



GAMBIA: WINTER ESCAPE BIRDWATCHING HOLIDAY

6 – 14 JANUARY 2026

6 – 14 JANUARY 2027



*The delightful **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** is a regular feature on this tour through Gambia.*

Gambia, fondly known as the “Smiling Coast of Africa”, thanks to its tourist friendly reputation, is a well-known hotspot for birds and birders alike. None more so than for British and European citizens, with its quick and easy access, making bird-watching trips here very affordable and mightily enjoyable. Indeed, this small country which is entirely surrounded by Senegal, offers action-packed birding – with an exciting mix of wooded habitats, forest patches and productive wetlands combining well. Additionally, Gambia can be covered thoroughly in just a few days and make trips here well worthwhile. This tour is timed specifically in the northern hemisphere’s winter period, to allow for a break from the cold and gloom of the UK and indeed Europe, all the while enjoying a prolific set of charismatic and distinctive African birds and families.



Broad-billed Roller is a characteristic sub-Saharan African species we should encounter.

This comfortable tour is not particularly strenuous, and appeals to birders of all skills and levels of enthusiasm. Basing ourselves at the Senegambia Beach Hotel for the most part, we explore the surrounds for a wide spectrum of Gambia’s best birds, combined with a short foray inland to Tendaba Camp along the Gambia River for a few days in a different environment. For many, this is indeed their first taste of sub-Saharan African birds and families, with the likes of rollers, hornbills, turacos, robin-chats, sunbirds, and so many more, vying for attention.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Banjul

This tour begins with your arrival into the small Banjul International Airport in Gambia. This day is set aside as an arrival day, and you are welcome to fly in at your leisure. There are no formal

plans for the day, but for those arriving earlier in the day (or the day prior), the grounds of our hotel offer a superb introduction to some of the common and widespread species found in the country. Bold and conspicuous birds like **Western Plantain-eater**, **Western Red-billed Hornbill**, **Broad-billed Roller**, **Yellow-crowned Gonolek**, **Long-tailed Glossy Starling** and **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** are all regular, while the regular feeding of the large numbers of **Hooded Vultures** add to the spectacle.

Overnight: Senegambia Beach Hotel



Yellow-crowned Gonolek is widespread, even occurring in the spacious grounds of our hotel.

Days 2 – 5. Birding day trips to forests, woodlands and wetlands around coastal Gambia

Basing ourselves at our comfortable hotel, we have four full days available to explore the bird-rich surroundings. We will undertake a mix of full day trips out from the hotel, and dedicated morning and afternoon excursions with a midday break in between. We anticipate visiting a wide range of well-known local sites, including Brufut woods, Pirang wetlands, Farasutu forest, Kartong Bird Sanctuary and Tanji Bird Reserve, amongst others.

As we go about all our travels and explorations, wetland habitat will be a regular feature and on top of the common and numerous birds like **White-faced Whistling Duck**, **Spur-winged Goose**, **African Darter**, **Great Egret**, **Squacco Heron**, **Hamerkop**, **Spur-winged Lapwing** and **Pied Kingfisher**, we will also look for more local and scarce specials. These may include species such as **African Pygmy Goose**, **Goliath**, **Western Reef** and **Black Herons**, **African Woolly-necked Stork**, **Pink-backed Pelican**, **Greater Painted-snipe**, **Senegal Thick-knee** and **Giant Kingfisher** amongst others. Coastal areas usually hold a variety of terns and shorebirds, and we'll keep a special lookout for birds like **West African Crested Tern**, alongside more widespread species, including **Common**, **Caspian** and **Sandwich Terns**, **Grey-headed** and **Lesser Black-**

backed Gulls, and many shorebirds overwintering from the northern hemisphere – such as **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Common** and **Little Ringed Plover**, **Bar-tailed** and **Black-tailed Godwits**, **Common Greenshank**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Sanderling**, **Ruff**, and various sandpipers.



African Pygmy Goose is a sought-after waterbird we'll try hard to find.



Western Reef Heron occurs around the coastal parts of the country.

Forested areas and patches of denser woodlands and thickets hold an exciting range of birds. Both the spectacular **Violet** and **Guinea Turacos** and the bizarre **Oriole Warbler** will feature highly on our wishlist, along with others like **Spotted Honeyguide**, **Buff-spotted Woodpecker**, **Brown-throated Wattle-eye**, **Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher**, **Blackcap Babbler**, **White-crowned** and **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chats**, **Olive-naped Weaver**, delightful **Lavender Waxbills** and, if we're lucky, the scarce **Western Bluebill**.



