TRIP REPORT SENEGAL: SCOUTING TOUR NOVEMBER 2014

By Justin Nicolau

Scissor-tailed Kite
DAY 1: 19 November 2014
Arriving late in the evening at Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport, baggage was collected, money exchanged, and in a dazed state a taxi ushered me to my lodge just outside of the capital, Dakar. Luggage unpacked and alarm set, I could not wait for sunrise and for the birding to commence.

DAY 2: 20 November 2014
Prior to breakfast I spent my time using what little light was available before sunrise to start my list. Common Bulbul fed in a plantation of bananas outside my room, while a Western Osprey was seen looking for breakfast of his own above the lake. A quick scan of the shoreline produced Common Moorhen, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Black-winged Stilt, Whimbrel, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Western Cattle Egret, Little Stint, Western Reef Heron, Little Egret, and Grey Heron, while Lesser Black-backed Gulls made their way in the direction of the nearby ocean.

Pied Crows sauntered around the breakfast table, and the nearby trees produced Laughing Dove, House Sparrow, the diminutive Bronze Mannikins, a flock of colorful and active Little Bee-eaters, Senegal Coucal, Black-crowned Tchagra, and a perched Yellow-billed Kite.

With a fantastic breakfast out of the way I headed for the coastline, where I bumped into a pair of Crested Larks, Zitting Cisticola, and a Grey-headed Kingfisher in a nearby field. A small seepage produced Striated Heron, Senegal Thick-knee, Common Redshank, Red-
billed Firefinch, African Silverbill, White-breasted Cormorant, and Black-headed Heron. A quick scan around the shoreline added Sandwich Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Sanderling, and Ruddy Turnstone. After returning to the lodge for lunch and a break from the immense heat, I gathered the energy to set out for another afternoon walk, trying to include some new habitats.

A small patch of trees and scrub yielded Black-billed Wood Dove, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Subalpine Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Purple Roller, and Double-spurred Francolin. Speckled Pigeon was common in the area, as too was the northern race of Village Weaver, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Yellow-fronted Canary, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Western Yellow Wagtail, and Copper Sunbird. Making my way back for dinner along the shores of the lake I flushed a Common Snipe and saw Common Sandpiper and a lone Village Indigobird (the white-billed form) drinking from a small puddle. It had been a great first days birding in unknown territory.

DAY 3: 21 November 2014

With another morning dedicated to the lake and its surrounds, I headed off directly after breakfast. Mourning Collared Doves flushed from the path down to the water’s edge, where I met up with Little Stint, Common Sandpiper, Spur-winged Lapwing, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Ruff, Black Heron, Grey Plover, Common Redshank, Western Osprey, and Common Ringed Plover. Rock Doves and Pied Crows circled overhead along with a single Hooded Vulture. Crested Lark, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, and Village Indigobird fed in the vicinity, with both Cut-throat Finch and Northern Red Bishop giving me great views. African Silverbills shot past in a hurry, while a pair of Western Plantain-eaters cruised by me with their typical labored wingbeats. A small patch of reeds was home to Black Crake and Western Marsh Harrier, while Laughing Dove, Common Bulbul, House Sparrow, Western Cattle Egret, and Senegal Thick-knee were added soon thereafter. Double-spurred Francolin was fairly common in the scrub veld, while Black-headed Heron, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Yellow-billed Kite, Grey Heron, Variable Sunbird, and a wayward Wood Sandpiper were all picked up in the cultivated fields while I was heading back to the accommodation. A quick snack for lunch,
and I was back on the road, this time back to Dakar to visit another well-known birding site within the capital city.

Technopole, as it is known, is a myriad of water bodies within the city limits, surrounded by reeds, marsh, and a small number of trees – a true birding paradise, so it turned out. Working my way down to the first pond I had hundreds of Yellow-billed and Black Kites circling above me, while along a flooded path I picked up Western Reef Heron, House Sparrow, Red-billed Firefinch, Common Greenshank, Speckled Pigeon, Western Yellow Wagtail, and Grey Heron, luckily without getting my feet wet. A larger body of water yielded a single Western Osprey, a flock of thirsty Rock Doves, Gull-billed Tern, White-breasted Cormorant, and Zitting Cisticola in the rank grass bordering the water’s edge, where Little Bee-eaters also actively hawked insects. Common Bulbul, Malachite Kingfisher, African Swamphen, African Jacana, and a lone Green Sandpiper joined the day’s tally, while a flock of Garganey, Grey-headed Gull, Intermediate Egret, Mourning Collared Dove, and a single Purple Heron followed soon after.

