



Mongolian Lark (Paul Matson)

MONGOLIA

24 MAY – 7/11 JUNE 2014

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Our recent Birdquest tour to Mongolia took us in search of some of the Palearctic's least known yet most desired birds in a series of epic desert, mountain and steppe landscapes. After a flight south from Ulaanbaatar to Dalangzagdab in the heart of the Gobi Desert we embarked on a 2600km off-road odyssey back to the capital through the heart of the country. Particular highlights included superb views of exquisite Oriental Plovers, including a male in its rocking and winnowing display flight, numerous Pallas's Sandgrouse, Altai Snowcocks at two sites, Altai, Brown, Alpine and the Mongolian breeding endemic Kozlov's Accentors, Hodgson's Bushchats, Gldenstdt's, Eversmann's and Daurian Redstarts, eight breeding plumaged Relict Gulls and large numbers of Mongolian and Pallas's Gulls, Swan Geese, Red-throated Thrushes, stunning Azure Tits, Asian Dowitchers, White-crowned Penduline Tits, Asian Rosy Finch and Brandt's Mountain Finches, Daurian Partridges, Pallas's Reed, Meadow and Pine Buntings, Pre David's and White-winged Snowfinches, Stejneger's Scoters, several White-naped and numerous Demoiselle Cranes, Mongolian Larks and Pallas's Fish Eagles. Spring migration was in full swing with various Siberia-bound migrants encountered at wetlands and migrant hotspots. Those who undertook the extension to the Khentai National

Park were rewarded with Black-billed Capercaillie and surprises such as Siberian Tit and Siberian Jay at the southernmost extremity of their range. The weather during the tour was mostly warm and sunny though we encountered our share of strong winds (and associated dust storms), some rain and even snow at times and overnight temperatures occasionally dipped to below freezing as spring made a tentative advance.



Ulaanbaatar viewed from Bogd Khan NP (Chris Kehoe)

Having gathered in the rather unprepossessing Ulaanbaatar, now home to half of the huge nation's entire population, our birding began with a late morning drive to the nearby Tuul River. Steady rain and decidedly chilly conditions didn't prevent us from connecting with our main target here when the first of several gorgeous Azure Tits popped up and showed beautifully. White-crowned Penduline Tit put up more of a fight but after a rather long search we had fair views of one bird plus a Black-faced Bunting. Returning to the bus we saw a Baikal Wagtail before eating our box lunches and moving on the short distance to Bogd Khan NP where the rain finally started to ease off and the ridges above us were lightly dusted with fresh snow. A walk through the larches here gave us a nice collection of resident species including Willow Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch (of the pale race *asiatica*) and Grey-headed Woodpecker while summer migrants included Common Redstarts, Taiga Flycatchers, Olive-backed Pipits, Pine and Meadow Buntings, Common Cuckoo and Hobby. Just as we were returning to the bus a couple of Booted Eagles appeared overhead and back at the hotel flocks of Pacific Swifts were chasing and screaming around the buildings.

After a short early morning flight south to Dalangzagdab we began our birding in the airport car park as we waited for our luggage, finding migrant Common Rosefinches, Brown Shrikes and Taiga Flycatchers along the fencelines. During the drive to our ger camp in the foothills of the Gobi Altai we stopped to watch Asian Short-toed and 'Brandt's' Horned Larks, our first Pallas's Sandgrouse were seen briefly, as were Upland Buzzard, Cinereous Vultures and Saker Falcon but the undoubted highlight was a pair of superb Oriental Plovers that showed to perfection, the male displaying over the stony desert steppe. Either side of lunch we found a few migrants sheltering from a cool, blustery wind around our camp including several more Brown Shrikes, Dusky Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat and White-cheeked Starling. A short drive took us to Yolyn Am where White-winged Snowfinches greeted us at the car park and a little while later we were watching our first Brown Accentors, a furtive Siberian Blue Robin and a single Koslov's Accentor, Mongolia's sole breeding endemic species. Further exploration revealed Citrine Wagtail, Twite and several Little and Black-faced Buntings. Moving into the gorge, we eventually connected with a fine male Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch

but just a few saw a fly-by Wallcreeper as Himalayan and Eurasian Griffons and a couple of impressive Lammergeiers soared overhead.



Dusky Thrush and 'Brandt's' Horned Lark at Khan Bohd Ger camp (Chris Kehoe)



The gorge at Yolyn Am. (Chris Kehoe)

After an early return to Yolyn Am we hiked up to one of the nearby ridges as the sun rose and scanned unsuccessfully for Altai Snowcocks. We did though find some Argali and Siberian Ibex, a smart Red throated Thrush and a fly-by Eversmann's Redstart. Back at the vans we watched Kozlov's Accentors singing in the junipers before returning to the gorge area where another Koslov's Accentor fell prey to a hungry migrant Brown Shrike. At the entrance to the gorge a splendid pair of Wallcreepers put on a prolonged show as they crept about a nearby rock face. Back at camp it was now very windy while the journey to our next base at Khongoryn Els continued the theme of inclement weather as wind, rain and dust (the latter two combining as falling mud at times!) hampered any en route birding though Saker Falcons and Greater Sand Plovers were

noted during brief clear interludes. By late afternoon we were passing the impressive dunes of Khongoly Els and soon afterwards settling into our gers for a final night of luxury before ten nights of camping.



Gobi Desert dust storm (Chris Kehoe)



Saxaul Sparrows (Chris Kehoe) and Mongolian Finch (Paul Matson) at Khongory Els.

