

Gambia in Style

Naturetrek Tour Report

17th – 24th March 2023



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater



Western Reed Egret



West African Crocodile



White-crested Helmet Shrike

Tour report and images by Keith Buchanan



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Keith Buchanan (Leader) with 13 Naturetrek clients.

Summary

A week in sunny Gambia, in March, would be a tonic in itself but when assisted by around 180 species of often colourful and delightful birds it is indeed something special. And so the week of 17-24 March 2023 proved to be. A wonderful range of habitats was explored – gallery forest, riverine forest, mangrove, agricultural land, mud flats – the list goes on. Add the serenity of canoe trips along the mangrove lined Gambia River and a wonderful series of adventures unfolded.

Colourful Violet Turacos vied for attention with impossibly beautiful sunbirds – tiny jewels of the forest. By contrast, shores produced mixed flocks of terns, and shimmering fly-bys of Curlew Sandpipers. A particularly special encounter was with a small group of the elusive and mysterious Greater Painted Snipe. Interspersed with these were encounters with Guinea Baboons, Green and Patas monkeys, and a West African crocodile with a very wide gape...all in all, a week to remember.

Day 1

Friday 17th March

The group gathered at Gatwick for our 6 hour flight with Titan Airways to Banjul, the Gambian capital, and the flight left, without incident, in the early morning. On arrival in Banjul we negotiated the slightly chaotic luggage inspection system and quickly made contact with the Gambia Experience local rep who sign posted us to our waiting bus.

For about 40 minutes we drove along the busy main road; a kaleidoscope of small shops, welding and metalwork enterprises, cafes and forlorn looking dogs before turning off onto the dirt road leading to the Makasutu Forest. We soon came to the welcoming gates of the Mandina Lodges complex. Our ever-cheerful hostess, Linda, greeted us warmly and gave us a briefing about the upcoming week. There was time for some initial bird spotting before dinner as we tried to sort out the doves, swallows and swifts but soon it was starting to get dark and was completely so by the time we sat down to dinner at 8pm. Following this delicious meal we all retreated to our respective lodges having had a very long day.

Day 2

Saturday 18th March

An early start today so, fortified with tea and biscuits, we set off in canoes towards Bafuloto. While waiting on the jetty we got our eye in on the doves by watching and listening to the Mourning Doves around the pool, contrasting them with the Speckled Pigeon on top of one of the lodges. Shortly after setting off, a Giant Kingfisher was perched on top of one of the lodges, which allowed good views although the light was not yet ideal for photographs. An African Darter was perched high on the trees, allowing comparison with the Long-tailed Cormorants which tended to perch lower down. Whimbrels flew along the river in front of us and a juvenile Osprey was perched in a dead tree.

As we approached Bafuloto we paused to watch another African Darter before spotting the little Striated Heron further back in the mangroves. Disembarking the canoes, we stopped to admire the work of the ladies processing oysters on the bank. The whole animal is used – the flesh as food but the shell is ground up and used as a

whitewash or fertiliser, or as road building material. On top of the Oyster shell heaps, small groups of Hooded Vultures were cleaning up any residual soft parts.

Bafuloto produced an abundance of birds. Spur-winged Lapwings and Hammerkop stalked the freshwater pools, and this source of fresh water was attracting flocks of Bronze Mannikins, Orange-cheeked Waxbills and Grey-headed Sparrows. Higher in the trees Beautiful and Splendid Sunbirds mixed with Senegal Eremomelas. High in a Baobab, Northern Crombecs were spotted while, lower down, a Yellow-billed Shrike sat on a spindly branch. Pin-tailed Whydahs in non-breeding plumage were feeding on the ground and, further along the track, numbers of Red-billed Firefinch mixed with Northern Red Bishops in non-breeding plumage. A highlight here were fine views of a lovely male Pygmy Sunbird. Another highlight was a pair of Bearded Barbets. White-throated and Little Bee-eaters were constantly active and, higher up, Pied Crows, Black and Yellow-billed Kites mixed with Hooded Vultures. On the way back some familiar waders were seen along the muddy Mangrove edge: Redshank, Common Sandpiper and Greenshank, while a Purple Heron fed obligingly along the Mangrove edge.

