



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Senegal

### Birding the Sahel

*17<sup>th</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (13 days)*



Golden Nightjar by David Hoddinott

*The small West African nation of Senegal is a popular birding holiday destination, for many reasons. One of these is the ability to escape the cold Northern winters to a summer wonderland only a few hour's flight away, though add in easily accessible, and superb West African birding habitats and many sought after birds and it's easy to understand why so many birders flock to this nation on an annual basis.*

*Rockjumper is, therefore, pleased to be offering a superb tour to this great birding destination, and our very comprehensive tour encompasses the avian highlights of this remarkable region, targeting an array of very special and sought-after species. For anyone seeking a relaxed and enjoyable introduction to African birds and birding and excellent photographic opportunities, this tour comes highly recommended!*

**THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...**

**THE ITINERARY**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival day in Dakar, Senegal</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Dakar to Richard Toll</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Richard Toll area</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Richard Toll to Podor</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Podor to Djoudj National Park</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Djoudj National Park</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Djoudj National Park to Kaolack</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Kaolack to Wassadou</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Wassadou to Kedougou</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Day trip to Dindinvelo</b>
<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Kedougou to Wassadou</b>
<b>Day 12</b>	<b>Wassadou to Kaolack</b>
<b>Day 13</b>	<b>Kaolack to Dakar &amp; Departure</b>

**TOUR MAP...**



### THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

**Day 1: Arrival in Dakar, Senegal.** On arrival in Dakar, you will be met and transferred to our comfortable hotel. Depending on time of arrival we can do some birding in a nearby nature reserve where we may see Blue Rock Thrush and Western Red-billed Hornbill.

This evening you will meet your Rockjumper tour leader and the other participants for a welcome dinner and a chat about our forthcoming birding adventure.

**Day 2: Dakar to Richard Toll.** We depart the capital city of Senegal this morning heading north towards Richard Toll. After departing the bustling capital, our birding experience kicks into full gear as we enter the Sahel (the semi-arid area along the southern edge of the great Sahara Desert). We will stop as and when we see birds while travelling to Richard Toll. Likely species in this harshly dry habitat include Blue-naped Mousebird, Mosque Swallow, Chestnut-bellied Starling and Sudan Golden Sparrow, the males of which are rather eye-searing. We will also keep our eyes on the skies for mixed flocks of vultures; whilst the ubiquitous Hooded Vulture will be seen regularly around villages. It is the carcasses of dead cattle, however, that attract the more interesting species such as White-backed, Rüppell's, Lappet-faced and hopefully even one or two Griffon Vultures that spend the winter in this area.



Cricket Warbler by Markus Lilje

This region also holds the localised Savile's Bustard and we will make a determined effort to see this rarely sighted species. We may also encounter some interesting migrants including Western Orphee and Sub-alpine Warbler and Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle. If we are very fortunate we may even chance upon a Quail-plover, though we would be extremely lucky to connect with this enigmatic species.

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**Days 3: Richard Toll area.** The area is very dry, Acacia scrub predominates and it holds a few sought after Sahel species. In the cool of the morning, before the temperature rises we'll search for such gems as Little Grey Woodpecker, the delightful Cricket (or Scaly-fronted) Warbler, diminutive Sennar Penduline Tit and Western Red-billed Hornbill all of which occur in the area. If we are exceptionally fortunate, we may even find the little known Kordofan Lark which has been seen here.



Sennar Penduline Tit by David Hoddinott

Although these birds are our main targets, we will also come across plenty of other interesting species including Cream-colored Courser, Eurasian Stone-curlew, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, African Collared and Namaqua Doves, Eurasian Hoopoe, Eurasian Wryneck, Black-crowned and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks, Singing Bush Lark, Yellow-bellied and Senegal Eremomela, Southern Grey Shrike, Black Scrub Robin, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Pygmy Sunbird and Speckle-fronted



Weaver. The region is a major wintering area for Palearctic migrants and we should come across Black Kite (though we'll need to look carefully at hundreds of Yellow-billed Kites to find one!), Tree Pipit, Common Redstart, Northern (including the *sebohmi* race that breeds in north-west Africa) and Black-eared Wheatears, Western Olivaceous, Western Bonelli's, Western Orphean and Subalpine Warblers, both Common and Iberian Chiffchaffs as well as Woodchat Shrike.

**Day 4: Richard Toll to Podor.** We will have further chances this morning to search for Western Red-billed Hornbill, Little Grey Woodpecker, Sennar Penduline Tit, Black Scimitarbill and any specials we may not have seen, before continuing on to Podor. In the evening we will do a night drive to search for the stunning Golden Nightjar.



Arabian Bustard by Clayton Burne

**Day 5: Podor to Djoudj National Park.** Today we relocate to the Djoudj National Park situated right on the border with Mauritania, where we will stay for two nights. We will arrive in time for some initial exploration of this mighty wetland, which is of significant international importance due to the hundreds of thousands of waterbirds that make it their winter home. We will soon come across flocks of wildfowl including colossal numbers of White-faced Whistling Duck and Northern Pintail, with lesser numbers of Spur-winged and Egyptian Geese, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Garganey and Northern Shoveler.

**Day 6: Djoudj National Park.** Djoudj National Park is internationally famous for its vast flocks of wildfowl but also hosts huge numbers of waterbirds. We can expect to see Greater Flamingo, hundreds of Great White Pelicans, White-breasted Cormorant, African Darter, Little Bittern, Purple and Squacco Herons, Glossy and African Sacred Ibis, Eurasian and African Spoonbills, Black, White and Yellow-billed Storks, Knob-billed Duck, African Fish Eagle, African Swamphen, Black Crowned Crane, African Jacana, Greater Painted-snipe and Collared Pratincole, while amongst the throngs of waders we will search for Little Ringed, Common Ringed and Kittlitz's Plovers, Wood, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stint, Dunlin, Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit. We could also come across White-winged and Whiskered Terns, African Stonechat of the *moptanus* race, Greater Swamp Warbler and Black-headed (Yellow-backed) Weaver.



Black Crowned Crane by Clayton Burne

However, the area is not just about waterbirds and in the surrounding dry country we will look for Montagu's and Western Marsh



Harriers, the endangered Arabian Bustard, Sand Martin, Western Yellow and White Wagtails, Tawny Pipit, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Whinchat, Sedge, rare Aquatic and European Reed Warblers, the recently described River Prinia - one of our main targets during this leg of the tour, Winding Cisticola, (Black-faced) Quailfinch, Orange-breasted (Zebra) Waxbill and thousands of Red-billed Quelea. Long-tailed Nightjars inhabit the area, as does Western Barn Owl, which we may find in our Hotel grounds. A real bonus would be a Short-eared Owl, a very rare visitor to the sub-Saharan that occasionally frequents this park and which we will search for in suitable habitat. We should also encounter Common Warthog and Common Jackal during our time in this very special area.



Scissor-tailed Kite roost by David Hoddinott

**Day 7: Djoudj National Park to Kaolack.** Having had our fill of waterbirds, today we will drive to Kaolack for an overnight stay. While principally a travel day, we will have further chances to look for any species we may have missed earlier or perhaps require better views of as we head towards Kaolack. En route we may see a variety of raptors including the majestic Bateleur and Dark Chanting Goshawk and we will also have further chances for the enigmatic Quail-plover. In the afternoon we will visit a Scissor-tailed Kite colony, an awesome spectacle indeed as we watch thousands of birds coming in to roost.

**Day 8: Kaolack to Wassadou.** Today we shall leave Kaolack early this morning to set off for Wassadou. We will make some birding stops en route arriving in time for some late afternoon birding around Wassadou. Our lodge is adjacent to the Niokolo-Koba National Park, is situated on the Gambia River and offers superb birding. Hamerkop, Brown Snake Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle, African Fish Eagle, Mourning Collared, Vinaceous and Black-billed Wood Dove, Violet Turaco, Western Plantain-eater, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Red-throated and Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Vieillot's Barbet,



Red-throated Bee-eater  
by David Hoddinott

**Day 9: Wassadou to Kedougou.** After breakfast we will drive to Kedougou. Birds we will keep a lookout for en route include Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Grey Kestrel, African Hobby, Grey-headed and Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Blackcap Babbler and Sahel Paradise Whydah. We should have time to do some birding around Kedougou in the afternoon where we will search for Mali Firefinch which has recently been discovered in this area.

**Day 10: Day trip to Dindinvelo.** This mixed woodland area



holds a good variety of species and we may see Stone Partridge, Double-spurred Francolin, Western Banded Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Senegal Coucal, Red-necked Falcon, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Rock Martin, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Piapiac, African Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Green-headed and Variable Sunbird, Black-necked Weaver, Lavendar Waxbill and Mali Firefinch.



Oriole Warbler by Ignacio Yufera

**Day 11: Kedougou to Wassadou.** On the drive to Wassadou we travel through some superb Guinea savanna which has a good selection of species. Here we will keep a lookout for amongst others; White-throated Francolin, Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Bronze-winged Courser, Black-headed Lapwing, Standard-winged Nightjar, Mottled Spinetail, Purple, Abyssinian and Blue-bellied Roller, Green Wood Hoopoe, Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Bearded Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, Senegal Parrot, White-crested Helmetshrike, Yellow-billed Shrike, African Golden Oriole, West African Swallow, Long-tailed Glossy Starling and Yellow-billed Oxpecker. In the afternoon we will take a boat trip to search for African Finfoot, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Egyptian Plover, Shining-blue Kingfisher, Palmnut Vulture, Pel's Fishing Owl, White-backed Night Heron and Four-banded Sandgrouse.

**Day 12: Wassadou to Kaolack.** We depart very early for the Saloum Delta. Here we will search for the elusive White-crested Tiger Heron. Other species we may encounter include Goliath and Black Heron, Senegal Thick-knee, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and Mangrove Sunbird.

**Day 13: Kaolack to Dakar and departure.** This morning we leave early for a boat trip to Isle des Madelaine National Park, a small island off Dakar. Here we may see Western Reef Heron, Brown Booby, Red-billed Tropicbird and Cory's Shearwater. Thereafter we will make our way to Dakar airport to connect with our International flights home.



**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs (where applicable) and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES.**

The tour price includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 of the tour to lunch on day 13;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary;
- Ground transportation;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services; and
- Tips for local guides and services.

The tour price excludes:

- **Any airfares**, taxes and visa costs;
- Any beverages;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**

**b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**

**c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**

**d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does not include your Rockjumper leader. Therefore, if you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- In some areas, it may be very hot, especially in the north of Senegal. We will thus make good use of the early mornings and will have many early starts, to avoid birding in the middle of the day as far as is possible. Furthermore, in the rainforest areas in the south, the humidity will be high and uncomfortable.
- This Senegal tour is designed to be a dedicated, fast paced birding experience and we will



- attempt to obtain good views of as many bird species as possible.
- This tour **DOES** require a good level of fitness and participants should be in good general health, as much of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours (on mostly flat terrain) at a time. Should you have any physical or medical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure. Please note that for most of this tour we will be far away from modern medical facilities.
  - Accommodations are generally of a good standard in Senegal. The lodge at Camp e Monde Wassadou, although fairly simple, is quite comfortable. We will do our utmost to make your stay as comfortable as possible, but at times we may experience maintenance issues that are beyond our control. We will stay either in hotels, guesthouses or park chalets.
  - A fair amount of our time is spent in vehicles as we do have to cover some long distances in order to get to the best birding areas. Some of the roads (especially in The Gambia) can be poor, and the going may be slow and potentially frustrating. Traffic in certain urban areas can be very time consuming too. The more luggage you pack, the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for your comfort and that of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg for check in luggage and 8kg for hand luggage.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour price **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will start in Dakar, Senegal on day 1, and as this is an arrival day and you are free to arrive at any time you wish. The tour will conclude in the afternoon of day 13 in Dakar, Senegal.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

### **FLIGHTS:**

Dakar International Airport (IATA: DKR), is the main port of entry for international flights into Senegal and is well serviced by several of the world's major airlines. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