Next morning a short drive took us to an area of Saxaul forest nestling below the huge dunes where we quickly found several Saxaul Sparrows and enjoyed excellent views of these very striking birds. Also seen in the area before we returned for breakfast were Isabelline and Steppe Grey Shrikes and several Pallas's Sandgrouse flew by. A flock of Mongolian Finches and a singing Desert Wheatear were watched at camp before we loaded up the vans and set off on the long drive towards Orog Nuur. After stopping to watch a group of Cinereous and Himalayan Vultures at a camel carcass we also had views of a busy pair of Asian Desert Warblers in the nearby desert bushes. Three Goitred Gazelles were seen running across the desert before we stopped for a picnic lunch. Pressing on we made some running repairs to the support vehicle in Byanlik, seeing a Crested Lark in the process, Pied Wheatears were watched in a rocky gorge before we finally reached a suitable camping area in the foothills of Ikh Bodh Uul a little before sunset.

After breaking camp, during which an Oriental Turtle Dove appeared briefly, we drove directly to Orog Nuur where we spent the remainder of the morning birding along the northwest shore. Several Richard's Pipits, Asian Short-toed Larks and Eurasian Skylarks were on the grassland while the lake shore held lots of Kentish Plovers and a few Temminck's Stints. Great Crested Grebes, Common Pochards, Tufted Ducks and other common wildfowl were noted on the lake with a couple of elusive Red-crested Pochards in emergent vegetation. We made our way onto a spit where a pair of Demoiselle Cranes were lingering as squadrons of Eurasian Spoonbills winged past. Scanning of the far shore revealed a group of Swan Geese amongst the more numerous Greylags and a single Bar-headed Goose put in a few appearances as Common, Gull-billed and Caspian Terns patrolled up and down. Making our way back to the bus we flushed a couple of 'Swintail'

Snipes. After lunch we began our ascent to Ikh Bodh Uul, eventually arriving there mid-evening and setting up camp on a meadow where Père David's Snowfinches showed well.



Orog Nuur with snowy Ikh Bodh Uul beyond (Chris Kehoe)

Soon after first light we were grinding our way upwards towards the summit of Ikh Bodh Uul which we reached about an hour later. In rather breezy conditions we walked towards the lee side of a rocky hill, stopping before there to watch two Altai Snowcocks on a distant crag and seeing a Güldenstädt's Redstart on an adjacent boulder field. As we reached some sheltered snow patches our primary target here, Hodgson's Bushchat, quickly appeared and gave a series of great views over the next hour or so, during which time Altai Accentors also showed well, a small flock of Brandt's Mountain Finches came and went, several 'Blakiston's' Water Pipits buzzed about and the male Güldenstädt's Redstart performed nicely again as Tarbogan Marmots looked on. Very satisfied with our haul, we returned to camp and after lunch set off back down to Orog Nuur with stops to admire Hill Pigeons, Chukars and Common Rock Thrushes along the way. As our support team set up camp we explored the southern lakeshore seeing several Demoiselle and Common Cranes but, better still, a pair of White-naped Cranes that eventually allowed quite close approach. Further highlights this evening included several Garganey and Red crested Pochards, more Swan Geese, singing Oriental Reed Warblers, two brief Bearded Reedlings, Black Terns, several Citrine Wagtails, Western Marsh Harriers and Pale Martins.



Père David's Snowfinch, Hodgson's Bushchat and Altai Accentor on Ikh Bodh Uul (Paul Matson)

Around the camp early the next morning we found Common Rosefinch, Hoopoes and a smart Rosy Starling as Demoiselle and Common Cranes bugled and danced nearby. A short drive took us to an area of bushes

northwest of Orog Nuur where within just a few minutes of disembarking we were watching Henderson's Ground Jays, one of which eventually gave some excellent views. Isabelline and Steppe Grey Shrikes also showed well here, as did another Rosy Starling. A refuelling stop in the village of Bogd gave us the chance to look for migrants along the nearby river where an Amur Wagtail and a Siberian Rubythroat were the highlights. We reached Holbooj Lake in time for some brief birding before lunch and found Slavonian Grebe, Ferruginous Duck and real surprise in the shape of a Long-tailed Duck amongst the good numbers of commoner waterfowl present, White-winged Terns and others. It was a rather warm and blustery day so we had a short rest after lunch before setting off to explore the shoreline to the northwest where shorebirds seemed to be concentrated. Several hours later we returned to camp with a fine haul of species including up to 30 Broad-billed Sandpipers, Curlew Sandpipers, several Long-toed and Temminck's Stints, Greater Sandplovers, Dunlin, numerous Pallas's Sandgrouse (including our first good views on the ground) plus nesting Whooper Swans and Demoiselle Cranes.



Long-toed Stint (Paul Matson), Asian Dowitchers and Pallas's Reed Bunting at Holbooj (Chris Kehoe)



In pursuit of Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers at Holbooj (Chris Kehoe)

We spent several hours the next morning exploring the area to the east of our camp where rewards included our first Pallas's Reed Bunting, up to 10 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers (some of which showed superbly), two smart Asian Dowitchers, six Pallas's Gulls, dozens of Pallas's Sandgrouse, Stejneger's Stonechat, and Black-tailed Godwit. By mid morning we were on our way west to Boon Tsagaan Nuur. A refuelling stop in Jinst gave us the opportunity to investigate a small park containing the only trees for miles around and this proved a magnet for small migrants as we found up to six Asian Brown Flycatchers, Spotted, Taiga and Dark-sided Flycatchers, Pallas's Leaf Warbler, a furtive Eyebrowed Thrush, Siberian Rubythroats and a Common Rosefinch in this tiny patch of habitat. We ate our picnic lunch on a vast stony plain that seemed to be endless as we later drove across it before finally reaching Batsagaan where we picked up some provisions and watched a European Siskin, a Thick-billed Warbler and a few commoner migrants in the few trees there. Two Pallas's Fish Eagles showed well as we completed the journey to Boon Tsagaan Nuur where we quickly made our way to the lakeshore where many Pallas's and Mongolia Gulls were gathered, 'genuine' Mute Swans showed well and our only Lesser Sandplover was found. Back at camp a male Oriental Plover flew past and landed distantly as the camp staff shored-up our dining tent against an increasing wind.