Sated after an almost overwhelming first morning, we arrived back at Mandina for a hearty breakfast.

In the late afternoon those of us not on the sunset cruise set off to walk to the mudflats. Pausing at the water tanks, we got views of the African Paradise Flycatcher coming to drink. This was quickly followed by Lavender Waxbills and a Green-headed Sunbird. On the other side of the track a Snowy-crowned Robin Chat was turning over leaves, looking for insects. Above our heads, Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters and White-throated Bee-eaters put in an appearance. The soft cooing of Blue-spotted and Black-billed Wood Doves were a constant soundtrack in the background. Pied, Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills were all seen along the way, as well as nice views of Beautiful Sunbirds and a Senegal Eremomela.

At the mudflats, our guide had to supplement the stepping stones as the tide was coming in. Moving quickly on the far side, we turned a corner to be confronted with a Pearl-spotted Owlet sitting out in the open in full view. We started to make our way back again but some of us were distracted by babblers low down in a tree. At the crossing point, the incoming tide meant that we had to further supplement the stepping stones to avoid wet feet but all made it across safely. On the far side, our journey back was further delayed by a Cardinal Woodpecker on a dead Palm but we made it back as the light was fading on a wonderful day packed with birds.

Day 3

Sunday 19th March

Today we set off immediately after a light breakfast for the famous bird reserve at Kartong. Before we got there we stopped at a small freshwater lake and immediately spotted a Blue-chested Kingfisher sitting obligingly on a branch overhanging the water. Opposite, a Giant Kingfisher occupied an equally prominent perch. Around the side of the lake, the sentinel shapes of Senegal Thick-knees were interspersed with Spur-winged Lapwings. A Red-chested Swallow and Fanti Saw-wing fed over the water and, in the shallows, Common Sandpiper and Greenshank probed for food. The most striking find was a pair of Violet Turacos sitting on top of a bush on the other side of the lake.

On arrival at Kartong, we paid our entrance fee to the cheerful figure who mysteriously appears to collect it and set off to walk the trail towards the coast. At the back of the allotments, we came across a lovely Abyssinian Roller and mobs of Long-tailed Glossy Starlings. Further on, a Rufous-crowned Roller was also sitting quite close and,

later, a Blue-bellied Roller was seen. As we walked, an African Harrier Hawk circled ominously, while Ospreys appeared from time to time, some carrying fish. Yellow-crowned Gonolek proved their usual elusive selves and we had to hunt quite hard to get views of this lovely bird, despite their frequent and close calling.

At our first freshwater pool numerous African Jacana were active in the water. Squacco Herons were thinly distributed, and we spent some time watching a Malachite Kingfisher and a Purple Swampphen playing hide-and-seek in the reeds. Overhead, Pink-backed Pelicans drifted by in small groups.

Near the beach we approached the ridge overlooking the main wetland where flocks of White-faced Whistling ducks were wheeling about, whistling as per their name. A great variety of birds were present. One highlight was a group of Spur-winged Geese, including one juvenile. Black-headed and Black Herons, some umbrella fishing, jostled for position with African Spoonbills, Greenshank, Jacanas and a Black-winged Stilt. Just before arrival at the beach a shout went up from our excited guides – two Vieillot's Barbets were sitting high in a tree. Although not close, they did stay in place, allowing all to see.

After a refreshing cold drink the party walked down to the beach, where many birds could be seen. We stopped to watch Kentish Plovers, later picking up the very similar White-fronted Plover. A large flock of terns contained Caspian, West African Crested, Lesser Crested and Little Terns. Sanderling, Oystercatchers and Turnstones were more familiar. We then made our way back to the bus. A 40 minute drive took us to our lunch stop at Sanyang, where we enjoyed a buffet of local fish and chicken.

After lunch we drove to Tanji, the largest fishing village in Gambia. This was a chaotic melee of people, fishing boats, and fish smoking arrangements, and fascinating to watch. Turning to the birds, we enjoyed the fishing Caspian, Sandwich and West African Crested Terns, and the large numbers of Grey-headed Gulls, mixed with smaller numbers of Slender-billed Gulls. Leaving Tanji we drove back to Mandina Lodges where many enjoyed a refreshing swim.

