



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## **Mongolia** **Birding The Gobi and Beyond** *Trip Report* *24<sup>th</sup> May to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014*



Henderson's Ground Jay by David Erterius

**Tour Intro:**

Imagine a territory half as large as Europe but with only three million inhabitants, characterized by vast and mesmerizing natural beauty, and nomadic people making a living from their livestock on seemingly infinite wind-swept plains... Cornered between Russia and China, Mongolia, also known as “the land of the eternal blue sky”, sits on a high plateau at an average altitude of 1500 metres, far from any ocean or sea. It’s the second largest landlocked country after Kazakhstan, and since the end of the communist era in 1990, visitors have experienced a secure and stable environment with well-



**The old and the new: Shepherd on motorbike by David Erterius**

established democratic institutions, making Mongolia a paradise for both business and leisure. In recent years the country has also experienced strong economic growth, which is directly reflected in the tourism industry. Just a decade ago, countryside tourist camps with good accommodation were almost non-existent – unlike today. Furthermore, Mongolia is situated within an ecological transition zone, where the forests of Siberia merge south into the Central Asian desert and steppe landscapes. This makes the countryside unique, with a distinctive and

remarkable flora and fauna. The north consists of vast expanses of lush taiga and beautiful valleys surrounded by spectacular rock formations and green meadows. The central parts are characterized by endless green steppes with nomads living in their yurts surrounded by their huge cattle herds, as well as the enchanting and rarely visited Khangay Mountains with its sub-alpine and alpine habitats, verdant forests and breathtaking scenery. In direct contrast, further south there are dry desert-steppes with shallow lakes teeming with birds, and in the very south of the country, the mythical Gobi Desert extends over vast areas, and this is where one encounters huge sand dunes and strange saxaul forests. Although Mongolia isn’t known for an abundance of species, the great diversity of habitats provides an exciting array of specialized birds, encompassing a mixture from Siberia and Central Asia, some of which are unique to Mongolia and its immediate surroundings. During our fabulous adventure through this remarkable country, we encountered such sought-after species as Swan Goose, Falcated Duck, White-winged Scoter (*stejnegeri sub sp*), Altai Snowcock, Daurian Partridge, Bearded Vulture, Crested Honey Buzzard, Himalayan Vulture, Eastern Marsh Harrier, Pallas’s Fish Eagle, Upland Buzzard, White-naped and Demoiselle Cranes, Oriental Plover, Asian Dowitcher, Relict and Pallas’s Gulls, Pallas’s Sandgrouse, Hill Pigeon, Oriental Turtle Dove, Black Woodpecker, Amur and Saker Falcons, Isabelline and Steppe Grey Shrikes, the splendid Henderson’s Ground Jay, Daurian Jackdaw, Azure Tit, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Mongolian and Asian Short-toed Larks, Pale Martin, Oriental Reed, Thick-billed, Barred and Asian Desert Warblers, Wallcreeper, White-cheeked Starling, White’s, Eyebrowed and Red-throated Thrush, Taiga, Dark-sided and Asian Brown Flycatchers, Siberian Rubythroat, Eversmann’s, Daurian and Gldenstdt’s Redstarts, White-throated Bush Chat, Saxaul Sparrow, Pre David’s Snowfinch, Altai, Brown and Kozlov’s Accentors, Eastern Yellow and Citrine

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Wagtails, Blyth's Pipit, Mongolian Finch, Asian Rosy Finch, Chinese Beautiful and Long-tailed Rosefinches, and Pine, Godlewski's, Grey-necked, Yellow-breasted and Pallas's Reed Buntings.

### Tour Summary:

#### 24 May

The weather on the first day was a bit unstable, with some wind and rain, so we decided to start our birding a little later, after enjoying a rich buffet lunch at a Mongolian Barbecue restaurant in the capital Ulaanbaatar. We then headed towards the outskirts of town where we were soon acquainted with an array of new species at some ponds. But even before the real birding commenced, something quite unexpected happened as two White-throated Needletails rapidly passed by just overhead. Despite being a breeder of nearby southern Siberia, this is an uncommon passage migrant in Mongolia, so we were pleasantly surprised. On arrival at the ponds, we enjoyed some smart Common Mergansers, gaudy



Eurasian Hobby by David Erterius

Great-crested Grebes, a flock of Tufted Ducks and a few Gadwalls, as well as Great Cormorants. Dozens of Barn Swallows, Sand Martins and twenty Common Terns were feeding over the ponds, as well as thirty-five stunning and graceful White-winged Terns that were feeding just above the water. All of a sudden however the terns scattered as a Eurasian Hobby passed close by. In the skies above a few hundred Pacific Swifts were patrolling as well as some Black Kites of the

eastern race *lineatus*. We then went to a nearby riparian woodland where we had nice views of an Oriental Turtle Dove perched right next to the track. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was feeding halfway up a tree and we were also entertained by a family of Black Woodpeckers giving superb views at their nesting hole, where two youngsters were begging for food. A flock of ten Common Rosefinches gave good views in the nearby trees and we also found a total of three Taiga Flycatchers and a handful of Eyebrowed Thrushes. Two target species for this area were easily located, namely Azure Tit and Azure-winged Magpie, and we managed nice prolonged views of both. A real bonus was a pair of Mandarin Duck, although we unfortunately only got a glimpse of them as they flew off and disappeared along a river bend. We also had our first encounters with Daurian Jackdaw and White-cheeked Starling.