During the night it became very windy indeed and we awoke to a full blown gale with attendant dust storms. Thankfully, our tents all remained standing, indeed the dining tent offered the only sheltered birding spot so we huddled there watching various gulls and terns over the nearby river and briefly noted a couple of Black Storks as we attempted to dodge the worst of the dust flurries. A female Daurian Redstart was a surprise find under our vehicles where it took advantage of the best available shelter from the storm. By late morning it was still very windy but the amount of airborne dust was greatly reduced so we made our way to the river mouth and checked through the flock of birds gathered there, though there was no sign of the hoped-for Relict Gulls we did enjoy further views of Pallas Fish Eagle and others. Heading back to camp for lunch we found a couple of smart Mongolian Larks. With the wind now easing somewhat we made our way across the river after lunch and searched the lakeshore there with a Siberian Rubythroat and an Asian Dowitcher as highlights. Back near camp we continued our search for Relict Gulls without success though there was much else to see, including a surprise Dalmatian Pelican, in the gradually improving conditions.

We awoke to a very chilly but still morning and immediately proceeded to the lakeshore where within a matter of minutes we had a much-wanted adult Relict Gull in the scopes, indeed we went onto see a total of eight individuals during the next hour. An amazing total of five Pallas Fish Eagles were on view this morning too, sometimes in the air together. Straight after breakfast we began the long journey north towards the Khangay Mountains. Having seen Oriental Plovers so well previously we spent only a short time scanning for them en route though our first Steppe Eagle was found. We ate lunch on the outskirts of Bayanghohor, where we picked up some vital provisions such as beer and chilli sauce, before climbing through the foothills and up towards our overnight camp at Sayayn Davaa at 2700m. A few short stops along the way gave us a couple of Golden Eagles, a close perched Steppe Eagle, two Lammergeiers on nests and lots of Daurian Jackdaws attending herds of horses, cows and yaks. A short stop at Erdenesogt Monastery saw us watching breeding Choughs in the picturesque surroundings.



Steppe Eagle (Paul Matson) and Daurian Jackdaw near Erdenesogt Monastery (Chris Kehoe)

It was cold but still the next morning and we soon began the task of scanning the surrounding hills and ridges for Altai Snowcocks, eventually finding two birds that gave some reasonable scope views. Also seen in the vicinity of our camp were two Daurian Partridges, a pair of Pallas's Reed Buntings, Dusky Warblers, our first Hume's Leaf Warbler and several Brown Accentors and Water Pipits. A little lower down we watched Golden and Steppe Eagles, the latter in display, before visiting a side valley where, after quite a long search, we eventually found a pair of Eversmann's Redstarts, they were rather flighty but most managed some good views. A quick stop at one of yesterday's Lammergeier nests produced the goods when an adult came gliding in and proceeded to feed its large youngster. Turning eastwards we bumped our way up to White Rock Pass where we paused for lunch at a large outcrop where an Alpine Accentor, two male Gldenstdt's Redstarts and some rather too brief and flighty Asian Rosy Finches appeared as a little rain fell. Continuing our journey we eventually descended into a wide valley where we set up camp for the night.



Black-eared Kite at Erdenesogt Monastery (Chris Kehoe)



Our camp at Sayayn Davaa (Chris Kehoe)

The next morning dawned overcast and a little drizzly and deteriorated from there. By the time we left camp at 08.00 it was snowing and continued to do so on and off for the rest of the morning. Plans to search for migrants in the valley bushes were shelved as the wet weather meant very slow progress on the slippery tracks. We eventually reached Orkhon Falls where our first Ortolan Bunting was quickly found though there was no sign of any Eurasian Eagle Owls at their nest cave, perhaps not surprisingly given that it must have been much drier and warmer deep inside. Song flying Blyth's Pipits continued their antics despite the near blizzard at times and one in particular gave some good scope views. On departure we slipped and slithered our way further eastwards, eating our picnic lunches in the shelter of our vehicles, but eventually the weather began to clear and by the time we finally reached Khujrit it was dry and intermittently sunny. At Khujrit Lake we watched our first Arctic Loons along with good numbers of Demoiselle Cranes, White-winged Terns and others. An hour later we reached our overnight stop at a large steppe lake where we watched several

Stejneger's Scoter and a single male Falcated Duck amongst the large numbers of wildfowl gathered there as numerous Mongolian Larks songflighted overhead and a female Eastern Marsh Harrier flew by.

Further exploration near our camp on an initially very cold and frosty morning gave us repeat views of yesterdays highlights plus Black-necked and Slavonian Grebes, Pallas's Reed Bunting, a pair of Arctic Loons and a few shorebirds. By mid-morning we were on our way further east with little to delay us before we reached Hustai National Park in the late afternoon, though our lunch stop at some rocky outcrops produced a Thick-billed Warbler and great views of Pacific Swifts. As the camp staff set up we drove a short distance into the park where Amur Falcon and several Blyth's Pipits were the avian highlights and we had excellent views of several Przewalski's Horses plus a few Red Deer.