More water bodies meant more birds, and Pied Crow, Spur-winged Lapwing, Black-winged Stilt, Reed Cormorant, Black-headed Heron, Great Egret, Ruff, Squacco Heron, Little Egret, Caspian Tern, Little Grebe, Pied Kingfisher, Wood Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Little Ringed Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Pink-backed Pelican, and Laughing Dove were all seen before I headed back to the lake for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

Variable Sunbird (photo Niall Perrins)

DAY 4: 22 November 2014

Before departing from Le Calao du Lac Rose, a quick saunter around the camp produced Western Osprey overhead, Black-winged Kite, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Western Plantain-eater, and the noisy, yet strikingly-colored Senegal Parrot.

A local guide and I then headed in a northerly direction for the Lompoul Desert. When we were stopping at a small dam and its surrounding vegetation the birds came in hard and fast. Abyssinian Roller displayed in the baobabs, with Subalpine Warbler, White-billed Buffalo Weaver, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Mourning Collared Dove, Laughing Dove, Purple Roller, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Pied Crow, Woodchat Shrike, and Vieillot’s
Barbet all found their way into view just before an African Hobby came cruising in after a flock of passerines. The dam itself housed Black-winged Stilt, Wood Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Black-tailed Godwit, Western Osprey, Grey Heron, Senegal Coucal, Common Redshank, Little Grebe, Great Egret, Ruff, Western Cattle Egret, Western Yellow Wagtail, and Spur-winged Lapwing.

Heading up the coast to a quaint fisherman’s village, the winds had brought in a high number of terns, including Sandwich Tern, Black Tern, and Lesser Crested Tern, while the car park produced Pied Crow, Yellow-billed Kite, Speckled Pigeon, Purple Roller, and Western Osprey. During the journey north we enjoyed species such as Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Chestnut-bellied Starling, White-billed Buffalo Weaver, African Silverbill, Greater Honeyguide, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Black-headed Lapwing, Piapiac, Yellow-billed Shrike, Western Yellow Wagtail, and Senegal Parrot.

Continuing north along the coast, we arrived at our next stop just prior to sunset. With a few minutes of light to spare I headed right to work in the surrounding thornveld, picking up Double-spedured Francolin, Black-billed Wood Dove, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Senegal Batis, Senegal Eremomela, Western Bonelli’s Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Red-billed Quelea, Red-billed Firefinch, Black-headed Lapwing, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Northern Crombec, and Common Redstart.

**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu (photo Niall Perrins)**

**DAY 5: 23 November 2014**

After a good night’s rest in our desert tents we had an early breakfast and then headed into the thorny sand dunes to see what avian treats they were hiding. Immediately we were onto Western Red-billed Hornbill, Purple Roller, African Wattled Lapwing, Laughing Dove, Common Redstart, Speckled Pigeon, Senegal Coucal, Yellow-billed Shrike, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Striped Kingfisher, and Northern Wheatear. A further scouting of the surrounding tree lines produced Senegal Batis, Black-crowned Tchagra, Rose-ringed Parakeet, African Grey Hornbill, Senegal Thick-knee, Brubru, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Little Bee-eater, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow,
Village Weaver, Abyssinian Roller, Black Scrub Robin, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Little Bee-eater, and Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver.

After lunch we made our was towards Boguel, were the heat of the desert today made birding rather slow, except at local watering points, where birds gathered in flocks to drink from these man-made wells. In the surrounding vegetation and at the water itself we enjoyed Little Bee-eater, Village Weaver, Black Scrub Robin, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Western Barn Owl, Temminck’s Courser, Eurasian Hoopoe, Black-headed Lapwing, African Collared Dove, Striped Kingfisher, and a fly-over of Short-toed Snake Eagle and Dark Chanting Goshawk before we continued on our route to Langue du Barbarie.

African Wattled Lapwing (photo John Caddick)

DAY 6: 24 November 2014

Breakfast on the deck overlooking the riverbanks allowed for good views of Grey-headed Gull, Caspian Tern, White-breasted Cormorant, Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Pied Kingfisher, Grey Heron, Great Egret, and a good number of other water-loving species.

