



Trip Report

Classic Georgia

From 1st to 10th of May 2022

The **Classic Georgia** is an annual birding tour, which is held once a year in early May.



Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia prageri*. Picture by Stef Houben

Tour leader: Alexander Rukhaia
Trip report complete by: Alexander Rukhaia

SUMMARY

Sunday, 1st May: Since our Belgian friends are arriving in the afternoon, Matthew and I have a whole morning at our disposal. Where else can we spend this time more productively than in the Ponichala Forest Park... a stone's throw from Tbilisi. The local attractions here, as usual, are woodpeckers, and it doesn't take us long to find several **Middle Spotted**, **Lesser Spotted**, **Syrian**, **Black** and **European Green**. As we continue the walk, we see more birds - mostly common woodland species, including singing **Common Nightingales**, but also a few **Eurasian Hoopoes**, a couple of **Green Warblers**, and plenty of **Red-breasted Flycatchers**. A half-asleep **Eurasian Scops Owl**, snuggled up in a tree, is another bright event of the day! There are several reedy ponds, where **Great Reed** and **Sedge Warblers** sing, and **Little Bittern**, in his style, diligently tries to hide his presence, but not quite skillfully. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** is obviously not yet weaned from the winter feeding manner - still knocks on the reed stems in search of insects. **Night Herons** are quite numerous today, and **Purple Herons**, on the contrary, are only a couple, but posing well on a tree. In addition, **Garganeys**, **Eurasian Oystercatchers**, **Black-winged Stilts**, a single **Pygmy Cormorant** in flight along the river, and some other regular stuff. Soon our first **Levant Sparrowhawk** appears, and then another, and so on... at least 5 individuals, including one supposed pair that we spot in a tree. *No assumptions, but just a couple of days ago (on April 28th) Batumi Raptor Count reported an exceptional record of more than 1,000 individuals flying over Batumi.* We will return to them later, on our last day, but now it's time to meet Belgians at the airport.

The plane lands an hour later than scheduled, but the group is assembled in one piece. A short lunch break at the parking lot, and we are heading to the mountain town of Stepantsminda in Kazbegi. It's too late to expect any special activities after arrival, but we can at least count on seeing some birds along the way, we thought, but not quite, as the weather is clearly getting worse. It is already raining on the pass, but still some bird activity is in sight; **Rock Doves**, **Red-billed Choughs**, **Black Redstarts**, **Whinchats**, **Northern Wheatears**, **Water Pipits**, etc. Yes, and a **Least Weasel**.



Eurasian Scops Owl
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Levant Sparrowhawk
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia

Monday, 2nd May: We start early. The dense bushland around the water dam can be a great start to the day, but fog and drizzling rain limit visibility and, accordingly, opportunities. Nevertheless, we manage to see numerous **Red-backed Shrikes**, **Mountain Chiffchaffs**, **Ring Ouzels**, **Whinchats**, **Northern Wheatears**, **Dunnocks**, **Tree Pipits**, **Water Pipits** and some other common stuff, but the highlight of the morning is an adult male **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** - just 15 meters away from us on the ground, stooping on its prey and clutching it tightly in its claws. Shortly after, we change the location, starting our observations again with numerous **Mountain Chiffchaffs**, **Black Redstarts**, **Northern Wheatears** and **Water Pipits**, but soon a big flock of **Great Rosefinches** appears above our heads and lands nearby - The more cautious and distrustful ones prefer to stay at a safe distance perched on bushes, filling their mouths with sea buckthorn fruits, while the bolder ones, and mostly the gorgeous males, enjoy a meal in the wet grass. But, at the end, all of them are rather tame and cooperative. Sometimes the rain drips in our face, and from time to time we have to wipe our optics, but we are over the moon to have this fantastic show. Now, for the fullness of sensations, we lack only **Güldenstädt's Redstarts**, and here they are - male and female arrive just before we leave, and our breakfast is again postponed indefinitely. Well, it was a wonderful hour, despite the periodic rain.