Day 4

Monday 20th March

Our early walk this morning was through the forest to the cultivated area known as Kembujeh. Heading off up the track the forest was very quiet initially. Our first notable encounter was with a pair of Green Turacos. These magnificent birds were high in a distant tree visible through a gap in the canopy, which framed them nicely for photographs. Later a Violet Turaco was also observed. Once again Yellow-crowned Gonoleks tormented us with fleeting glimpses. Many smaller birds were seen as we walked along, with Grey-backed Camaroptera being new for the group.

As we turned from one track to another, a different sunbird caught our eye. This turned out to be a wonderful male Scarlet-chested Sunbird. This stunning avian jewel was feeding actively and flitting from tree to tree but good views were eventually obtained for everyone. A little later we all stopped because of movement in a distant tree. These turned out to be the shy and elusive Patas monkeys, with their distinctively patterned faces. They watched us watching them until they decided they had seen enough and they melted away into the vegetation. Another interesting encounter was the spotting of a Striped Kingfisher in a distant tree. We adopted the approach of photograph then move forward, photograph again, etc. This version of Grandma's footsteps continued until we

were really quite close. We debated whether we could actually get right up and pick it up but decided that would be pushing our luck!

It also seemed to be a good day for woodpeckers. Our first encounter was with a Grey Woodpecker. This was a female with the plain grey head. This was followed by excellent views of Fine-spotted Woodpecker. Getting the scope onto this bird allowed us to see the fine spotting on the breast which gives it its name. The diminutive Brown-backed Woodpecker was the next to present itself, eventually briefly pausing out in the open to the relief of all. The least accommodating was the Golden-tailed Woodpecker which stuck stubbornly to the centre of a tree with heavy foliage. The best view we got was of it flying out of the tree, with the characteristic woodpecker undulating flight.

As we moved through an open field we scanned hopefully for sand grouse but drew a blank there. We were compensated with nice views of Yellow-fronted Canary and various sunbirds. As we walked along two dogs appeared with a young local man. The guides could tell by the demeanour of the dogs that they could detect a monkey in a nearby tree. As hunting is not allowed in the forest the young man was told off by the guides and he slunk away, suitably chastened. A tantalising glimpse of a retreating Slender African Beauty Snake was a fine end to an interesting morning and we headed back to Mandina for our hearty cooked breakfast.

Our afternoon walk took us back to the Nambikala area. On the way we were able to locate African Paradise Flycatcher and Green-headed Sunbird at the area near the water storage tanks. Further on, the vigorous calling from the dense foliage of a tree near the path betrayed the presence of Little Greenbul although we struggled to find the two birds within the dense canopy. As we reached the junction of two paths, stealthy shapes in the distance betrayed the presence of Patas Monkeys which were departing the Cashew trees on which they had been feeding when we disturbed them. At the cultivated fields, the wet areas had attracted Cattle Egrets and a Squacco Heron while on the nearby grass several Red-billed Hornbills were hunting. By now, light was beginning to fade and we made our way back to the Mandina Lodges for dinner.

Day 5

Tuesday 21st March

The morning outing was a canoe ride up to the Kembujeh rice field. The river was calm and beautiful as we paddled up between the mangroves. A Blue-breasted Kingfisher flew across and the canoe and we went so close to a Pied Kingfisher that we could have almost reached out and touched it. The most striking sighting was as we approached a four-storey tower which had been constructed in advance of lodges which were never built. At that time of the morning it was full of Guinea Baboons, warming up in the morning sun, play fighting and grooming. High up, projections from the building were also occupied by baboons, completely at ease with the vertical drop beneath them.

Just beyond the baboons, a Malachite Kingfisher sat up on the mangrove roots, as if to claim its fair share of the attention. On landing at Kembujeh we were immediately spoiled for choice. A Blue-bellied Roller beckoned us from one side, Blackcap Babblers babbled enticingly under a tree on the other side, and, in-between, an African Golden Oriole played peek-a-boo from behind the leaves of a tree. It flew to a different tree then we had a wonderful piece of behaviour: a female African Golden Oriole sat out in the open and was constantly buzzed by a male. She squawked loudly at each pass, indicating her disapproval but he persisted until eventually both flew

off. A Northern Black Flycatcher sat high in a tree; we watched this bird until two African Green Pigeons demanded our attention.