After packing up camp we headed for a local estuary, where we enjoyed freshly smoked oysters while watching Black-winged Stilt, White-faced Whistling Duck, Garganey, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Grebe, Wood Sandpiper, White-winged Tern, Western Reef Heron, and Pink-backed Pelican. A little further north we picked up Great White Pelican, Western Yellow Wagtail, Western Marsh Harrier, Glossy Ibis, Collared Pratincole, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, and many others before reaching Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, where we spent the duration of the day.

Large numbers of waterbodies produced Pied Avocet, Eurasian Spoonbill, Curlew Sandpiper, and other highlights, such as Collared Pratincole, Senegal Coucal, Fulvous Whistling Duck, and flocks of 10 000 or more White-faced Whistling Duck and Garganey, a true spectacle as they took flight, turning the sky black. A boat ride to a colony of roughly 14 000 breeding Great White Pelicans was an absolute highlight, while we also enjoyed Western Osprey, African Fish Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, Gull-billed Tern, and many others.
The bushveld birding later in the afternoon yielded **Blue-checked Bee-eater, Brown Babbler, Subalpine Warbler, Western Yellow Wagtail, African Hawk-Eagle, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Black Crowned Crane, Northern Wheatear, Western Red-billed Hornbill, and Blue-naped Mousebird**, to name but a few.

![Collared Pratincole](photo Maans Booysen)

**DAY 7: 25 November 2014**

With a full day available to us within the sanctuary, we were eager to set to work as early as possible and did so by having breakfast in the dark, prior to sunrise. At first light we were in place at a small body of water, where we locked onto **Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-tailed Godwit, Mourning Collared Dove, Black Crane, Common Bluethroat, Spur-winged Lapwing, Western Yellow Wagtail, Beautiful Sunbird, Speckled Pigeon, Great Egret, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Little Egret, Yellow-billed Stork, Sand Martin, and Red-billed Quelea**. Delving deeper into the reserve we started to pick up more species, such as **Great White Pelican, Crested Lark, Little Bee-eater, Malachite Kingfisher, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Little Bittern, Wood Sandpiper, Common Ringed Plover, Garganey, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpiper, Northern Pintail, Kittlitz’s Plover, Little Stint, and Green Sandpiper** as well as a roosting **Western Barn Owl**.

As the morning progressed, and so too did the heat, the birding slowed down. We did, however, managed to add **Black Crowned Crane, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Western Marsh Harrier, Caspian Tern, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Arabian Bustard, Black Stork, a lonely Montagu’s Harrier, and Vieillot’s Barbet**.

Leaving the park in the late afternoon we birded towards out next destination. Here in the thornveld we enjoyed **Laughing Dove, Northern Crombec, Crested Lark, Chestnut-bellied Starling, Senegal Batis, Anteater Chat, Western Yellow Wagtail, Blue-naped Mousebird, Savile’s Bustard**, and **Northern Wheatear** before the sun went down.
DAY 8: 26 November 2014
Today featured predominantly as a travel day, and although the scenery was breathtaking and we passed through many small and intriguing villages, the birding was rather slow. We saw **Yellow-billed Kite, House Sparrow, Little Swift, Reed Cormorant, Barn Swallow, Peregrine Falcon, Western Cattle Egret, Chestnut-bellied Starling, Laughing Dove, Namaqua Dove, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Lesser Kestrel, Senegal Coucal, Scissor-tailed Kite, Eurasian Hoopoe, Western Osprey, and Western Reef Heron**. Arriving late in the afternoon in Kaolack, we set about locating our accommodation and putting our bodies to rest after a long journey and a welcoming dinner.
DAY 9: 27 November 2014
Leaving Kaolack in the morning, we picked up Spur-winged Lapwing, African Palm Swift, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Lesser Striped Swallow, Black-winged Stilt, Crested Lark, Hooded Vulture, Pied Kingfisher, and a number of others along the road before reaching a small village, where we enjoyed Bearded Barbet, Verreaux’s Eagle-Owl, and Senegal Parrot.