A couple of hours in Hustai NP in the morning gave us improved views of Amur Falcons plus several Lesser Kestrels, our first Little Owls and several Meadow Buntings while Przewalski's Horses put on another good show. As our first day in Ulaanbaatar was so wet and cold we returned there in time for a couple of hours birding back at the Tuul River, this time in warm and sunny conditions. Greatly improved views of Azure Tits and White-crowned Penduline Tits were welcomed and we also had some great encounters with a couple of stunning male Long-tailed Rosefinches. After negotiating the appalling Ulaanbaatar traffic we finally reached our comfortable hotel where real showers and beds awaited!

Most of the group this year opted-in to the extension to the Khentai Mountains and we set off towards there after a leisurely breakfast. After a brief stop at a huge and imposing monument to Ghengis Khan we made our way to Gun Galut. The lakes there held several Stejneger's Scoters and a couple of Black-necked Grebes plus various commoner waterfowl. Moving on to the nearby marsh we found two pairs of White-naped Cranes, several Demoiselle Cranes and a handful of Black Storks as we ate our lunch on a rocky outcrop. By mid-afternoon we were relaxing at our camp in a meadow near Terelj where several Eastern Buzzards, Cinereous Vultures, a Steppe Eagle and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk appeared overhead amongst clouds of Pacific Swifts. Later in the evening we drove to a marshy valley but the hoped-for Swinhoe's Snipes failed to materialise though several Pine Buntings were found and our first Oriental Cuckoo was heard.

A frosty dawn saw us returning to the marshy valley where we continued higher and began exploring the forested slopes. A good fly-by view of a Ural Owl and a singing Red-throated Thrush were early highlights. As we explored another area one person had a brief flight view of a Black-billed Capercaillie but despite an extensive search we failed to find it or another though we did see Eurasian Wrynecks, one or two Oriental Cuckoos, Pallas's Leaf and Yellow-browed Warblers, several Olive-backed Pipits and others. A Booted Eagle showed well as we returned briefly to the vehicle to shed some layers on an eventually warm and pleasant morning. After lunch we drove for an hour to an area of riverine woodland but despite ample evidence of the activities of woodpeckers in the area we failed to find any though we did hear a Eurasian Wryneck and a Eurasian Scops Owl, and saw our only Long-tailed Tits, lots of Pine Bunting and an unattended nest of White-crowned Penduline Tit. After an early dinner we resumed our search for Swinhoe's Snipe but despite remaining until dark there was no sight or sound of them, perhaps the freezing overnight temperature had delayed their arrival or caused a temporary retreat to lower elevations. We did though see a Common Whitethroat of the strikingly pale and unfamiliar looking race *rubicola* and a few Olive-backed Pipits and others.

Next morning we launched a pre-dawn assault on Capercaillie Mountain that lay directly above our camp. Several stops were made during our ascent to look and listen for Chinese Bush Warblers but none were apparent though we did see our first Black Woodpecker before finally reaching the prime habitat of Black-billed Capercaillies after a couple of hours. We then walked far and wide in our search and after two-and-a-half hours found a male bird foraging on the forest floor about 60 metres away and allowing good views to almost everyone before inexplicably disappearing. Further searching then produced a succession of brief flight views while further highlights included an inquisitive group of Siberian Jays and an unexpected Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit), two species at the extreme southern limit of their essentially Taiga forest range. It was late afternoon before a leg weary group returned to camp where we soaked up the warm sun and relaxed after our exertions as a Black Woodpecker came and went from the adjacent trees.

Our final day began with a 90 minute drive to a valley that in the past has held Yellow-breasted Buntings. Despite an extensive search none were found though we encountered plenty of Pine Buntings, a single Black-faced Bunting, singing Dusky Warblers, Lesser Whitethroats, a superb Siberian Rubythroat and other bits and pieces once the early morning mist had burned off. Returning to the woodpecker grove visited a couple of days earlier we found a couple of Daurian Redstarts, White-crowned Penduline Tits, three Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and heard a briefly singing 'Siberian' Chiffchaff. while nearby power lines held a few White-cheeked Starlings. Back at camp we ate lunch, packed up and set off back towards Ulaanbaatar where we gathered later for a farewell dinner in a local restaurant and voted on the bird of the trip with the following results:

- 1- Oriental Plover 19 points
- 2- Henderson's Ground Jay 11 points
- 3= Black-billed Capercaillie 10 points
- 3= Hodgson Bushchat 10 points
- 5= Azure Tit 8 points
- 5= Pallas's Sandgrouse 8 points



Oriental Plover near Dalangzagdab (Chris Kehoe (left) and Paul Matson)



Pallas's Sandgrouse at Holbooj (Paul Matson)



Terbish and a Saxaul tree at Khongory Els (Chris Kehoe)



One of our drivers in the snow at Orkhon Falls and Ghengis Khan (right) near Ulaanbaatar (Chris Kehoe)



Crossing the Gobi Desert (Chris Kehoe)



Lammergeier near Erdenesogt Monastery (Paul Matson)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Black-billed Capercaillie ◊ (Spotted C) *Tetrao parvirostris* A perched male and a few flight views at Khentai NP.

Altai Snowcock ◊ *Tetraogallus altaicus* Two at Ikh Bodh Uul and two more above Sayayn Davaa camp.

Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar* Several in the gorge below Ikh Bodh Uul.

Daurian Partridge ◊ *Perdix dauurica* Two at Sayayn Davaa and two more for some at Hustai NP.

Swan Goose ◊ *Anser cygnoides* Noted on several steppe lakes.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Common on several steppe lakes, often with young.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* Noted on several steppe lakes and rivers. See note.

Mute Swan ◊ *Cygnus olor* Up to 10 at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Noted on several larger lakes, often with cygnets.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* Small numbers at and around some steppe lakes.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Fairly common and widespread, often away from water.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Fairly common on most steppe lakes.

Falcat Duck *Anas falcata* A handsome male at Sangiy Dalan.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* Present in small numbers on most steppe lakes.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Present in small numbers on several steppe lakes.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Fairly common on some steppe lakes.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Small numbers at a few steppe lakes.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* Most conspicuous at Orog Nurr but present on several other steppe lakes.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Present on a few steppe lakes in small numbers.



Bar-headed Goose (Paul Matson) and Ruddy Shelduck (Chris Kehoe)

- Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* Most prominent at Orog Nuur with a few elsewhere.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Up to several hundred on some steppe lakes.
- Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* A male at Holbooj
- Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* Up to 50 on some steppe lakes.
- Stejneger's Scoter** ◊ (White-winged S) *Melanitta stejnegeri* Up to 10 at Sangiy Dalay and Gun Galut.
- Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* One at Holbooj, a write-in.
- Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* Present on several steppe lakes.
- Common Merganser (Goosander)** *Mergus merganser* Scattered records throughout, mainly in uplands.
- Black-throated Loon (Arctic L, B-t Diver)** *Gavia arctica* Noted at Khijrit Lake and Sangiy Dalay
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Present on most steppe lakes.
- Horned Grebe** ◊ (Slavonian G) *Podiceps auritus* Singles at Holbooj and Sangiy Dalay.
- Black-necked Grebe (Eared Grebe)** *Podiceps nigricollis* Ones and twos at Sangiy Dalay and Gun Galut.
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Noted on four dates at widespread sites with four at Gun Galut.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* Common on some steppe lakes, especially Orog and Boon Tsagaan Nuurs
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Present at most steppe lakes, especially numerous at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.
- Great Egret** *Egretta alba* Small numbers at a few steppe lakes, some evidently migrating.
- Dalmatian Pelican** ◊ *Pelecanus crispus* One immature at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Common on some steppe lakes.
- Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)** *Gypaetus barbatus* Regular sightings in the south and central highlands.
- Eurasian Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* A handful at Yolin Am.



Cinereous Vulture near Orkhon Falls and Himalayan Vulture with Northern Raven near Khongory Els (Chris Kehoe)

- Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* Several in the Gobi Altai and southern deserts.
- Cinereous Vulture (Eurasian Black V, Monk V)** *Aegypius monachus* Widespread in small numbers.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* Two at Bodh Khan and one at Khentai.
Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* Occasional encounters in the northern steppe and hills.
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* Ones and twos at a few upland sites throughout.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Singles at Dalangzagdab and Khentai NP.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A pair at Orog Nuur.
Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* A female at Sangiy Dalay
Black-eared Kite (B K) *Milvus lineatus* Widespread, sometimes common.
Pallas's Fish Eagle ◊ *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Up to seven individuals at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.
Upland Buzzard ◊ *Buteo hemilasius* Fairly common throughout the main tour.
Eastern Buzzard ◊ (Japanese B) *Buteo japonicus* Three over our camp at Khentai NP on one date.
Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Up to six at Hustai NP.
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Ones and two on six dates at widespread sites.
Amur Falcon ◊ (Eastern Red-footed F) *Falco amurensis* About six at Hustai NP.
Merlin *Falco columbarius* A male of the race pallidus near Erdenesogt.
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* Noted on four dates at widespread sites, best views at Khan Bogd on day 1.
Saker Falcon ◊ (Saker) *Falco cherrug* Noted on nine dates, mainly in the south, some great views.



Saker Falcons (left, Chris Kehoe) and Lesser Kestrel (Paul Matson)

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra* A handful at some steppe lakes.
White-naped Crane ◊ *Grus vipio* Two at Orog Nuur, one at Holbooj and four at Gun Galut - a good haul.



White-naped Cranes at Orog Nuur (Paul Matson) and Demoiselle Crane near Bayanghohor (Chris Kehoe)

Demoiselle Crane ◊ *Grus virgo* Regularly encountered throughout the steppe, especially near lakes.
Common Crane *Grus grus* Small numbers at some steppe lakes.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Present in small numbers at most steppe lakes.
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Common at Holbooj, several elsewhere.
Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* Present at several steppe lakes.
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Up to 20 at Holbooj and Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* A handful at Holbooj.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Present at several wetland sites in small numbers.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Common at all steppe lakes.

Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian S P) *Charadrius mongolus* One at Boon Tsagaan Nuur. See note.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* Scattered records in the south including 20 at Holbooj.

Oriental Plover ◊ *Charadrius veredus* A superb pair near Dalangzagdab,, a brief male at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Common at Orog Nuur.

Asian Dowitcher ◊ (Asiatic D) *Limnodromus semipalmatus* Two at Holbooj and one at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Black-tailed Godwit ◊ *Limosa limosa* One or two at four steppe lakes.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* (NL) One at Sangiy Dalan.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Several at most steppe lakes.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* A handful at three steppe lakes.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* One at Bogd.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* About five at Holbooj, a couple elsewhere.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers at a few steppe lakes and rivers.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* About 15 at Boon Tsaggan Nuur.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* About eight at Holbooj.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Up to 20 at Holbooj.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* Several at three steppe lakes.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* Up to 20 at Holbooj.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Three at Holbooj.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Three at Holbooj.

Broad-billed Sandpiper ◊ *Limicola falcinellus* Up to 30 at Holbooj.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* A handful, including breeding males, at Holbooj.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Present at all steppe lakes, sometimes in large numbers.

Relict Gull ◊ *Ichthyaelus relictus* Eight adults after a long and tricky search at Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Pallas's Gull *Ichthyaelus ichthyaelus* Up to 400 at Boon Tsagaan Nuur, six at Holbooj.



Pallas's Gull at Boon Tsagaan Nuur and White-winged tern at Holbooj (Paul Matson)

Mongolian Gull ◊ *Larus mongolicus* Common at Boon Tsagaan Nuur, smaller numbers on several other lakes.

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini* Two at Boon Tsagaan Nuur, a write-in. See note.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelocheilidon nilotica* A few at some steppe lakes after the first at Orog Nuur.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Common at Boon Tsagaan Nuur with a few elsewhere.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* A handful at Holbooj and Boon Tsagaan Nuur.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Present on most wetlands. Subspecies

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Two at Boon Tsaggan Nuur

White-winged Tern (W-w Black T) *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* A handful at Orog Nuur.

Pallas's Sandgrouse ◊ *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* Locally common in the southern deserts.



Pallas's Sandgrouse at Holbooj and Brown Shrike at Bodh Khan (Paul Matson)

Rock Dove (R Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Hill Pigeon ♦ *Columba rupestris* Occasional encounters after the first below Ikh Bodh Uul.

Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D) *Streptopelia orientalis* A few encounters at widespread sites.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* One or two seen and a few more heard at Khentai NP.

Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus* Locally common and noisy.

Eurasian Scops Owl (European S O) *Otus scops* (H) Heard at Khentai NP.

Ural Owl ♦ *Strix uralensis* Good flight views at Khantai NP.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* A handful at Hustai NP and Gun Galut.

Common Swift *Apus apus* Some quite large numbers over the southern steppes and lakes.

Pacific Swift (Fork-tailed S) *Apus pacificus* Locally common, some migrating through.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Ones and twos at several widespread sites.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* A pair seen and others hear at Khentai NP.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* Two in UB and three at Khentai NP.



Black Woodpecker and an unexpected Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit) at Khentai NP (Paul Matson)

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* Two or three were found at Khentai NP.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* One at Bodh Khan NP. and a couple more at Khentai sites

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Several migrants were found in the south.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* Common in Saxaul forests and similarly bushy desert areas.
Steppe Grey Shrike ◇ *Lanius pallidirostris* Present in similar areas to the last though in lower numbers.
Siberian Jay ◇ *Perisoreus infaustus* Three at Capercaillie Mountain, Khentai NP.



Siberian Jay at Khentai (Paul Matson)

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* Widespread at low densities.
Henderson's Ground Jay ◇ *Podoces hendersoni* Up to eight near Orog Nuur.
Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Common in many hillier areas.
Daurian Jackdaw ◇ *Coloeus dauuricus* Large numbers in some montane valleys and northern steppe.
Oriental Crow ◇ *Corvus orientalis* Widespread in mostly small numbers.
Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax* Fairly common and very widespread.
Coal Tit *Periparus ater* Small numbers in the Taiga forests
Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* Fairly common in the northern forests.
Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit) *Poecile cinctus* One at Capercaillie Mountain, Khentai NP, a write-in.
Azure Tit ◇ *Cyanistes cyanus* Great views of a handful at the Tuul River in UB.
Great Tit *Parus major* A few encounters in the north.
White-crowned Penduline Tit ◇ *Remiz coronatus* Two at the Tuul River in UB and two at Khentai NP.
Bearded Reedling (B Tit, B Parrotbill) *Panurus biarmicus* Two brief views at Orog Nuur.
Mongolian Lark ◇ *Melanocorypha mongolica* Two at Boon Tsagaan Nuur, common in the moist northern steppes.
Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* Just one near Hustai NP.
Asian Short-toed Lark ◇ *Calandrella cheleensis* Common in the southern deserts and steppe.
Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* One at Bayanlik.
Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* Present in a few damper grassland areas.
Horned Lark (Shore L) *Eremophila alpestris* Common and very widespread. See note.
Pale Martin ◇ *Riparia diluta* Best views at Orog Nuur, just a couple elsewhere.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*



Azure Tit in Ulaanbaatar (Paul Matson)

- Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Small numbers in the mountains.
- Common House Martin (Northern H M)** *Delichon urbicum* Noted at Bayanghohor and Khentyai. See note
- Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* A couple at Khentai NP.
- Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus tristis* One heard singing briefly at Khentai NP.
- Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Noted at several sites, migrants and breeders.
- Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* One at Jinst and several in the Taiga forests.
- Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Several in the Taiga forests
- Hume's Leaf Warbler (H's Warbler)** *Phylloscopus humei* A few around Sayayn Davaa and on at Khentai.
- Two-barred Warbler (T-b Greenish W)** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Several in the north.
- Oriental Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis* A handful in the reeds at Orog Nuur.
- Thick-billed Warbler** ◇ *Iduna aedon* Singles at Batssagan and during lunch west of Hustai NP.
- Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola* Up to 10 at Holbooj with a couple elsewhere.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* A handful in the north. See note.
- Asian Desert Warbler** ◇ *Sylvia nana* Two in the desert near Khongory Els.
- Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* Three at Khentai NP, the very pale race *rubicola*.
- Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* Noted at Bidh Khan and Khentai NP's.
- Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* Two at Yolin Am. Always a welcome sight.
- White-cheeked Starling** ◇ *Spodiopsar cineraceus* One at Khan Bodh camp and a few in Kent a NP.



Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler at Holbooj and Siberian Rubythroat at Jinst (Paul Matson)

- Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured S) *Pastor roseus*** Two singles at Orog Nuur.
Eyebrowed Thrush ♦ *Turdus obscurus* One rather elusive bird at Jinst.
Red-throated Thrush ♦ *Turdus ruficollis* Ones and twos at Yolin Am and Khentai NP.
Dusky Thrush ♦ *Turdus eunomus* Singles at Khan Bodh camp and Yolin Am.
Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* A handful of migrants at widespread sites, breeding at Khentai NP.
Siberian Blue Robin *Luscinia cyane* A male at Yolin Am.
Eversmann's Redstart ♦ (Rufous-backed R) *Phoenicurus erythronota* A pair below Sayan Davaa.



Eversmann's Redstart near Sayayn Davaa (Simon Cross) and Dark-sided Flycatcher at Jinst (Paul Matson)

- Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*** Several at Yolin Am. See note
Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Occasional encounters in the north.
Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus* One at Boon Tsagaan Nuur and a handful in Khentai NP.
Güldenstädt's Redstart ♦ *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* One male at Ikh Bodh Uul and two at White Rock Pass.
White-throated Bush Chat ♦ (Hodgson's Bushchat) *Saxicola insignis* A showy pair on Ikh Bodh Uul.
Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* Noted at Sayayn Davaa. See note.
Stejneger's Stonechat *Saxicola stejnegeri* Noted at Holbooj. See note.
Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* Common and widespread.
Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Widespread in fairly small numbers.
Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* Scattered records in foothill areas.
Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* Occasional encounters, often in desert villages.
Common Rock Thrush (Rufous-tailed RT, White-backed RT) *Monticola saxatilis* Occasional in the uplands.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* One at Jinst.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* One at Jinst and two at Khentai NP.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris* Six at Jinst and a couple elsewhere.

Taiga Flycatcher (Red-throated F) *Ficedula albicilla* Several in the northern forests and at migrant hotspots.

Saxaul Sparrow ◊ *Passer ammodendri* Up to 20 at Khongory Els, some great views.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Present in most towns and villages, occasionally elsewhere.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Widespread.

Rock Sparrow (Rock Petronia) *Petronia petronia* Noted at several sites.

White-winged Snowfinch (Eurasian S) *Montifringilla nivalis* Several at Yolin Am.

Père David's Snowfinch ◊ *Pyrgilauda davidiana* Seen well on Ikh Bodh Uul, another near Khijrit.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* One at White Rock Pass.

Altai Accentor ◊ *Prunella himalayana* A handful on Ikh Bodh Uul.

Brown Accentor ◊ *Prunella fulvescens* Fairly common in some montane areas.

Kozlov's Accentor ◊ (Mongolian A) *Prunella koslowi* Up to 10 at Yolin Am, one killed by a Brown Shrike..

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Noted at Orog Nuur and a couple of other steppe lakes

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* At least one, nominate race-like bird, at Holbooj.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Locally common in damper areas.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* A few at Yolin Am and other upland sites.

Baikal Wagtail ◊ *Motacilla [alba] baicalensis* Occasional records, including in central UB.

Amur Wagtail ◊ *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* A male at Bogd.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* Several in southern steppe areas

Blyth's Pipit ◊ *Anthus godlewskii* Present at a few northern steppe sites.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* Noted at Bodh Khan and Yolin Am.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Fairly common in the northern forests, a few elsewhere.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* Several at the highest elevations visited. See note.

Mongolian Finch ◊ (M Trumpeter F) *Bucanetes mongolicus* Good views of 15 at Khongory Els, a few elsewhere.

Brandt's Mountain Finch ◊ *Leucosticte brandti* Up to six on Ikh Bodh Uul.

Asian Rosy Finch ◊ *Leucosticte arctoa* A couple of brief views at White Rock Pass.

Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R) *Carpodacus erythrinus* Scattered records, mainly in the north.



Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch at Yolin Am and Long-tailed Rosefinch in Ulaanbaatar (Paul Matson)

Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* A male at Yolin Am. See note

Long-tailed Rosefinch *Uragus sibiricus* Two or three at the Tuul River in UB on our return there.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris* Several at Yolin Am.

Red Crossbill (Common C) *Loxia curvirostra* Five in flight on Capercaillie mountain, Khentai NP..

Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus* One at Batsagaan.

Pine Bunting ◊ *Emberiza leucocephalos* Rather common in the northern forests.



Pine Bunting at Bogd Khan and Little Bunting at Yolyn Am (Paul Matson)

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides* Noted at Bodh Khan and Hustai NP's.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* A handful at and near Orkhon Falls.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* Up to six at Yolyn Am.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* A few at Yolyn Am and singles in UB and Khentai NP.

Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii* Ones and twos at Holbooj, Sangiy Dalan and Sayayn Davaa. See note.



Henderson's Ground Jay near Orog Nuur (Simon Cross) and Alpine Pika at Ikh Bodh Uul (Chris Kehoe)

MAMMALS

Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus* Noted at Khentai NP.

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai* Noted a few times in the southern deserts and steppe.

Alpine Pika *Ochotona alpina* Noted at Ikh Bodh Uul..

Daurian Pika *Ochotona dauurica* Noted between Orkhon falls and Khujrit.

Northern Pika *Ochotona hyperborea* Noted at Khentai NP.

Pallas's Pika *Ochotona pallasii* Noted in the Gobi Altai.

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* One at Khentai NP.

Tarbagan Marmot (Siberian/Mongolian M) *Marmota sibirica* Regularly seen in the highlands.

Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel (R-c Souslik) *Spermophilus erythrogenys* Noted in the Gobi Altai.

Long-tailed Ground Squirrel (L-T Souslik) *Spermophilus undulatus* Noted on seven dates, quite widespread.

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus* Several at Khentai NP.

Brandt's Vole *Microtus brandtii* Common at and around Sangiy Dalan.

Mid-day Jird (M-d Gerbil) *Meriones meridianus* A handful at Yolín Am.
Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* Noted on two dates.
Corsac Fox *Vulpes corsac* Noted near Khujrit and at Sangiy Dalan.
Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* Several at Hustai NP.
Eastern Roe Deer *Capreolus pygargus* A handful at Khentai.
Goitred Gazelle (Black-tailed G) *Gazella subgutturosa* Three south of Bayanlik.
Siberian Ibex *Capra sibirica* A couple at Yolín Am.
Argali *Ovis ammon* Three distantly at Yolín Am.
Przewalski's Horse *Equus (ferus) przewalskii* Over 20 at Hustai NP.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Additional to or replacing those in the tour checklist

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

The neck-collared individuals we recorded belong to a marking scheme run by the Wildlife Science and Conservation Centre in Mongolia that has been operational in western and northern Mongolia since 2008. At the time of writing no information has yet been provided regarding the history of the two individuals seen.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

The form concerned is *schaeferi*. It has recently been suggested that Lesser Sand Plover (or Mongolian Plover) *C. mongolus* should be treated as two species: Himalayan and Central Asian breeding Lesser Sand Plover *C. atrifrons* (including the nominate race plus *pamirensis* and *schaeferi*) and Mongolian (Sand) Plover *C. mongolus* which breeds further north and east in Asia, uses a more easterly, coastal migration route and has a rather distinctive breeding plumage and different proportions.

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini*

This species has variously been regarded as a race of Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* and Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* to name just two of the more recent taxonomic treatments.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

The form concerned is *brandti*. A recent genetic study sampled numerous individuals from across this species very wide range and concluded that it should be split into six species with *brandti* to become a monotypic species, perhaps to be called Brandt's or Mongolian Horned Lark.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

The form concerned is *lagopodum* which differs from nominate *urbicum* in having a much more extensive white rump patch and shallower tail fork. In the small area of contact between the two taxa to the south and east of Lake Baikal they reportedly behave as separate species so, pending further research, a split seems possible.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The form concerned is *phoenicuroides* which is one of the eastern red-bellied races that represent a potentially separate species from black-bellied birds found in Europe.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* and Stejneger's Stonechat *S. stejnegeri*

What was formerly Common Stonechat *S. torquatus* has gone through a number of recent revisions including the separation of Palearctic taxa from African Stonechat *S. torquatus* as Common Stonechat *S. rubicola* and more recently the further separation of Eastern Palearctic forms as Siberian Stonechat *S. maurus*. More recently still the easternmost forms of *maurus* have been further split by IOC as Stejneger's Stonechat *S. stejnegeri*, primarily on the basis of genetic evidence though usable field characters are gradually being described. The range limits and migration routes of *maurus* and *stejnegeri* remain poorly understood but based on the most recent evidence both occur as passage migrants and breeding visitors to Mongolia, *stejnegeri* breeding around Ulaanbaatar and mainly to the north and east of their and *maurus* breeding further west – though both could conceivably occur as migrants anywhere in central Mongolia. The subtle plumage differences between the species are at their most obvious in fresh autumn plumage but well marked individuals are identifiable with a moderate degree of confidence in spring given good views. Of the birds we saw well, the apparent migrant male at Holbooj showed a wash of colour extending from the breast onto the flanks, had distinct

dark shaft streaks on the uppertail coverts and a moderately large white neck patch – features which, in combination, are strongly suggestive of *stejnegeri*. The male of a pair presumably breeding at Sayayn Davaa had white flanks and perhaps a larger neck patch and on range should have been *maurus*. So, looked at somewhat pragmatically, we appear to have seen both species. A rather distant male at Khentai NP. could have been either species though if it was on breeding territory, rather than a migrant, should have been *stejnegeri* if the current information on breeding distribution, which is largely based on genetic sampling of breeding birds, is correct.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

This species was formerly called Rock Pipit, but that name is now used for the coastal form *petrosus*, which is nowadays split off as a separate species with the name Water Pipit now used for the residual *A. spinoletta*. The form concerned is *blakistoni*; recent studies of plumage, voice and genetics suggest that the three races of Water Pipit might be better regarded as three separate species with the name Eastern or Blakiston's Water Pipit used for the present taxon.

Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*

The form concerned is *argyrophrys* which IOC now regard as a race of the present species rather than, as previously, of Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *C. davidianus*; all were formerly considered conspecific with the name Beautiful Rosefinch *C. pulcherrimus* used for the enlarged species.

Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*

The form concerned is *lydiae* which differs from other races slightly in plumage but more distinctly in voice and ecology and potentially represents a separate species