Entering the area of gardens, we were greeted with the sight of beautifully tended raised beds, where Hibiscus, Ocra, Onions and Cassava were being watered by the women of the village. This was the second round of cultivation as the area had already been used to grow rice in the wet season. Here, the main attraction was a roosting Pearl-spotted Owlet which gazed at us, in that disapproving way that they have mastered, from a tree in the middle of the cultivated area.

On the way back to the canoes, we managed to get views of Violet-backed, Greater Blue-eared and Purple Glossy Starling, the latter glaring at us with those mad yellow eyes. Further birds detained us, such as the endearing Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, but by then breakfast was beckoning and we headed back to the canoes.

This afternoon, some of us went on the sunset cruise. We motored slowly out of the secluded creek where the lodges are located and headed towards the Gambia river. Bird wise it was fairly quiet. Whimbrels dotted the exposed mud regularly, along with Redshank and Greenshank. On one larger expanse of mud, Whimbrels mixed with Kentish Plover and a single Sandwich Tern. Our first Goliath Heron brought gasps of amazement at the sheer size of this formidable fish hunter. As we approached the main river itself, the horizon opened out and we saw the awesome size of the river.

At the junction with the main river we watched an African Spoonbill performing its side to side feeding action. As we turned to start heading back, an Osprey appeared and we followed it back into the creek. After following it for some time it suddenly dropped into the water and reappeared with a fish. Flying a short distance, it landed on a tree, adjusted its catch so the head was facing forward, then proceeded to fly away. Our final highlight was getting so close to Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters that they wouldn't fit into camera viewfinder! As the sun dipped to the horizon we arrived back at the lodges in good time for dinner.

Day 6

Wednesday 22nd March

After an early breakfast we drove east to Pirang, on the edge of the Gambia River. This was the site of an abandoned shrimp farm and consisted of a series of wet pools with walkways in between. Accompanied by a guide from the local community, we made our way out onto the raised walkways. Pink-backed Pelicans could be seen in the distance, as well as African Spoonbills and egrets, but we also began to pick out waders. At first it was small numbers of Little Stint, Ringed Plover and Greenshank. As we got deeper into the site Crested Larks began to appear on the walkways, and, in the distance, a large flock of Slender-billed gulls.

Wader numbers began to build up until there were shimmering flocks murmuring over the muddy flats. Further off, flocks of Black-winged Stilts and Pied Avocets could be seen. Curlew Sandpipers, Redshank and Dunlin formed the basis of these restless flocks, but Ruff were also scattered through in small numbers. On the far side of the flats a small group of Yellow-billed Storks could be seen. Terns were also present - Caspian, West African Crested and Gull-billed were all observed. By now it was getting hot so we headed back to the bus. As we approached the entrance of the site, we paused to watch a large group of Pink-backed Pelicans fishing cooperatively, watched by a group of African Spoonbills and Reed Cormorants.

Our next visit of the morning was to the community woodland reserve of Bonto. We followed a sinuous path through the woodland for a considerable time before our guide stopped. This was the roost site of the very shy African Wood Owl. We were ushered forward to observe it one at a time as it sat in deep shadow, occasionally gazing at us sleepily. Moving to another part of the wood, we had some difficulty finding our quarry – the impressive Verreaux's Eagle Owl. Peering into the depths of a large tree, we had a false alarm when the plumage of a largish bird was glimpsed which turned out to be a Black Kite. Further observation located the owl and all got a look, although it was partially obscured by foliage. Well satisfied by a fine morning, we headed back to Mandina Lodges for lunch.

Our afternoon visit today was to the area of Marakissa. We stopped by the roadside and walked down to a small wetland. The first thing we noticed was a crocodile lying at the end of a path with its mouth wide open; either thermoregulating or just anticipating our arrival? Undeterred, we began to pick up the typical birds of such a wetland area. Perhaps the most taxing were two waders briefly seen in the pond, which we decided were a Redshank and a Marsh Sandpiper. The now familiar Jacanas busily explored the water plants while we were serenaded by the plaintive calls of Spur-winged Lapwings.

