naped Mousebird (Ramiro Yabar)



Eurasian Hoopoe



Female African Paradise Flycatcher (both Ramiro Yabar)



Pied Avocet near Djoudj (Jeff Marks)



Guinea Baboon (Jenna McCullough)