#### 25 May

After spending the night at our high standard hotel in central Ulaanbaatar, we left the city and drove east, eventually ending up in more open landscape with hills and small mountains, covered with thin larch forests and gradually increasing steppe-like terrain. We made a comfort stop at a large monument along the way, in the form of a giant Chengis Khaan statue, the founder and emperor of the huge Mongol empire during the 13th and 14th centuries. Here we spotted our first Cinereous Vultures, while several Blyth's Pipits uttered their characteristic song. We then continued to the well-known Gün

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Galuu wetland and soon learned that striking Horned Larks and Isabelline Wheatears, with their typical “parachute display flight”, were plentiful in this open steppe landscape. On arrival at gun Galuu, we found a whole array of waterbirds and shorebirds including Swan and Bar-headed Geese, Whooper Swan, Common and Ruddy Shelducks, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Garganey, Eurasian Teal, Common Pochard, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Horned and Black-necked Grebes, and Grey Heron. We also had our first Steppe Eagle flying by and a magnificent sight of 120 Demoiselle Cranes next to one of the lakes. It became even more magnificent when they took off as a young Golden Eagle started to soar with them! We also found our first Upland Buzzards while a further highlight was a male Amur Falcon that flew by. Another first was a Saker Falcon soaring distantly, and



**White-winged (Stejneger's) Scoter, male, by David Erterius**

on the surrounding steppe we got acquainted with our first Mongolian and Asian Short-toed Larks. In a nearby wetland, we managed to locate a pair of White-naped Crane, which became even more exciting when we spotted two week-old chicks next to one of the adults. Fantastic views were had of this rare species, with a global population of less than 5000 pairs remaining in the wild! Very happy with this we headed north towards the outskirts of the Khentii Mountains. Here we chose to set up camp in a small and scenic valley, our base for our forthcoming explorations over the next few days. At a nearby stream with dense willows, a male Brown Shrike was posing nicely, a Dusky Warbler was singing and gave brief views, and we enjoyed a smart and confiding male Pine Bunting. Blyth's Pipit was common on the slopes right outside the tents and we could compare the call of Eurasian Hoopoes sitting on top of rocks with the Oriental Cuckoo calling from the nearby forest on the opposite side. A nice surprise was a pair of Long-tailed Rosefinch feeding in the nearby willows, and we were treated to great scope views.

## **26 May**

The next morning we hiked uphill through the nearby meadows. This yielded good views of Pied Wheatear, Meadow Bunting, Eurasian Wryneck and Common Rock Thrush. We also found a magnificent Golden Eagle perched in a rather distant dead tree and enjoyed it for several minutes through the scope. After a while, we reached a ridge where we found our first Daurian Redstart in the form of a stunning male. Olive-backed Pipits were almost everywhere, and once in the forest, we found our first Willow Tits and Eurasian Nuthatches as well as singing Common Redstarts. A bit further inside the forest, we located our first Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker feeding on a dead tree right next to us. Soon after, we also found our first Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. While happy with these two sightings, it would prove to be just the beginning of a “woodpecker bonanza”. In a clearing, our first Booted Eagle for the trip was seen soaring low overhead and both Common and Oriental Cuckoos were calling in the forest, the latter of which was seen flying overhead. At some budding brushwood we then

found several singing Yellow-browed Warblers and two Black-faced Buntings showing well. Here we also heard the distinctive descending call of our first Grey-headed Woodpecker, and after a while we found ourselves watching a smart male feeding high up in a large tree. All of a sudden we could distinguish the alarm call of a Red-throated Thrush, and shortly after a bird came flying in and landed on top of a nearby tree. An Asian Brown Flycatcher was another new bird for the trip, and we heard the typical accelerating drumming from a White-backed Woodpecker in the distance. We ended up this morning with a total of about forty singing Olive-backed Pipits and about fifteen Pine Buntings, with several good views of stunning males. We also had all possible woodpeckers, an incredible seven species! Returning to camp for a scrumptious lunch, we then decided to try for Black-billed Capercaillie in a different area, several kilometres away. We drove into a valley and followed it until we reached an extensive wooded area with surrounding ridges. However, despite our persistent efforts during the rest of the day, we failed to locate any capercaillie. We did however manage even better views of Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker and saw our first Crested Honey Buzzards, a group of four migrating birds that flew by low overhead. Some of us also flushed two Daurian Partridges out on a meadow.

### **27 May**



**Siberian Rubythroat by David Erterius**

The following morning we explored the near vicinity. A hike in the bottom of the valley yielded another sighting of Golden Eagle, several Lesser Whitethroat, cracking views of singing male Siberian Rubythroats, and our first Siberian Stonechats. It was then time to drive back to the capital, though not before visiting a river with extensive riparian willows en route. Just before arriving at the actual spot, an unexpected Western Osprey appeared just next to the road, giving good perched views – an uncommon bird in

Mongolia. Upon arrival and after just a short walk, we reached the riverbank and it didn't take long before we located two stunning White-crowned Penduline Tits feeding right in the open just next to us. On the way back, we also enjoyed our first Arctic Warbler in the riverside trees, and two more Crested Honey Buzzards flew by.

### **28 May**

The following day, we caught a flight to Dalanzadgad at the edge of the Gobi, some five-hundred kilometres south. After meeting up with our drivers and loading the vehicles, we left the airport and checked some nearby plantations. Here we found some interesting migrants including Isabelline Shrike, more White-crowned Penduline Tits, Dusky Warbler, White's Thrush, Spotted, Dark-sided, Asian Brown and Taiga Flycatchers, and both Little and Black-faced Buntings. After "checking in" at our Ger Camp, we left for some afternoon birding on the surrounding steppe. Arriving at a small isolated

plantation with some cultivated land in the middle of the steppe, we found some interesting waders at a nearby watercourse, including Ruff, Greater Sand Plover, Common Snipe, and Temminck's and Long-toed Stints. We also found some interesting passerines such as Arctic Warbler, Eastern Yellow and Citrine Wagtails, Richard's Pipit and Pallas's Reed Bunting. A pair of Mongolian Finch came down to drink and showed very well in the warm evening light. We also had our first Pallas's Sandgrouse flying by in their typical, rapid flight. All of a sudden, an odd call just overhead caught our attention, and looking up we saw a group of five Oriental Plovers whizzing past us like jet fighters, in what seemed to be some kind of territorial chase. We subsequently had the opportunity to study them after they landed on some nearby ground. Moments later, we found a male displaying nearby and had brief views of a female flying by as well. As if this wasn't enough, on our drive back to the Ger camp we also found a female with two newly hatched chicks! Certainly not bad with so many sightings of this special species, the norm being just a few encounters...

## 29 May

Starting early the next day, we drove for about an hour into the Zuun Saikhani Nuru (which means "The Eastern Beauty"), a sub-range of the Gurvan Saikhan Mountains where the spectacular Yolyn Am Valley ("The valley of the Lammergeier") is situated. Yolyn Am is a deep and narrow gorge, famous for its deep ice field and breathtaking scenery, as well as being a good area for wildlife and birds. Eventually reaching the mountains, moments later we found a pair of Saker Falcon perched high up on some roadside rocks.



Kozlov's Accentor by David Erterius

We spent a few minutes enjoying these magnificent raptors through the scope while the first rays of sunlight hit the surrounding mountains. On a sun-exposed slope a bit further ahead, we found singing Barred Warbler, and upon arriving at the parking area several Brown Accentors were singing from the surrounding Dwarf Juniper slopes. We began our hike into the valley, and it wasn't long before we recorded the only breeding endemic for the trip, Kozlov's Accentor. While sounding very similar to the closely related Brown Accentor, its behaviour is different in that Kozlov's seems to sing more often directly from the ground, as opposed to Brown. We also flushed a Dusky Thrush, apparently a migrant and the sole record for the trip, from a small stream along the trail and we got good if somewhat short views as it perched on a rock. Single Pallas's Leaf and Arctic Warblers gave good views while feeding on the ground in the barren valley, and we also had our first Common Whitethroat. After moving a little further into the valley and entering the canyon itself, all of a sudden and high overhead, a Wallcreeper crossed from one side of the cliffs to the other. The bird could then be seen through the scope as it fed on the rocks, albeit somewhat briefly. Black Redstarts of the distinctive *phoenicuroides* subspecies were singing from the surrounding rocks, and we also had several Taiga Flycatchers and one Asian Brown Flycatcher. On the way back, our first Water Pipit gave good views while feeding at

the edge of a snow field. Other noteworthy species in the valley were Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, Twite, and Godlewski's and Grey-necked Buntings. Bearded and Himalayan Vultures patrolled overhead as well as a handful of Common Kestrels. Some small mammals were also present, including Daurian and Pallas's Pika, Tolai Hare, Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel and Mid-day Jird. After having enjoyed our lunch in the valley, we then continued on to a nearby valley where we enjoyed our first Chukars. We also found an elusive Blyth's Reed Warbler in dense shrubbery, and a pair of Saker Falcon were breeding high up on a nearby shelf: we were treated to fine scope studies of an adult feeding no less than five chicks! We then checked out a plantation out on the steppe not far from our camp, with our most interesting sighting being a White's Thrush giving much better views than the previous one.

### 30 May

Since we failed to locate any Altai Snowcock the previous day, we decided to leave early this morning for another try. Out on the steppe we scoped a seemingly tired Oriental Honey Buzzard sitting on the ground – a great sighting! Arriving in the mountains, we had excellent views of a pair of Chukars. A little later we scanned the slopes and this time we were successful and enjoyed a pair of Snowcocks



Godlewski's Bunting by David Erterius

feeding up the slope, with the male giving his characteristic whistle. We then went to the same valley as yesterday for some morning birding and, just as we arrived, we spotted our first Thick-billed Warbler inside a dense shrubbery. A beautiful male Common Rock Thrush also showed very well while singing in the morning sun from a cliff-top. Further into the valley, we recorded several Barred Warblers and Siberian Rubythroats as well as some additional Common Rock Thrushes, as well as Kozlov's Accentors and another male Godlewski's

Bunting. Two Dark-sided Flycatchers gave nice views and our only Alpine Accentor of the trip was unfortunately seen just briefly by a few of us high overhead on a rocky slope. At lunch we decided to drive back to Dalanzadgad, and at a dam on the outskirts of town we had our first sightings of Desert Wheatear and Hill Pigeon and a somewhat unexpected Rosy Starling, albeit a regular vagrant. Returning to the same plantation as yesterday, aside from the already recorded warblers, we had another two Dark-sided Flycatchers and at least a dozen Asian Brown Flycatchers, after which we drove back to camp.

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### 31 May

It was time to drive further west towards the famous and spectacular Khongor Sand Dunes, an area famous for its extraordinary and scenic landscape. We left just after sunrise and our first stop was in the middle of the steppe at the same site we visited a few days earlier. Here we spotted another pair of Oriental Plover and another Rosy Starling, which gave much better views than the previous one. A little further ahead we reached another plantation, and we soon realized that this site was literally teeming with migrants! This is what we recorded: Oriental Turtle Dove (1), White-crowned Penduline Tit (2), Dusky Warbler (30), Pallas's Warbler (20), Arctic Warbler (30), Two-barred Warbler (2), Thick-billed Warbler (4), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (2), Daurian Redstart (1), Asian Brown Flycatcher (5), Pine Bunting (1), Godlewski's Bunting (1), Black-faced Bunting (1) and Brambling (1). Wow – not a bad tally at all!! Here we also had great views of four Common Swifts (*pekinensis* subspecies) as they were feeding low over a small pond in good morning light. We then drove on to Khongor Sands where we arrived at lunchtime. In the afternoon, we decided to look for two of the area's target species, and indeed two of our major tour targets: Henderson's Ground Jay and Saxaul Sparrow. Starting with the former, we



Oriental Plover by David Erterius

headed to a semi-desert area with scattered low scrubs, stopping along the way to admire four pairs of breeding Lesser Kestrel at some abandoned houses. Arriving at the Ground Jay spot, we easily located one bird, which then exposed itself very well on top of a small bush for some five minutes! Very satisfied with this, we drove back to a known site for Saxaul Sparrow at a nearby saxaul forest, but despite our efforts we failed to locate any. We did however find our first Steppe Grey Shrike.

### 1 June

The next day it was time for the long drive to Lake Orog. Just before departing, Mike (a participant) found a Long-eared Hedgehog inside his gear – a very enjoyable encounter with this cute little animal! We then travelled through the vast semi-desert, passing the occasional camels but virtually no people. In this area, we also found remarkably well-preserved saxaul forest, and at one of these we tried again for Saxaul Sparrow. Eventually we heard some distant *Passer*-like calls, and shortly after we located the birds, which showed well if somewhat briefly. Moving on, we saw more Steppe Grey Shrike, as well as a few more Henderson's Ground Jays, albeit only briefly from the cars, and we didn't give them much attention as we had already seen the species very well. We chose our lunch spot right next to another good Saxaul forest, and here we found our only Asian Desert Warbler of the trip, curiously checking us out from some small bushes. Our next stop was at a spectacular cave, which is believed to be the place of the earliest human inhabitants in Mongolia, with evidence of human presence dating back as far as 700,000 years ago! Near the cave's entrance we found a Lesser Kestrel colony, and were treated to excellent studies. Entering the almost 40m long and spectacular cave with its strange rock



formations and crystal covered inner walls, we found a small group of day-roosting bats of an unknown species.

Returning to our vehicles after this interesting excursion, we eventually arrived at Orog Lake in the early evening having just seen a Long-legged Buzzard next to the road. Setting up camp at the edge of the grazed marshy meadows surrounding the lake, we then scanned through all the waterbirds on the lake and soon found a bonus male Falcated Duck amongst a group of Garganeys. Aside from the ever-present Black-winged Stilts and Pied Avocets, we also found a distant group of feeding Eurasian Spoonbills, some 20 Kentish Plovers and, amongst the gulls and terns, we had a 100 Black-headed

Gulls, a dozen Pallas's Gulls and Gull-billed Terns, and 20 Caspian Terns. Five rather distant Goitred Gazelles appeared on the lake edge, a new mammal for the trip. Our camp was just next to a nomad settlement, and later in the evening the local people invited us to their ger, and we acquired an interesting insight into their nomadic, everyday life. Early in the season, these people live with their cattle near the lake, and then later in the summer they move away from the lake up to higher altitudes. Late in the evening a few of us also heard the distinctive buzzing song of a distant European Nightjar.



**White-naped Cranes by David Erterius**

## **2 June**

The next day we moved further west along the south side of the lake. Our first stop was just a few kilometres away, where we found a track and managed to get quite close to the lake. We enjoyed a very confiding Himalayan Vulture just next to the road, and a little further ahead was a group of Pallas's Sandgrouse feeding right in the open. We followed the edge of the lake by foot for a few kilometres, and the most striking feature was hundreds of Pied Avocet nesting on sandbars out in the shallow lake, as well as dozens of Gull-billed Terns flying around. Further west, we made a few more stops to look for water birds and found, among other things, another pair of White-naped Crane as well as single Common Cranes. We also recorded our first Red-crested Pochards and a Western Marsh Harrier, both new for the trip. Just next to a nomad settlement we found two Little Owls, another new species. Two more Long-legged Buzzards appeared, allowing an even better opportunity to compare them with Upland Buzzard. We then had lunch on the lake's west side, and here we enjoyed several territorial male Greater Sand Plovers.

Eventually arriving at Lake Boon Tsagan in the early evening, we chose to camp out on the lovely lakeside grazed meadows, just a stone's throw away from a very productive river mouth teeming with birds. It soon became clear that some kind of fish was swimming in the river as various water birds were feasting and taking advantage of this abundant food. We spent the rest of the day here, enjoying the spectacle, and the following day we explored the adjacent area on the other side of the river mouth, which yielded a selection of new species. Several of the rare and localized Pallas's Fish Eagle were present, and we also saw a group of Mute Swans – a truly wild species in Mongolia, unlike many areas further west where it has been introduced. We also had our first Black Stork, as two birds

were feeding along the river. About 75 Grey Herons were present and among these were two Great Egrets. We flushed several Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers out on the damp meadows, and we found several new waders as well. A Lesser Sand Plover showed quite distantly while three Asian Dowitchers were much more cooperative and we enjoyed two males and a female feeding in a pool. Scanning the shore we also found fifteen 15 Turnstones, some 30 Sanderlings, 10 Little Stints, 3 stunning Curlew Sandpipers and 5 Dunlins. We even found a small group of 4 confiding Red-necked Phalaropes, allowing for close-up studies. In this area we also had good numbers of gulls, and having scanned for a while we eventually located a Relict Gull. This species, one of the rarest and most localized of all gulls, is usually seen only in small numbers in this part of Mongolia, and we were therefore very fortunate to obtain fantastic views as the bird came closer and landed in the river mouth to feed. We also saw an immature and an adult Brown-headed Gull, plenty of Black-headed Gulls, +-100 Pallas's Gulls and hundreds of Vega Gulls (of the *mongolicus* subspecies).

### 3 June

After lunch, we left Boon Tsagan Nuur to drive towards the high altitude zone of the Khangay Mountains in central Mongolia, to camp for the next two nights at the very scenic lake Khukh Nuur at 2600 m.a.s.l. This area comprises rarely visited and under-documented montane habitats, and is a good site for the rare and endangered White-throated Bush Chat. This is a summer breeder, wintering much lower down on the grassy plains of the northern Indian Subcontinent and the terai of Nepal. Very few birders have seen this



Relict Gull by David Erterius

species on its breeding grounds and it has also become an extremely scarce and seldom-recorded species on its wintering grounds. For the rest of the day, we were driving through areas with enchanting montane steppe habitats and plateaus with an abundance of Brandt's Vole and several Tarbagan Marmots. The many voles attracted several raptors, and we were astonished at the high number of Saker Falcons within a rather restricted area, with no less than 15 individuals! We got some really nice close-up views from our cars as they were sitting on the ground seemingly very focused on this "giant buffet". We also had about a dozen Upland Buzzards.

### 4 June

Having camped on the outskirts of Khangay Mountains, we continued our drive. Several Père David's Snowfinch were present around our campsite, and just before we left we were treated to excellent views of a pair collecting nest material. We arrived at Khukh Nuur just before lunch and were welcomed by a nomadic family close to the lake, offering dried yak cheese outside their ger camp. These people had arrived at the lake just a few days earlier in order to lead their yaks to their summer pasture. We continued our drive along the lake and chose our camp ground near the lake and with the

mountains surrounding us. In the afternoon we explored the area alongside the lake, finding a pair of Black-throated Loon in a small lagoon and, on an adjacent small island, we found a colony of Vega Gulls with a few hundred pairs as well as 20 pairs of Great Cormorant. Eurasian House Martins of the distinctive *lagopodum* subspecies were feeding low along the lake shore and a little further along the side of the mountain, we found our first Hume's Leaf Warblers and a pair of Gldenstdt's Redstart. Moments later we were amazed to also find a stunning male Eversmann's Redstart! We had a total of two males and one female of this species, showing well in the thickets along the base of the mountain. This is a scarce species in Mongolia and can be tricky at times. We also found several stunning male Siberian Stonechats. Other common species were Northern Wheatear, Water Pipit, Twite, Brown Accentor and Blyth's Pipit, the latter two almost annoyingly common.

## 5 June

Early in the morning, we departed on foot to spend all day exploring the surrounding mountains in search of White-throated Bush Chat. To reach the specific breeding habitat, we had to climb a nearby mountain, a quite strenuous hike in the trackless and rather steep and rugged terrain. However, once



White-throated Bush Chat by David Erterius

reaching the mountain top we all agreed that it was well worth the effort, as the view of the lake and the surrounding mountains was simply stunning! Along our way up we had several interesting encounters, including a loose group of Altai Snowcocks feeding on the slope, and were again treated to good scope views. In this barren and desolate landscape, we also located the stunning Gldenstdt's Redstart, with fantastic views of a very territorial male perched on top of the steep rocks just below us. A few

confiding Altai Accentors were performing well, and while resting a bit higher up on a small plateau, a pair of Rock Ptarmigan appeared just a few metres away. After enjoying our lunch near the top of the mountain we continued our hike, and were absolutely stunned by finding a pair of White-throated Bush Chats right next to a south facing slope! The weather was just fantastic with some sun and a faint breeze, and we enjoyed the magic moments with this rare species, with the male giving some really nice views as he posed on top of small shrubs. We also saw the female briefly, and judging by her behaviour she probably had eggs nearby. We also had our best views of Asian Rosefinch. Interestingly, the birds here belong to the distinctive *sushkini* subspecies that is endemic to these mountains, and described by a Russian ornithologist back in the thirties based on a specimen collected at the nearby Otgontenger Mountain, the highest in the Khangay Mountains. More than satisfied, we began the trek back down to hike along the lake towards our camp, finding another pair of White-throated Bush Chat on the way. Several Bearded Vultures were patrolling along the mountainside, and upon reaching the bottom we flushed several Willow Ptarmigans in an area of extensive willow, while along a small

stream, a pair of Red-throated Thrush were breeding. In the evening we arrived back at our camp after a demanding but truly spectacular and very successful day!

### **6 June**

The following morning we enjoyed a much needed and appreciated sleep-in, and then after breakfast we did some additional birding along the lake. This yielded a few more interesting sightings including even better views of Altai Snowcock and good views (at last) of a Willow Ptarmigan on the ground. The previous night had been considerably milder than the first night, and at dawn the wind came from the south. We soon realized that the numbers of passerines in the vicinity was significantly higher, and again we had Rosy Starling (2 birds) and about 20 Pallas's Leaf Warblers along the lakeshore. We also noted more Hume's Leaf Warblers than the day before, indicating a nocturnal influx of the species. After a late lunch, we then said our goodbye to this fabulous place, departing eastwards and arriving in the early evening at a village in the lower parts of the Khangay Mountains. En route we enjoyed a magnificent Black Stork just next to the road, and upon



**Güldenstädt's Redstart by David Erterius**

arriving in the village everyone insisted on spending the night at a basic motel rather than camp for another night. It turned out to be a really nice evening with good food and singing and a taste of the local vodka! Strolling around in the surrounding village, we enjoyed the plentiful Hill Pigeons and Red-billed Chough, as well as hundreds of Daurian Jackdaws heading for a nearby night roost.

### **7 June**

The next day we headed further east towards the vast taiga of the eastern Khangay Mountains. Interesting sightings during our drive included 3 Himalayan Vultures, 20 Cinereous Vultures and our first White-tailed Eagles at some small lakes. After lunch in a sparse riparian forest, we continued into a wooded area and eventually reached our wonderfully located campsite overlooking the hilly and lush surrounding forests and rich flowering meadows. A very confiding Oriental Cuckoo gave excellent views just outside our tents, and we concluded that a White-backed Woodpecker must have had a nest in the nearby woods as adults were flying by every now and then. We explored the adjacent meadows and woods, the latter significantly denser and lusher compared to the Khentii Mountains. This yielded three new species for the tour, namely Tree Pipit, Eurasian Treecreeper and Red-flanked Bluetail. Just before dusk a Ural Owl started calling in the adjacent forest, but despite our persistent efforts we failed to find it.

### **8 June**

We woke up dawn, and were met by the bubbling call of distant Black Grouse. We decided to explore the forest more thoroughly, and therefore left our camp early hoping there might be some displaying Black-billed Capercaillie in the area. Hiking uphill through the forest, we found a calling Red-flanked Bluetail perched just overhead. Two-barred Warbler was singing as well, and a bit later a curious Long-tailed Tit showed well. All of a sudden, a large dark grouse came flying and landed in a tree top not far from us. Instant excitement ensued as I was absolutely sure it was our sought-after Black-billed Capercaillie, but seconds later the bird flew off and turned out to be “just” a male Black Grouse. Reaching the higher parts of the hill, with more pine-dominated habitat, we heard a Mistle Thrush but only managed short glimpses of it. At closer inspection, an unfamiliar song turned out to be a Taiga Flycatcher, the first one recorded on its breeding grounds. On the way back, we enjoyed good views of singing Common Redstart, and moments later another male Eversmann's Redstart appeared. A closer inspection of the woods below our camp yielded the White-backed Woodpecker nesting hole in a dead birch. However, even though we kept a critical distance and were hiding among the trees, the adults were remarkably shy and we had to be content with brief yet very good views near the nest. Here we added another new species for the trip, a pair of Marsh Tit. On the surrounding meadows, Mike then found a Pine Bunting nest.

We continued our journey eastwards towards the shallow and birdy steppe lake Bayan Nuur. Lunch was held right next to a small sandpit where plenty of Sand Martins were breeding, and we also picked out a handful of Plain Martins. Our second Booted Eagle for the trip, a dark morph, was soaring high overhead, and moments later a quick scan at a nearby wetland produced an additional Asian



Eastern Yellow Wagtail by David Erterius

Dowitcher. About 300 Northern Lapwings were also at this spot, and we were entertained by the whole flock in flight. We reached Bayan Nuur hours before sunset, and thus had time for some evening birding. Our first stop was at a roadside reedbed, where we were treated to good views of newly arrived Oriental Reed Warblers, singing their hearts out from the reed tops. A Brown-cheeked Rail was heard repeatedly but didn't show. We then crossed the lakeside meadows on foot to get closer to the lake. At the edge of the

extensive reedbed we soon located Bearded Reedling by their tinkling call. Paddyfield Warbler and Common Reed Bunting were singing from the reeds and we heard the characteristic call of Common Moorhen and a dozen Red-crested Pochards were present. We moved a bit further along the lake to choose our camp site, from where we had a wonderful overview of the lake itself. Typical species of the nearby marshy lakeside meadows included Marsh Sandpiper, Richard's Pipit and Eastern Yellow Wagtail. In the taller grass, right next to our tents, we also heard the distinctive steppe subspecies *lydiae* of Pallas's Reed Bunting. A bit after dusk, some of us also heard the repetitive and frog-like call of a distant Baillon's Crake.

**9 June**

Today was dedicated to Lake Bayan Nuur and its surroundings. After breakfast, we walked along the lake which was teeming with birds, and we added a new species of dabbling duck, namely 2 fly-by Eastern Spot-billed Duck. We also added a new species of raptor, as a stunning male Eastern Marsh Harrier was hunting low over the reedbeds, a nice comparison to the Western Marsh Harriers that were also present. A lovely group of Bearded Reedling was feeding on the edge of the reeds and we again had plenty of stunning Mongolian Larks and the ever-present Asian Short-toed Lark, as well as the occasional Eurasian Skylark. We then decided to try and explore the area a bit north of the lake, but it turned out that an area of several square kilometres had been recently submerged due to the high river levels, thereby creating a very rich wetland. Here we enjoyed close to 1,000 White-winged Terns floating around over the glittering water, a truly spectacular sight! A Eurasian Bittern was booming in the distance, a rare bird in these parts of Mongolia, and we also had a few more Black Storks and White-tailed Eagles. A Eurasian Hobby flew by at close range and several Marsh Sandpipers were flying around, apparently with chicks nearby judging by their alarm calls.



**Yellow-breasted Bunting by David Erterius**

In the early evening we again explored the southern parts of the lake and enjoyed several Swan Goose families with small chicks, as well as many Pied Avocets flying by in good light. We also had additional good views of two pairs of White-naped Crane.

**10 June**

Our last day saw us leaving early for the long drive to the capital. Since the weather was now much better than in the beginning of the trip, we decided to give the Tuul Fishponds another try. Our target species was the beautiful Yellow-breasted Bunting, a species that has recently declined dramatically throughout its range. Upon arrival, we walked along the ponds and after a while we heard its distinctive song; and, moments later, we were looking at two beautiful males singing from the willows right in the open at close quarters. A female was associating with one of the males, suggesting that the birds hadn't started to breed yet and were quite newly arrived. This was certainly one of the birding highlights of the entire trip! We also managed much better views of Long-tailed Rosefinch, which were virtually all over in the surrounding willows and very cooperative, as well as enjoying close views of a bathing Azure Tit, before heading back to our hotel in the city. After enjoying a much needed shower, some of us walked around for some shopping and sightseeing. In the evening, we then attended a show with some local people performing their Mongolian dancing along with singing and traditional music – certainly a great way to round off what had been an exceptional adventure through this incredible country!



Saker Falcon and camels by David Erterius

## Annotated List of Birds recorded

**Total species recorded: 241, of which 235 were seen and 6 heard only**

*Nomenclature and taxonomy of the bird species list follows that of IOC (International Ornithological congress), Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2014; Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (version 4.2). Names in square brackets represent names given by IOC and omitted by Clements whereas names in round brackets represent names given by Clements and omitted by IOC. Names without square or round brackets represent the name given by both IOC and Clements.*

### Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>

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<b>Ruddy Shelduck</b>	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
<b>Mandarin Duck</b>	<i>Aix galericulata</i>
<b>Gadwall</b>	<i>Anas strepera</i>
<b>Falcated Duck</b>	<i>Anas falcata</i>
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>	<i>Anas penelope</i>
<b>Mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
<b>Eastern Spot-billed Duck</b>	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
<b>Northern Pintail</b>	<i>Anas acuta</i>
<b>Garganey</b>	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
<b>Eurasian Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>
<b>Red-crested Pochard</b>	<i>Netta rufina</i>
<b>Common Pochard</b>	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
<b>White-winged Scoter</b>	<i>Melanitta deglandi</i>
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
<b>Common (Goosander) Merganser</b>	<i>Mergus merganser</i>

### Pheasants & Allies Phasianidae

<b>Black Grouse</b>	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>
<b>Rock Ptarmigan</b>	<i>Lagopus muta</i>
<b>Willow Ptarmigan</b>	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>
<b>Altai Snowcoc</b>	<i>Tetraogallus altaicus</i>
<b>Chukar Partridge</b>	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
<b>Daurian Partridge</b>	<i>Perdix dauurica</i>

### Loons Gaviidae

<b>Black-throated Loon</b>	<i>Gavia arctica</i>
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### Grebes Podicipedidae

<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
<b>Horned (Slavonian) Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
<b>Eared (Black-necked) Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>

### Storks Podicipedidae

<b>Black Stork</b>	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
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### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

<b>Eurasian Spoonbill</b>	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
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### Hérons & Bitterns Ardeidae

<b>Eurasian Bittern</b>	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>
<b>Grey Heron</b>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
<b>Great Egret</b>	<i>Ardea alba</i>

### Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae

<b>Great Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
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**Ospreys Pandionidae**

[Western] Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

**Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**

Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*  
 Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
 Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*  
 Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*  
 Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*  
 Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*  
 Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*  
 Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*  
 Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*  
 Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*  
 Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*  
 Black Kite *Milvus migrans*  
 Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*  
 White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*  
 Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*  
 Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicus*  
 Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

**Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae**

Brown-cheeked Rail *Rallus indicus*  
 Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*  
 Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*  
 Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

**Cranes Gruidae**

White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*  
 Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*  
 Common Crane *Grus grus*

**Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*  
 Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Plovers Charadriidae**

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*  
 Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*  
 Grey Plover *Pluvialis fulva*  
 Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*  
 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*  
 Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*  
 Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*  
 Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*

**Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae**

Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Asian Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>

**Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae**

Brown-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Relict Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus relictus</i>
Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus</i>
Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Vega (Mongolian) Gull	<i>Larus vegae</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>