Walking up to a small bridge, we caught a brief glimpse of the shy Black Crake which dived into the reeds on seeing us. On the other side, leading down to another wetland, we carefully stepped over a line of ants before approaching the water's edge. Here we had excellent close views of Yellow-billed Shrikes, then briefer views of Brown Babblers and a Purple Glossy Starling. We rounded off the visit with a Greenshank and two Wood Sandpipers standing in the water. About to re-enter the bus, we were distracted by a Blue-bellied Roller, then two Violet Turacos which performed delightful aerial displays before finally vanishing, leaving us clear to return for dinner.

Day 7

Thursday 23rd March

The morning outing in canoes was to the little village of Kubuneh. It was a beautiful peaceful morning and the river was still, apart from the swelling tide. On the way there good views of a Purple Heron were obtained from a bird sitting in the mangroves. Just before we landed we stopped to watch a Blue-breasted Kingfisher sitting at head height on the edge of the mangroves. On disembarking from the canoes, we watched the ladies opening oysters, saving the shells separately from the flesh, which they boil to make edible. Groups of Hooded Vulture and Piapiacs were picking over the oyster shells in the background – nothing wasted!

Moving away from the shore, many birds were viewed feeding on the Locust Bean Tree and other tree flowers. Flocks of Lavender Waxbills fed in the Cashew trees, mingled with Paradise Flycatcher and Black Flycatchers. A Purple Glossy Starling flitted between a pole and a nearby tree, a tree also being visited by Yellow-billed Shrikes and Rose-ringed Parakeets. Sunbirds sang and fed on flowers. On emerging into an open area we came across a flock of Black-rumped Waxbills, mixed with Red-billed Fire Finches and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu. High in a Baobab, the huge nest of a Hooded Vulture, with a sitting bird on the nest, could be seen.

However, our highlight was a little further on when two White-faced Scops Owls were located. Although roosting, the birds were vigilant, and peered down at us from time to time. They were no doubt grateful when we left to admire the huge Kapok tree with its buttress roots before returning to the canoes.

In the afternoon we went back to the mud flat area. On our way there, we saw many of the birds with which we had become familiar. A slightly more unusual encounter was when we stopped to observe some sunbirds. Another avian arrival at the back of the tree turned out to be a female Klaas's Cuckoo; females are apparently not often seen. As we walked through a grove of Cashew trees we realised that we were not alone. A large number of Guinea Baboons were also under the trees. These included many mothers with young, and they strolled in front of us, and across our path, paying us no attention.

When we reached the mudflats, we crossed over and up to the gardens on the far side. Here we watched a large group of Buffalo Weavers feeding in the cultivated fields. As we crossed back towards the mudflats we got good views of Little Bee-eaters and a more fleeting view of Yellow-crowned Gonolek. As we approached a tidal creek to cross by the stepping stones a movement on the edge of the mangrove caught our eye. Several male or juvenile Greater Painted Snipe were emerging from the mangrove edge and feeding in the water. We got good views before they disappeared into the mangrove once more: a fantastic way to end the day.

Day 8

Friday 24th March

Our last day commenced with a walk to the craft market. Even before we set off we had nice views of a Blue-breasted Kingfisher that decided to visit the swimming pool; no doubt to say goodbye to the group. After a brief show it disappeared back to the river where a solitary Grey Plover stalked the exposed mudflats. We made our way up the dusty track and our first notable sighting was a single Swallow-tailed Bee-eater sitting out on an exposed perch. Shortly after, we got our first views of a Splendid Starling, which had eluded us earlier in the week. We surprised a Lizard Buzzard sitting low in a tree, the result being that it flew immediately on seeing us. Our final notable encounter before the market was a male African Golden Oriole which showed well against the dark foliage of an Acacia.

After perusing the craft market, and buying some souvenirs, we spent some time watching two Northern White-faced Owls which were roosting right at the top of a tree behind a curtain of leaves, a position designed to elicit neck pain in observers. On our way back we came upon a busy group of the delightful White-crested Helmetshrikes. They followed their customary pattern of short flights interspersed with busy insect hunting on landing. All this in a sociable group.