After breakfast, we visit the Kuro Gorge on the outskirts of the town, but the view of the slopes significantly lacks the much-needed contrast - the wind, low clouds and rain ruin our plans to find **Caucasian Grouse**. To spite everything, we hear **Caucasian Snowcocks**, but we can't see anything. The neighboring gorge above looks better without clouds, and we move there. We find a secluded spot behind the chapel of the Fathers' Monastery. From here we can calmly scan the slopes, sheltering from the wind and little rain. Two distant birds fly to the left and soon land... far away even for the scopes. We can still say they are grouse, but they look no better than black dots. Soon we get on **Caucasian Snowcocks**. A lovely views of two birds sitting by a stream in the ravine, but we can obviously do better. We walk higher, to the observation deck. It made sense - poor lighting is compensated by the short distance and we can properly see all the details as one might wish. Since we constantly hear **Snowcocks** from different sides of the gorge, we certainly see more of them, and a more thorough exploration of the gorge rewards us with **Bearded Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture** and **Golden Eagle** in a planning flight against the backdrop of rocky slopes. **East Caucasian Tur**s are practically everywhere. Now each new observation of **Caucasian Grouse** is also getting better and better than previous one. The meadows surrounding us offer a pleasant view of various passerines, such as **Black Redstarts**, **Water** and **Red-throated Pipits**, **Twites**, etc.

A follow-up visit to the water dam after lunch leads to great views of a **Wallcreeper** and **White-throated Dipper**, but then, heavy rain forces us to return to the hotel for an unplanned break, but we enjoyed watching numerous **Mountain Chiffchaffs**, along with **Lesser Whitethroats** and other mini-birds in our green courtyard, opposite the living room. Meanwhile, Stef and Ward manage to see more **Great Rosefinches** and **Güldenstädt's Redstarts** during a self-guided stroll in the rain.

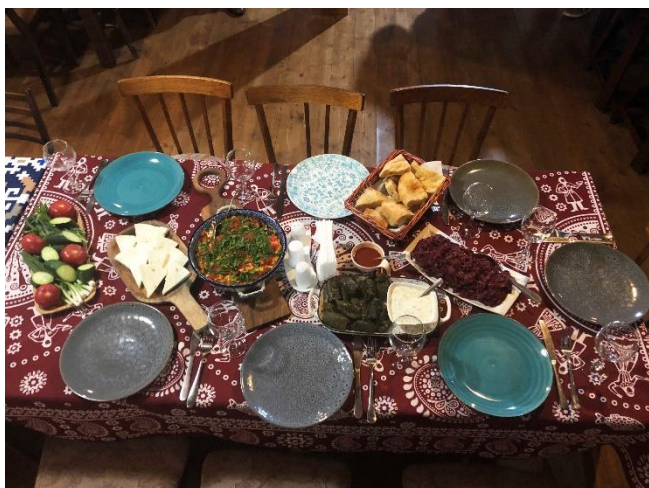
The rain stops, and we go out into the fresh air again, but suddenly a thick fog falls on the town, leaving us no choice but to stock up on beer and go back to the hotel for a forced rest. Why not, if the Caucasus's Big Five birds have been successfully achieved and are already 'in the pocket', as some say.



Great Rosefinch
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Terek River Valley
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Lunch
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia





Güldenstädt's Redstart
Picture by Stef Houben

Tuesday, 3rd May: Another outing before breakfast results in heartwarming views of several **Grouse** and **Snowcocks**, and a gorgeous male of a **Common Rock Thrush** was a constant presence around the lookout point. On top of all, we added a few **Bearded** and **Griffon Vultures**, as well as several **Alpine Choughs**, **Wallcreeper**, numerous **Black Redstarts**, a single male **Güldenstädt's Redstart**, **Common Rosefinches**, **Common Linnets**, **Red-fronted Serins**, etc., and, of course, the much-admired **East Caucasian Tur**... a medium-sized pack of at least 47 individuals. Breakfast is always tastier after such a pompous start!

The weather pleases with the bright, warming sun, and now we intend to visit the nearby Sno Valley on the way to the Kazgebi National Park. At first glance, the semi-artificial wooded wetland along the Snostskali River looks fairly attractive, with a lot of passerine movement in a grassy pitch, where we spot a single **Red-throated Pipit** among dozens of **Water Pipits**. Then, in the wooded area, we add another set of common birds; **Spotted Flycatchers**, **European Robin**, **Whinchat**, **Grey Wagtails**, **Rock Bunting**, and so on.

On the way back to Stepantsminda, we make a short stop in the riverside marshes along the road. **Dunnucks** can be heard singing from almost every bush, and, surprising enough, we spot one **Sedge Warbler** around a small branched pool, not much larger than an ordinary jacuzzi tub.