We then birded towards Keur Saloum, and around the vicinity of the lodge upon our arrival we enjoyed Bearded Barbet, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, African Grey Woodpecker, Beautiful Sunbird, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Spur-winged Lapwing, Malachite Kingfisher, Common Bulbul, Senegal Thick-knee, Lizard Buzzard, African Grey Hornbill, Giant Kingfisher, African Harrier-Hawk, African Golden Oriole, Brown Babbler, Black Scimitarbill, Northern Puffback, African Collared Dove, and a personal highlight in form of a small group of Stone Partridge, which performed for us along the side of a footpath while we were heading back to the car.

A short stint of birding prior to dinner added the usual suspects, notably African Jacana, White Stork, Yellow-billed Shrike, Hamerkop, Greater Blue-eared Starling, and a flock of Four-banded Sandgrouse, which came down to drink at a small waterway at dusk.

DAY 10: 28 November 2014
The entire day was spent around Keur Saloum, where the large stands of woodland and bushveld allowed for a host of new species to be added for the trip. Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Western Plantain-eater, Western Red-billed Hornbill, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Black-billed Wood Dove, Common Bulbul, Purple, Broad-billed, and Abyssinian Rollers, Pearl-spotted Owlet, White-crowned Robin Chat, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, African Thrush, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Brown Babbler, and Bruce’s Green Pigeon entertained us early on the walk, while after a break we headed to a new patch of woodland.

Here Bearded Barbet, Lavender Waxbill, Striped Kingfisher, Shikra, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, African Grey Woodpecker, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Shrike, and the splendid Violet Turaco all put in a great show before we returned to the lodge for dinner.
DAY 11: 29 November 2014
Today was a travel day, and very little birding took place as we made our way back to the capital. Along the way a few birds were enjoyed, though, such as Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Laughing Dove, Pied Crow, Pink-backed Pelican, Eurasian Curlew, Western Osprey, and Western Reef and Grey Herons before we reached our accommodation in the early evening and went straight to bed after sitting down for a very rewarding dinner after a long day in the car.
DAY 12: 30 November 2014
Today marked my departure, and situated once again at Le Calao du Lac Rose in Dakar, I spent a little time trying to see what more I could add before heading to the airport. The usual suspects were present, such as Common Redshank, Senegal Parrot, Common Greenshank, Senegal Thick-knee, Grey Plover, Sanderling, Western Osprey, Sandwich Tern, and Lesser Black-backed Gull, and just prior to leaving I managed one last addition in form of Long-tailed Nightjar, which gave me a fly-by at dusk as I headed for the vehicle.

![Common Redshank (photo Jason Boyce)](image)

### SENEGAL SCOUTING TOUR BIRD LIST NOVEMBER 2014

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### Thrushes

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<tr>
<td>African Thrush</td>
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### Chats, Old World Flycatchers

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<td>Black Scrub Robin</td>
<td>Cercotrichas podobe</td>
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<td>Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin</td>
<td>Cercotrichas galactotes</td>
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<td>White-crowned Robin-Chat</td>
<td>Cosseypha albicapillus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluethroat</td>
<td>Luscinia svecica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Redstart</td>
<td>Phoenicus phoenicurus</td>
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<td>African Stonechat</td>
<td>Saxicola torquatus</td>
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<td>Myrmecocichla aethiops</td>
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### Sunbirds

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### Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches

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<td>Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver</td>
<td>Plocepasser superciliosus</td>
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<td>House Sparrow</td>
<td>Passer domesticus</td>
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<td>Northern Grey-headed Sparrow</td>
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<td>Sudan Golden Sparrow</td>
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### Weavers, Widowbirds

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<td>White-billed Buffalo Weaver</td>
<td>Bubalornis albirostris</td>
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<td>Speckle-fronted Weaver</td>
<td>Sporopipes frontalis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village Weaver</td>
<td>Ploceus cucullatus</td>
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<td>Red-billed Quelea</td>
<td>Quelea quelea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Red Bishop</td>
<td>Euplectes franciscanus</td>
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### Waxbills, Munias and allies

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<td>Red-billed Firefinch</td>
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<td>Estrilda caerulescens</td>
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### Indigobirds, Whydahs

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### Wagtails, Pipits

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<td>Motacilla alba</td>
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<td>Macronyx croceus</td>
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<td><em>Crithagra mozambica</em></td>
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