

Birds of SE Senegal and Dindéfello

Senegal is one of West Africa's most stable countries with a heavy French influence dating back to colonial days. The first half of the tour concentrates on the little-visited far east of the country on the border with Guinea Conakry at Wassadoo and the almost unknown Dindéfello region which is on the border with Guinea and Mali. The former area is the most reliable in West Africa for the beautiful Egyptian Plover and the localised African Finfoot. Dindéfello also holds significant numbers of mammals and over 220 species of birds, making it one of the premier wildlife areas of West Africa. Our final destination on this tour is Saloum National Park, an area of inter-tidal rivers, scrub and savannah. The range of bird species in Senegal is impressive – Arabian and Savile's Bustards, Goliath Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, African Swallow-tailed Kite, Fox Kestrel, Adamawa Turtle Dove and Kulikoro Firefinch to name a few. Birdwatching Breaks has operated several tours to Senegal since the 1990s and is pleased to offer these unique birding tours at a peak time for birdlife.

Day 1: Fly to the new airport south of Dakar. On arrival, we transfer to the sea-side village of Popenguine.

Day 2: Dawn visit to the coastal scrub reserve of Popenguine where we should find Blue Rock Thrush and European Crag Martin, rare visitors from Europe. After breakfast, we travel to Wassadoo via Tambacounda, the largest city in eastern Senegal. En route we may encounter the beautiful African Swallow-tailed Kite, Dark Chanting Goshawk and, in the dry acacia woodland, Black-bellied Bustard, Black Scimitar-bill and Piapiac. Seasonal pools adjacent to the road lure small birds to drink including Cut-throat Finch, Exclamatory Paradise and Pin-tailed Whydahs, Sudan Golden Sparrow, Village Indigobird and hunting Shikra. Near Tambacounda we may locate Senegal Batis, Yellow Penduline Tit, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver and the uncommon and localised Brown-rumped Bunting. As dusk falls, we should encounter Four-banded Sandgrouse. Four nights at Wassadoo.

Days 3-5: The area is home to over 300 hundred species of birds with some of the more interesting species being Bateleur, Martial Eagle, Denham's Bustard, Egyptian

Dates

Friday January 12th - Thursday
January 25th 2018

Leaders: Mark Finn and Ass Ndiaye
Group Size: 8
Birds: 260-320



Grey Woodpecker Photo: Roger Ridley



Savile's Bustard Photo: Roger Ridley

Plover and Violet Turaco. The Gambia River meanders slowly through the region with extensive vegetation along the banks, sand-bars and banks attracting Saddle-billed and Woolly-necked Storks, African Finfoot, Giant and Shining-blue Kingfishers, White-headed Lapwing and Oriole Warbler. During our stay within the park, we make several excursions to birding hotspots. Savannah habitats offer us Helmeted Guineafowl, Stone Partridge, Black-headed Heron, Hadada Ibis, Palm-nut Vulture, Short-toed, Beaudouin's, Brown and Banded Snake Eagles, Bateleur and Black-crowned Crane. Also present in the savannah in lower numbers are Sun Lark, Pied-winged Swallow and a wide range of estrildids – Black-bellied and Black-faced Firefinches and Black-faced and Black-rumped Waxbills. Wassadoo also has patches of gallery forest holding

Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Green Turaco, Spotted Honeyguide, Little Green and Buff-spotted Woodpeckers, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Green Crombec and Crimson Seedcracker. Wassadoo attracts many birds, with previous visits recording Red-throated, Green and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Greater Honeyguide, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike, Yellow-bellied and Senegal Eremomelas, Swamp Flycatcher, White-crowned Robin-chat, Blackcap and Brown Babblers, Lesser Blue-eared Starling, African Pied Wagtail, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah, Vitelline Masked Weaver and Pygmy Sunbird.

Day 6: This morning we continue our journey south towards the border with Guinea and Mali. The habitat starts to change slow-

ly as the border has cliffs, gallery forest and ravines. Our base for the next three nights is in the regional town of Kedougou.

Days 7-8: Our main interest is visiting the Dindefello Nature Reserve which was formed by a partnership of the Jane Goodall Institute and the Rural Community of Dindefello to protect an isolated population of chimpanzees. It also protects areas of forests, cliffs and waterfalls which are rare habitats within Senegal. Rare species occurring include Fox Kestrel, Narina's Trogon, Mocking Cliff-chat, Neumann's Starling, Dybowski's Twin-spot and Kulikoro Firefinch. Several recent surveys have found species at the edge of their ranges or rare migrants from Europe. These have included Black Stork, Red-chested Goshawk, Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Common Buttonquail, Forbes's Plover, Rock Martin, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Olive Sunbird and Wilson's Indigobird. In other areas we may encounter Guinea and Violet Turacos, African Cuckoo, Northern White-faced Owl, Fanti Sawwing, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Singing, Short-winged and Rufous Cisticolas, Green-headed Sunbird and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.

Day 9: A travel day back to Kaolack where we have a one-night stay. Before we arrive, we visit a huge raptor roost site which holds hundreds of African Swallow-tailed Kites, Lesser Kestrels and possibly three species of harriers – Marsh, Montagu's and Pallid.

Days 10-12: Today we head to Saloum National Park, an extensive region of forests and mangrove swamps. As we approach our hotel, we expect to find Black Woodhoopoe, Fork-tailed Drongo, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, African and Bruce's Green Pigeons. On one morning, depending on tide times, we take a boat trip through mangrove swamps and visit isolated sandbars. The hotel quay sometimes has Blue-breasted Kingfisher and Goliath Heron. Shorebirds are numerous and include White-fronted, Kentish, Common and Little Ringed Plovers, Curlew Sandpiper, Eurasian Curlew, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Greenshank. On previ-

ous visits, we have observed White-crested Bittern, White-backed Night Heron, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Shikra, Bronze Mannikin, Brown Babbler, Klass's Cuckoo, Western Grey Plantain-eater, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Lavender Waxbill and Brown Sunbird. An afternoon visit is planned to a forested area where birds of prey abound. We may find Grasshopper Buzzard, Brown and Baudouin's Snake Eagles, Short-toed Eagle, Grey Kestrel, African Hobby and Palm-nut Vulture. Open areas attract European, Blue-cheeked and, occasionally, Little Green and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters.

Day 13: Today we return to Popenguine and visit a series of wetland lagoons adjacent to the coast where it is possible to find wintering Audouin's and Mediterranean Gulls and, in recent years, Franklin's Gulls from across the Atlantic. Anything is possible here and recent rarities have included American Golden Plover. The dry acacia woodland holds many of Europe's warblers here on their wintering grounds.

Day 14: Today we return to Dakar for flights to Europe with arrival early the next day.

Prices

Ground Price: £2,495
Single room: £250
Deposit: £250
*Air Fare: £615

This tour is fully inclusive of accommodation and meals, transport, park entrance fees and permits, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: visa, drinks, insurance, items of a personal nature.

**Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights*