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Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 12:59:31 PM
To: Karanta Camara <karantamj@hotmail.com>
Subject: Gambia & Senegal Tour

This was our third visit to the Gambia for my wife and I and our first guided tour with Karanta Camara, MD of gambiabirdingtours.com

We have known Karanta for many years and I wanted to book a guided tour with him as his knowledge and expertise in his field is second to none.

Our base for the first 7 days was the Ocean Bay Hotel on the coast of Gambia where we had stayed before and the gardens attract many species of birds.

We were picked up every morning at 7.30am and explored all habitats of the Gambia including forests, wetlands, savannahs, rice fields, rivers and the coast.

Karanta, like me is a very keen photographer and together, with my wife taking videos of the beautiful areas we visited, off we went each day.

The photographic opportunities came thick and fast as we took our time in each area we visited to get those images we craved. This was a great test for me with my new Canon R5 and 100mm - 400mm lens combo and the results were amazing.

Eagles, Owls, Bee-Eaters, Kingfishers, Falcons, Shrikes, Rollers, Herons, Sunbirds and many more were photographed each day as we tracked down our target birds.

For lunch we either went to a local restaurant or took a packed lunch which was prepared for us by Karanta, usually in a secluded spot known to Karanta where we could photograph an array of birds of prey circling above us. On one occasion we were treated to a Bateleur Eagle soaring 100 feet above our heads, incredible views. :)

On our eighth day we packed our cases for a 4 day tour of the north bank of the Gambia and Senegal. I had never been to Senegal before but Karanta knows the area extremely well and the birds we saw en-route surpassed my expectations. The main purpose of our trip to Senegal was to visit Kousmar Island near Kaolack, the roosting site of over 2000 Swallow Tailed Kites. It was a truly memorable day out as we watched these incredible birds tumble out of the skies into the baobab trees in front of us.

We stayed in a lovely camp called Morgan Kunda not far from the border to Senegal. We had more amazing views of the local birds whilst having our breakfast and I couldn't resist getting the camera out. After a 2 night stay in Morgan Kunda we headed over to Tendaba camp where we had stayed twice before. We booked a late afternoon boat trip across the Gambia river into the mangrove creeks to photograph more wetland birds and kingfishers. A flyby Goliath Heron was a delight to see.

We headed back to our hotel on the coast after a memorable 4 day tour with over 3000 images on my SIM cards and memories I will never forget.

Each day spent with Karanta and our driver Sly was like being with your closest friends as he made us feel totally at ease and catered for all our needs. We have made a friend for life and I have already booked to go back in January 2024 with 4 of my dearest friends to spend another 11 days with Karanta. I can't wait!

In all we saw 245 bird species and witnessed many wildlife encounters. A full list of birds below.

26th January

Black Kite
Blue Bellied Roller
Red Billed Hornbill
Speckled Pigeon
Hooded Vulture
Pied Crow
Piapiac
Mourning Dove
Broad Billed Roller
Grey Heron
Lanner Falcon
Grey Kestrel
Vinaceous Dove
Laughing Dove
Yellow Billed Shrike
Wire Tailed Swallow
Common Bulbul
Grey Headed Sparrow
Red Billed Fire-finch
Red Cheeked Cordon Bleu
Variable Sunbird
Pygmy Sunbird
Splendid Sunbird
Scarlet Chested Sunbird
Black Billed Dove
Spotted Honeyguide
Pygmy Kingfisher
Giant Kingfisher
Common Wattle Eye
African Paradise Flycatcher
Black Rumped Waxbill
Bronze Mannequin
Black Necked Weaver
Black Winged Red Bishop
Blue Spotted Wood Dove
Little Green Bulbul
Snowy Crowned Robin Chat
African Thrush
African Harrier Hawk
White Backed Night Heron
Wattled Plover
Yellow Breasted Apalis
Grey Backed Camaroptera
European Bee-Eater
Black Capped Babbler
Village Weaver
Little Weaver
Green Headed Sunbird
Violet Turaco

Western Grey Plantain Eater
Lesser Honeyguide
Greater Honeyguide
Feral Pigeon
Beautiful Sunbird
Shikra
Brown Babbler
Yellow Crowned Gonolek
Yellow Fronted Canary
Northern Puffback Shrike
White Faced Scops Owl
Greyish Eagle Owl
Blue Cheeked Bee-Eater