Passing once again through a busy group of Guinea Baboons, the youngsters playing on a termite mound, we arrived back in good time for breakfast. Some of the group were staying on at Mandina, so it was a smaller group who left at lunchtime for the flight back to Gatwick after a busy and rewarding week.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

| Common name | Scientific name | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| White-faced Whistling Duck | <i>Dendrocygna viduata</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Spur-winged Goose | <i>Plectropterus gambensis</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Double-spurred Spurfowl | <i>Pternistis bicalcaratus</i> | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| Long-tailed Nightjar | <i>Caprimulgus climacurus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| African Palm Swift | <i>Cypsiurus parvus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Little Swift | <i>Apus affinis</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Western Plantain-eater | <i>Crinifer piscator</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Violet Turaco | <i>Tauraco violaceus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Guinea Turaco | <i>Tauraco persa</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Senegal Coucal | <i>Centropus senegalensis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Klaas's Cuckoo | <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i> | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Speckled Pigeon | <i>Columba guinea</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mourning Collared Dove | <i>Streptopelia decipiens</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Red-eyed Dove | <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i> | H | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Vinaceous Dove | <i>Streptopelia vinacea</i> | H | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Laughing Dove | <i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Black-billed Wood Dove | <i>Turtur abyssinicus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Blue-spotted Wood Dove | <i>Turtur afer</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| African Green Pigeon | <i>Treron calvus</i> | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| African Finfoot | <i>Podica senegalensis</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| African Swampphen | <i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Black Crake | <i>Amauornis flavirostris</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Senegal Thick-knee | <i>Burhinus senegalensis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Eurasian Oystercatcher | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Pied Avocet | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Black-winged Stilt | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

| Common name | Scientific name | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Spur-winged Lapwing | <i>Vanellus spinosus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| African Wattled Lapwing | <i>Vanellus senegallus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Grey Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Common Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| White-fronted Plover | <i>Charadrius marginatus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Kentish Plover | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Greater Painted-snipe | <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i> | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| African Jacana | <i>Actophilornis africanus</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Eurasian Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Ruff | <i>Calidris pugnax</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Green Sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | |
| Common Redshank | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Marsh Sandpiper | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Slender-billed Gull | <i>Chroicocephalus genei</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Grey-headed Gull | <i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Gull-billed Tern | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Caspian Tern | <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Lesser Crested Tern | <i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| West African Crested Tern | <i>Thalasseus albididorsalis</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Sandwich Tern | <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Little Tern | <i>Sternula albifrons</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Yellow-billed Stork | <i>Mycteria ibis</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| African Darter | <i>Anhinga rufa</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Reed Cormorant | <i>Microcarbo africanus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| White-breasted Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| African Sacred Ibis | <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| African Spoonbill | <i>Platalea alba</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| White-backed Night Heron | <i>Gorsachius leuconotus</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Striated Heron | <i>Butorides striata</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Squacco Heron | <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Western Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Black-headed Heron | <i>Ardea melanocephala</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Goliath Heron | <i>Ardea goliath</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Purple Heron | <i>Ardea purpurea</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Great Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Black Heron | <i>Egretta ardesiaca</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Common name | Scientific name | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Western Reef Heron | <i>Egretta gularis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Hamerkop | <i>Scopus umbretta</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Pink-backed Pelican | <i>Pelecanus rufescens</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Western Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Black-winged Kite | <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| African Harrier-Hawk | <i>Polyboroides typus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Palm-nut Vulture | <i>Gypohierax angolensis</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Hooded Vulture | <i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lizard Buzzard | <i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Dark Chanting Goshawk | <i>Melierax metabates</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Shikra | <i>Accipiter badius</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Black Kite | <i>Milvus migrans</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Yellow-billed Kite | <i>Milvus aegyptius</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pearl-spotted Owlet | <i>Glaucidium perlatum</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| Northern White-faced Owl | <i>Ptilopsis leucotis</i> | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Verreaux's Eagle-Owl | <i>Bubo lacteus</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| African Wood Owl | <i>Strix woodfordii</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Green Wood Hoopoe | <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Western Red-billed Hornbill | <i>Tockus kemp</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| African Pied Hornbill | <i>Lophoceros fasciatus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| African Grey Hornbill | <i>Lophoceros nasutus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Purple Roller | <i>Coracias naevius</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Abyssinian Roller | <i>Coracias abyssinicus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Blue-bellied Roller | <i>Coracias cyanogaster</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Striped Kingfisher | <i>Halcyon chelicuti</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Blue-breasted Kingfisher | <i>Halcyon malimbica</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Malachite Kingfisher | <i>Corythornis cristatus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Giant Kingfisher | <i>Megaceryle maxima</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Pied Kingfisher | <i>Ceryle rudis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Swallow-tailed Bee-eater | <i>Merops hirundineus</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Little Bee-eater | <i>Merops pusillus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| White-throated Bee-eater | <i>Merops albicollis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Blue-cheeked Bee-eater | <i>Merops persicus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird | <i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Vieillot's Barbet | <i>Lybius vieilloti</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Bearded Barbet | <i>Lybius dubius</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Brown-backed Woodpecker | <i>Picoides obsoletus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Fine-spotted Woodpecker | <i>Campethera punctuligera</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Golden-tailed Woodpecker | <i>Campethera abingoni</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Cardinal Woodpecker | <i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| African Grey Woodpecker | <i>Dendropicos goertae</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Grey Kestrel | <i>Falco ardosiaceus</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Senegal Parrot | <i>Poicephalus senegalus</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rose-ringed Parakeet | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Brown-throated Wattle-eye | <i>Platysteira cyanea</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

| Common name | Scientific name | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Yellow-crowned Gonolek | <i>Laniarius barbarus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| White-crested Helmetshrike | <i>Prionops plumatus</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| Yellow-billed Shrike | <i>Corvinella corvina</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| African Golden Oriole | <i>Oriolus auratus</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Glossy-backed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus divaricatus</i> | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher | <i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| African Paradise Flycatcher | <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Piapiac | <i>Ptilostomus afer</i> | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| Pied Crow | <i>Corvus albus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Crested Lark | <i>Galerida cristata</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Little Greenbul | <i>Eurillas virens</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Common Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fanti Saw-wing | <i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Pied-winged Swallow | <i>Hirundo leucosoma</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Wire-tailed Swallow | <i>Hirundo smithii</i> | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Red-chested Swallow | <i>Hirundo lucida</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Red-rumped Swallow | <i>Cecropis daurica</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Northern Crombec | <i>Sylvietta brachyura</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Zitting Cisticola | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Tawny-flanked Prinia | <i>Prinia subflava</i> | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Yellow-breasted Apalis | <i>Apalis flavida</i> | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Oriole Warbler | <i>Hypergerus atriceps</i> | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Grey-backed Camaroptera | <i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Senegal Eremomela | <i>Eremomela pusilla</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Brown Babbler | <i>Turdoides plebejus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Blackcap Babbler | <i>Turdoides reinwardtii</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Greater Blue-eared Starling | <i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i> | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Purple Starling | <i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Long-tailed Glossy Starling | <i>Lamprotornis caudatus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Splendid Glossy Starling | <i>Lamprotornis splendidus</i> | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| Violet-backed Starling | <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i> | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Yellow-billed Oxpecker | <i>Buphagus africanus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| African Thrush | <i>Turdus pelios</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Northern Black Flycatcher | <i>Melaenornis edoloides</i> | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat | <i>Cossypha niveicapilla</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Mangrove Sunbird | <i>Anthreptes gabonicus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Western Violet-backed Sunbird | <i>Anthreptes longuemarei</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Pygmy Sunbird | <i>Hedydipna platyura</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | |
| Green-headed Sunbird | <i>Cyanomitra verticalis</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Scarlet-chested Sunbird | <i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Beautiful Sunbird | <i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Splendid Sunbird | <i>Cinnyris coccinigastrus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Variable Sunbird | <i>Cinnyris venustus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Northern Grey-headed Sparrow | <i>Passer griseus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |

| Common name | Scientific name | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| White-billed Buffalo Weaver | <i>Bubalornis albirostris</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Little Weaver | <i>Ploceus luteolus</i> | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| Black-necked Weaver | <i>Ploceus nigricollis</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Vitelline Masked Weaver | <i>Ploceus vitellinus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Village Weaver | <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Northern Red Bishop | <i>Euplectes franciscanus</i> | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |
| Bronze Mannikin | <i>Spermestes cucullata</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Lavender Waxbill | <i>Glaucostrelda caerulea</i> | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |
| Orange-cheeked Waxbill | <i>Estrilda melpoda</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Black-rumped Waxbill | <i>Estrilda troglodytes</i> | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu | <i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Red-billed Firefinch | <i>Lagonosticta senegala</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pin-tailed Whydah | <i>Vidua macroura</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| Western Yellow Wagtail | <i>Motacilla flava</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Yellow-fronted Canary | <i>Crithagra mozambica</i> | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |

Mammals

| | | March 2023 | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Common name | Scientific name | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Mammals | | | | | | | | | |
| Western Red Colobus Monkey | <i>Procolobus badius</i> | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Guinea Baboon | <i>Papio papio</i> | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Green Vervet/Callithrix Monkey | <i>Chlorocebus sabaeus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Patas Monkey | <i>Erythrocebus patas</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat | <i>Epomophorus gambianus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Striped Ground Squirrel | <i>Xerus erythropus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Gambian Sun Squirrel | <i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Marsh Mongoose | <i>Atilax paludinosus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | |

Invertebrates, Reptiles & Fish

| Common name | Scientific name |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Papilionidae | |
| Citrus Swallowtail | <i>Papilio demodocus</i> |
| Pieridae | |
| Small Grass Yellow | <i>Eurema brigatta</i> |
| Caper White | <i>Belenois aurota</i> |
| Nymphalidae | |
| African Tiger | <i>Danaus chrysippus</i> |
| Odonata | |
| Black Percher | <i>Diplacodes lefebvrei</i> |
| Red Basker | <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> |
| | |
| | |

| Common name | Scientific name |
|------------------------------|--|
| Other invertebrates | |
| African Giant Snail | <i>Achatina sp.</i> |
| West African Mangrove Oyster | <i>Crassostrea tulipa</i> |
| Brown Paper Wasp | <i>Polistes sp.</i> |
| Antlion | <i>Myrmeleon sp.</i> |
| Giant Millipede | <i>Diplopoda: family Odontopygidae</i> |
| Driver Ants | <i>Dorylus sp.</i> |
| | |
| Reptiles | |
| Forest Cobra | <i>Naja melanoleuca</i> |
| Agama Lizard | <i>Agama agama</i> |
| West African Crocodile | <i>Crocodylus suchus</i> |
| Slender African Beauty snake | <i>Psammophis elegans</i> |
| | |
| Fish | |
| Atlantic Mudskipper | <i>Periophthalmus papillo</i> |
| Guinean Tilapia | <i>Tilapia guineensis</i> |

Plants

| Common name | Scientific name |
|--|----------------------------------|
| FLOWERING PLANTS | ANGIOSPERMS |
| <i>Magnoliidae (Dicotyledons)</i> | |
| Acanthus Family | Acanthaceae |
| Black Mangrove | <i>Avicennia germinans</i> |
| | |
| Cashew Family | Anacardiaceae |
| Cashew Tree | <i>Anacardium occidentale</i> |
| Mango | <i>Mangifera indica</i> |
| | |
| Cocoplum Family | Chrysobalanaceae |
| Gingerbread Plum | <i>Neocarya macrophylla</i> |
| | |
| Pea Family | Fabaceae |
| Groundnut/Peanut | <i>Arachis hypogaea</i> |
| African Locust Bean Tree | <i>Parkia biglobosa</i> |
| | |
| Mallow Family | Malvaceae |
| Baobab | <i>Adansia digitata</i> |
| Kapok Tree | <i>Ceiba petandra</i> |
| | |
| Mulberry Family | Moraceae |
| Strangler Fig | <i>Ficus craterostema?</i> |
| | |
| Four O'Clock Family | Nyctaginaceae |
| Bourganvillia | <i>Bourganvillea spectabilis</i> |
| | |
| Mangrove Family | Rhizophoraceae |
| Red Mangrove | <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> |

| Common name | Scientific name |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| | |
| Palm Family | <i>Areaceae</i> |
| Coconut | <i>Cocos nucifera</i> |
| | |
| Mahogany tree | <i>Swietenia spp</i> |