

### **Kotu Ponds**

The sewage ponds are still active but very full in November 2014 and African Jacana is no longer present due to lack of vegetation. The site is still good for White-faced Whistling Duck and waders. Red-necked Falcon is still frequent in this area.

Kotu quarry is reached by a track on the opposite side of the main road from the ponds. Passing by the army officers mess the quarry can be accessed though it may be necessary to negotiate your way through some compounds to get good views. Purple and Allen's gallinule occur here with the best views from the far side, and early morning visiting is recommended as rubbish dumping and flies make this site unpleasant during the heat of the day.

### **Cape Point**

The botanic gardens should be visited for Superb Glossy Starling. Following the Old Cape Road from Bakau craft market and turning right at the roundabout passes some good mudflats for waders, terns and gulls, and then mangrove swamps which support a good population of mixed breeding herons. Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters are frequent in the area and the bushes and grasslands on the seaward side are a good spot for Palearctic migrants in the early Spring. Continuing to the end of the Old Cape Road where it re-joins the main highway, turn right ( South) along the main Banjul – Kololi road and the marshy vegetation either side of the road held breeding Yellow-crowned Bishop in 2013.

### **Yundum**

This area is now heavily degraded by residential and agricultural development and probably not worth bothering with if you are on a short visit. I have not heard of any recent sightings of coursers in this area. However newly installed street lamps provide perches from which raptors such as Black-winged Kite can hunt.

### **Tujareng**

This area has replaced Yundum as the area closest to the tourist area for bush birds. The area is best visited with a guide and consists of degraded but regenerating bush between the road and the coast, North of the village of Tujareng, accessed via a series of tracks that run perpendicular to the road. A wide variety of species are present including Brubru, 4 species of woodpeckers and Rufous, Whistling and Singing Cisticolas, Woodland and Striped Kingfishers, White-fronted Black Chat, and is very good for a variety of Palearctic migrants. White-crowned Helmet Shrike has been seen in better wooded areas close to the coast.

### **Bonto Forest**

This is an excellent forest area with a better variety of species than Abuko. If visiting with a guide they should be able to speak to the local guide at the gate to direct you to key species for a small tip. These include White-faced Scops Owls, Wood Owl, Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Violet Turaco, Brown-necked Parrot, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Green Crombec, Green Hylia, Common Wattle-eye and Palm-nut Vulture. Star species is White-spotted Flufftail. Guides use tape lures to attract this species in 2

prepared areas, therefore if you are concerned about this you should discuss with a guide before arranging a trip, or contact ABC.

### **Pirang**

Access to the shrimp farm is blocked by a heavy metal gate. However if you continue down the track past the farm compound to the end it is possible to scan the lakes, although a telescope would be needed. This is a good spot for African Spoonbill, White and Pink-backed Pelicans, Gull-billed Tern and Slender-billed Gull, and Wire-tailed Swallow nests under some of the culverts. Crowned Cranes seem to have disappeared from this site in recent years.

### **Route Inland**

The south bank road is now fully completed at least as far as Soma to the standard of a UK A road, with white lining, cats eyes, hard shoulder, bus stops and names signs for the villages. Police checkpoints are frequent but Police are courteous and disciplined and if your documents are in order there are no hold ups. It should now be possible to visit Tendaba and Soma independently in a hired car from the coast. Electricity pylons line the route all the way inland, and provide perches for Rufous-crowned and Abyssinian Rollers, Black-shouldered Kites, Lizard and Grasshopper Buzzards and Dark Chanting Goshawks. There are a couple of traditional stops on the route to Tendaba, including the “raptor spot” where raptors drink in the dry season near Kanpanti village, Brumen Bridge, and the bush a couple of km north of the bridge being good spots.

### **Tendaba Camp**

The spur road from Kwinella is now also metalled to the camp, but beware of 3 fords or “Irish Bridges” as they are signposted. If staying independently at Tendaba it is advisable to call in advance and book. There is a local guide based at Tendaba, Omar Jarju, Tel 9894456 who knows the Batelling bush track quite well and can guide you to some local specialities including Dorst’s Cisticola, Yellow Penduline Tit and Spotted Thick-knee. The bush track might be better negotiated in a 4 X 4 or a high wheel base vehicle than a rented saloon. Nightjars recorded in the area include Long-tailed, Standard-winged and Pennant-winged, as well as Stone Partridge, Four-banded Sandgrouse and Abyssinian Ground Hornbill. Walks from the back of the camp can produce White-rumped Seed-eater, Bush Petronia, White-fronted Black Chat and White-shouldered Black Tit within a short distance of the camp. Try the area behind the village school.

### **Soma**

The Soma wetlands offer possibly the closest site to the coast where Egyptian Plover can be seen, with one bird present in Nov 2014. The improved road stretches at least as far as this town making it an easy excursion from Tendaba Camp. The wetlands are before the town crossed by a causeway and can be easily explored but are somewhat degraded due to locals dumping rubbish. Egyptian Plover may require some searching, but is often confiding, and there are other good species in the area. Bush stops between Soma and Tendaba should be productive for a stop and wander as there are few villages in this area. Little Green Bee-eater has recently been recorded in this area.