27th January

Caspian Tern
Great White Egret
Yellow Billed Black Kite
Cattle Egret
Long Tailed Cormorant
Northern Crombec
Stone Partridge
Red Bellied Paradise Flycatcher
Northern Black Flycatcher
Pearl Spotted Owlet
Red Necked Falcon
Little Bee-Eater
Green Turaco
Oriole Warbler
Tawny Flanked Prinia
Yellow Fronted Leaflove
Long Tailed Glossy Starling
Red Eyed Dove
Long Tailed Nightjar
Fork Tailed Drongo
Lavender Waxbill
African Grey Hornbill
Grey Headed Gull
Pied Kingfisher
House Sparrow
Lesser Crested Tern
Sandwich Tern
Royal Tern
Slender Billed Gull
Lesser Black Backed Gull
Whimbrel
Green Sandpiper
Grey Plover
Greenshank
Turnstone
Bar Tailed Godwit

Spur Winged Plover
Reef Heron
Little Egret
Osprey
Great Cormorant
Pink Backed Pelican
Great White Pelican
Senegal Thick Knee

28th January

Yellow Wagtail
Crested Lark
African Jacana
Black Egret
Singing Cisticola
Black Crowned Tchagra
Cutthroat Finch
African Darter
Pallid Swift
Namaqua Dove
Hoopoe
Woodchat Shrike
Silver Billed Finch
Chestnut Bellied Starling
Red Winged Warbler
Black Shouldered Kite
Pied Wing Swallow
Mottled Spinetail
Whinchat
Black Headed Heron
Bearded Barbet
Green Crombec
Western Bluebill
Sulphur Breasted Shrike
Collard Sunbird
Grey Headed Bristlebill
Capuchins Babbler
Squacco Heron

29th January

Batueler Eagle
Yellow White Eye
Striped Kingfisher
Red Billed Quela
African Golden Oriole
Senegal Batis
African Cuckoo
Brown Backed Woodpecker
Bush Petrona
Swallow Tailed Bee-Eater
Rufous Cisticola

Siffling Cisticola
White Fronted Black Chat
Green Backed Eromola
African Spoonbill
Purple Glossy Starling
Rufous Crowned Roller
Dark Chanting Goshawk
White Spotted Fluff-Tail
Pied Hornbill
Simple Leaflove
Green Woodhoopoe
Red Chested Swallow

30th January

African Green Pigeon
Black Wood Hoopoe
Rose Ringed Parakeet
Violet Backed Sunbird
Senegal Parrot
Fine Spotted Woodpecker
Greater Blue Eared Glossy Starling
Lesser Blue Eared Glossy Starling
Long Crested Eagle
Wahlbergs Eagle
Palm Nut Vulture
Abyssinian Roller
Double Spurred Francolin
Buffalo Weaver
Lizard Buzzard
Striated Heron
Black Crake
Grey Headed Woodpecker

31st January

Purple Heron
Klass's Cuckoo
African Goshawk
Fanta Saw Wing
Sacred Ibis
Malachite Kingfisher
Blue Breasted Kingfisher
Common Sandpiper
Wood Sandpiper
Little Ringed Plover
Redshank
Black Winged Stilt
Golden Tailed Woodpecker
Hammerkop

01st February - En Route to Morgan Kunda

Intermediate Egret

Grasshopper Buzzard
Bronze Winged Courser
African Fish Eagle
Griffin Vulture
White Headed Vulture
White Backed Vulture
Ruppells Vulture
Yellow Billed Stork
Chestnut Backed Sparrow Lark
Lesser Kestrel
Brown Snake Eagle

02nd February

Village Indigo Bird
Yellow Fronted Tinker Bird
Whitethroat
Common Redstart
Beaudoins Snake Eagle

02nd February - Senegal

Lesser Flamingo
Greater Flamingo
Kentish Plover
Klitz's Plover
Marsh Sandpiper
Pied Avocet
Swallow Tailed Kite
Saville's Bustard
Sudan Golden Sparrow
White Rumped Seedeater
Southern Grey Shrike
Western Olivaceous Warbler
Montagu's Harrier

03rd February

Gabor Goshawk
Speckle Fronted Weaver
Gull billed Tern

03rd February - Tendaba Boat Trip

Goliath Heron
White Throated Bee-Eater
Mouse Brown Sunbird
Black Crowned Night Heron
Woolley Necked Stork
White Wagtail

04th February- Tendaba

Brubru
White Crested Helmet Shrike
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

Splendid Glossy Starling
Bruce's Green Pigeon

05th February

Spur Winged Goose
White Faced Whistling Duck
Purple Swamphen
Moorhen
Marsh Harrier
Common Snipe
Grey Headed Kingfisher
White Fronted Plover
Sanderling
Oystercatcher

06th February

Little Tern