**Sandgrouse Pteroclididae**

Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrhaptes paradoxus</i>
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**Pigeons & Doves Columbidae**

Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>

**Cuckoos Cuculidae**

Oriental Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus optatus</i>
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>

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**Owls Strigidae**

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*  
Little Owl *Athene noctua*

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae**

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Swifts Apodidae**

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*  
Common Swift *Apus apus*  
Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*

**Hoopoes Upupidae**

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

**Woodpeckers Picidae**

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*  
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*  
White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*  
Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*  
Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*  
Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*  
Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

**Falcons Falconidae**

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*  
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*  
Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*  
Merlin *Falco columbarius*  
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*  
Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*

**Shrikes Laniidae**

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*  
Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*  
Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius pallidirostris*

**Crows, Jays Corvidae**

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*  
Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*  
Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*  
Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*  
Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*  
Daurian Jackdaw *Coloeus dauuricus*  
Rook *Corvus frugilegus*  
Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

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Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

**Tits, Chickadees Paridae**

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*  
 Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*  
 Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus*  
 Great Tit *Parus major*

**Penduline Tits Remizidae**

White-crowned Penduline Tit *Remiz coronatus*

**Bearded Reedling Panuridae**

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*

**Larks Alaudidae**

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*  
 Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*  
 Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*  
 Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*  
 Asian Short-toed Lark *Alauda cheleensis*

**Swallows, Martins Hirundinidae**

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*  
 Pale Martin *Riparia diluta*  
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*  
 Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
 Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

**Bushtits Aegithalidae**

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

**Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae**

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*  
 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*  
 Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*  
 Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*  
 Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*  
 Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*  
 Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*

**Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae**

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*  
 Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*  
 Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
 Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon*

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**Grassbirds & Allies**Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler     *Locustella certhiola***Sylviid Babblers Sylviidae**

Barred Warbler     *Sylvia nisoria*  
 Lesser Whitethroat     *Sylvia curruca*  
 Asian Desert Warbler     *Sylvia nana*  
 Common Whitethroat     *Sylvia communis*

**Nuthatches Sittidae**Eurasian Nuthatch     *Sitta europaea***Wallcreeper Tichodromidae**Wallcreeper     *Tichodroma muraria***Treecreepers Certhiidae**Eurasian Treecreeper     *Certhia familiaris***Starlings Sturnidae**

White-cheeked Starling     *Spodiopsar cineraceus*  
 Rosy Starling     *Pastor roseus*

**Thrushes Turdidae**

White's Thrush     *Zoothera aurea*  
 Eyebrowed Thrush     *Turdus obscurus*  
 Red-throated Thrush     *Turdus ruficollis*  
 Dusky Thrush     *Turdus eunomus*  
 Mistle Thrush     *Turdus viscivorus*

**Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

Spotted Flycatcher     *Muscicapa striata*  
 Dark-sided Flycatcher     *Muscicapa sibirica*  
 Asian Brown Flycatcher     *Muscicapa latirostris*  
 Siberian Rubythroat     *Calliope calliope*  
 Red-flanked Bluetail     *Tarsiger cyanurus*  
 Taiga (Red-throated) Flycatcher     *Ficedula albicilla*  
 Eversmann's Redstart     *Phoenicurus erythronotus*  
 Black Redstart     *Phoenicurus ochruros*  
 Common Redstart     *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
 Daurian Redstart     *Phoenicurus aureus*  
 Gldenstdt's Redstart     *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*  
 Common Rock Thrush     *Monticola saxatilis*  
 White-throated Bush Chat     *Saxicola insignis*  
 Siberian Stonechat     *Saxicola maurus*

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Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>

### Old World Sparrows Passeridae

Saxaul Sparrow	<i>Passer ammodendri</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>
White-winged Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>
Père David's Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda davidiana</i>

### Accentors Prunellidae

Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>
Altai Accentor	<i>Prunella himalayana</i>
Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>
Kozlov's Accentor	<i>Prunella koslowi</i>

### Wagtails, Pipits Motacillidae

Eastern Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>

### Finches Fringillidae

Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
Mongolian Finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>
Asian Rosy Finch	<i>Leucosticte arctoa</i>
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus davidianus</i>
Long-tailed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus sibiricus</i>
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>

### Buntings & Allies Emberizidae

Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalus</i>
Godlewski's Bunting	<i>Emberiza godlewskii</i>
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>
Grey-necked Bunting	<i>Emberiza buchanani</i>

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Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>
Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>
Black-faced Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>
Pallas's Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza pallasi</i>
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>

## List of Mammals recorded

Total species recorded: 14

Alpine Pika	<i>Ochonta alpina</i>
Daurian Pika	<i>Ochotona dauurica</i>
Pallas's Pika	<i>Ochotona pallasi</i>
Tolai Hare	<i>Lepus tolai</i>
Tarbagan Marmot	<i>Marmota sibirica</i>
Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus erythrogegens</i>
Long-tailed Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus undulatus</i>
Siberian Chipmunk	<i>Tamias sibiricus</i>
Mid-day Jird (Gerbil)	<i>Meriones meridianus</i>
Brandt's Vole	<i>Microtus brandtii</i>
Corsac Fox	<i>Vulpes corsac</i>
Goitred Gazelle	<i>Gazella subguttarosa</i>
Siberian Ibex	<i>Capra sibirica</i>
Long-eared Hedgehog	<i>Meriones unguiculatus</i>

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