*The strange **Oriole Warbler** is a sought-after bird occurring in the forests and denser patches of thickets.*

Many sites also incorporate more open woodland habitat, and even though this can be fairly degraded in places, these areas are always incredibly birdy. Many of the common birds around our hotel grounds are a regular feature like **Western Plain-tan-eater** and **Western Red-billed Hornbill**, but we will also look carefully for many others as well. Noisy **Double-spurred Spurfowl** run along the open tracks, while comical **Green Wood Hoopoes** cackle about, and stately **Bruce's Green Pigeons** perch atop the dead trees. Sought-after birds like **Blue-bellied** and **Abyssinian Rollers** often perch along the wires and are occasionally joined by the dainty **Little Bee-eater**. While **Bearded Barbets** and **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds** are invariably heard before being seen, we will also carefully listen out for the soft calls of **Fine-spotted Woodpecker**, while noisy **Senegal Parrots** commute about regularly. Various starlings often provide a hit of color, with the likes of **Lesser Blue-eared**, **Purple** and **Long-tailed Glossy Starling** routinely seen, while spectacular sunbirds like **Scarlet-chested** and **Beautiful Sunbirds** are never far away. These are only a small number of the many species we're likely to see, and should be enough to whet your appetite for our birding over these first days.

Overnight: [Senegambia Beach Hotel](#)



Abyssinian Roller is one of the many woodland specials that we'll see.



Noisy Senegal Parrots commute up and down throughout the day in parts of the country.

Days 6 – 7. Birding Tendaba Camp – inland Gambia

We temporarily say goodbye to the Senegambia, as we transfer inland to the more basic Tendaba Camp, located on the Gambia River, for two nights.

We will bird along the way to Tendaba, with stops that might include birds like **Leaf-love** and **Oriole Warbler** (if we're still missing this special bird), along with scarcer wetland birds like **African Pygmy Goose**. As we head farther inland, raptors become a bit more regular and many species are possible. We'll keep an eye out for the scarcer species like **Brown Snake** and **Western Banded Snake Eagle**, **Martial Eagle**, **African Hawk Eagle**, **Dark Chanting Goshawk** and even **Grasshopper Buzzard** as well.

Once we reach Tendaba Camp, the bulk of our time will be spent birding the dry woodlands in the surrounding area, which support several sought-after and scarce species. Birds such as **Vieillot's Barbet**, **Black Scimitarbill**, **Brown-backed Woodpecker**, **White-shouldered Black Tit**, **White-crested Helmetshrike**, **Senegal Eremomela**, **Bronze-tailed Starling**, **Pygmy Sunbird** and **Brown-rumped Bunting** will feature as big targets. We should also be able to find more widespread species like **Striped** and **Woodland Kingfishers**, **Brubru**, **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu**, **Yellow-fronted Canary** and **Cut-throat Finch**, amongst many others. If we're fortunate, we may run into the prehistoric-looking **Abyssinian Ground Hornbill** striding through the area. A convenient photo hide attracts many species, and usually provides excellent views of the various starlings and small seedeaters (like the bright cordon-blues, waxbills and canaries).



*The snazzy **White-crested Helmetshrike** will be a special bird we'll keep a keen eye open for.*

We will also undertake a boat trip on the Gambia River here and, while we should have seen most of the possible waterbirds already, this is always an enjoyable outing on any tour! Various waterbirds, including cormorants and a wide array of egrets and herons, commute up and down along the river, and roving **Pink-backed Pelicans** are often about, along with the ubiquitous **Pied Kingfishers**. The majestic **African Fish Eagle** is usually seen as well.

Overnight: Tendaba Camp

Day 8. Birding back to Banjul

We have a final morning available for birding the Tendaba region, before we'll need to navigate our way back to Banjul. We will keep the morning flexible, and use it to try and track down any notable species we might not have found yet. We will return back to our familiar Senegambia Beach Hotel in the afternoon, as we wind up the tour and reminisce about the exciting birds we will have enjoyed.

Overnight: Senegambia Beach Hotel



White-faced Whistling Ducks are a widespread African species, and we should encounter them commonly in wetlands throughout Gambia.

Day 9. Departure from Banjul, Gambia

This day is set aside for your departure from Banjul, and no birding plans are included. You can depart at your leisure.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	9 days
Group size:	4 - 8
Dates:	6 – 14 January 2026 6 – 14 January 2027
Start:	Banjul, Gambia
End:	Banjul, Gambia
Price:	GB£ 2,457 per person sharing, based on 6-8 participants (2026) GB£ 2,730 per person sharing, based on 6-8 participants (2027)
Single supplement:	GB£ 260 (2026) GB£ 290 (2027)

Price includes:

All accommodation
All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9
Mineral water
International tour leader and local guide
All entrance fees
All guide fees
All ground transport
All activities as described (Tendaba boat trip and photo bird hide visit etc.)

Price excludes:

International flights to/from Banjul, Gambia
Visa fee's
Gambia departure tax
Travel insurance
Soft and alcoholic drinks (except water)
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Gifts and other items of a personal nature
Any pre- or post-tour activities, entrance fees for excursions not described, and additional activities