The weather is totally unpredictable. By the time we arrive in the town, it is getting quite windy, but now we are enjoying the blessed 'khinkali' – the traditional meat dumplings. Our lunch is interrupted by the sudden landing of transiting **European Rollers** - definitely one of the least likely species we would expect to see today. Jaak, who spots them through the window, lures us outside, and we find 2 birds nicely perched on the concrete ruins next to our café. *Then, Jaak, in his own style, tries to sneak up on the birds with his camera, and as a result he ultimately earns himself the nickname 'Jaak Attack' for the rest of the tour* 😊

Following the coffee at the end, we are ready to get on our tour bus and embark on a 15-minute journey to the Dariali Gorge near the Russian border, but we are now detained by the pleasant courtship of **Green Warblers** in a small forest stand next to the café. Apparently, this event turns out to be the main highlight of the evening, because due to the strong wind and heavy fog, we managed to see very little in Dariali – only a few **Coal Tits** and other stuff that we had already observed previously. Then a farewell feast, and Nao, our hostess, spoils us with her marvelous dinner again.



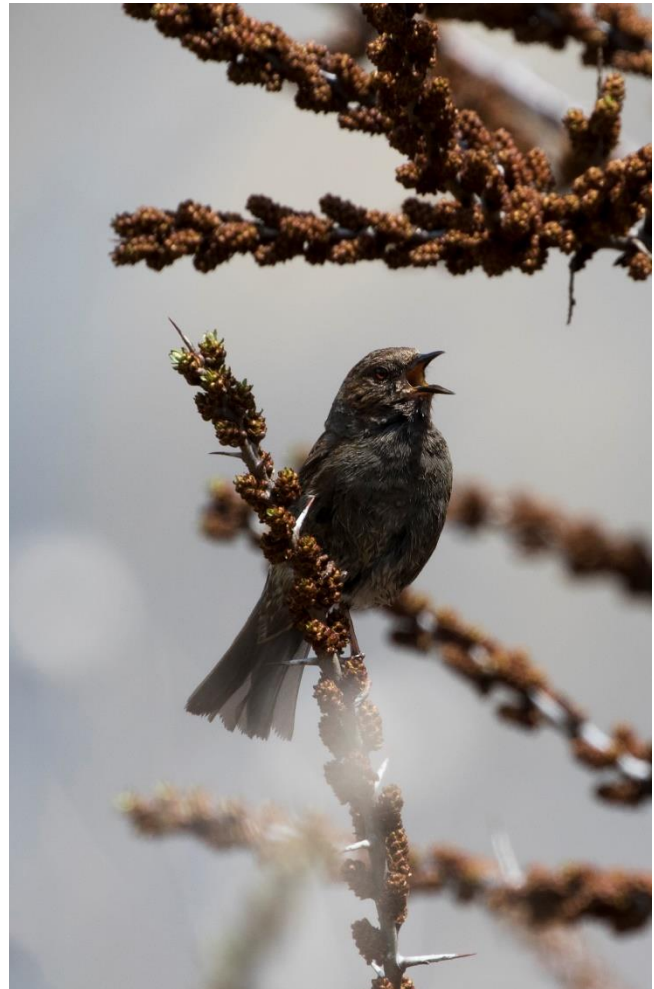
Common Rock Thrush
Picture by Stef Houben



Breakfast
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Our Group
Picture by Beka Burduli



Dunnock... singing
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Green Warbler
Picture by Stef Houben

Wednesday, 4th May: After breakfast, we head southwest towards Akhaltsikhe, a small town almost on the border with Turkey. It's a long but rather an entertaining journey with arrival by dinnertime. We make our first stop before reaching the mountain pass, near the entrance to the Truso Gorge. Here, in the vicinity of a half-abandoned Ossetian hamlet, at the foot of a high rocky wall, as expected, we find a pair of **Common Kestrels**, a few **Red-billed Choughs**, a small group of **Eurasian Crag Martins**, and a couple of **Red-fronted Serins**.

We drive further along the so-called former military road where fog and rain overtakes us, or rather we have entered the fog and rain zone, and as we drive higher, it clearly does not get better, except for periodic pauses, which we still manage to use quite successfully. At our next stop near the iron spring, we get on several **Black Redstarts**, **White-throated Dippers**, plenty of **Water Pipits** and a fairly large group of **Twites**, and, curiously, we also heard a **Caucasian Snowcock** a couple of times from the slopes above the cableway.

Then we make another stop near the highest point of the Cross Pass. Soon the cold almost freezes our hands and faces, but in the end we are rewarded with a few nice **Horned Larks** foraging in wet meadows along with **Water Pipits**. The next stop at the Gudauri Viewpoint, (sarcastically named the Russian-Georgian Friendship Monument), was supposed to reveal an **Alpine Accentors** and many other birds, plus a scenic mountain panorama over the deep ravine, but now it looks no better than Canadian Grand Banks for 200 days a year.

As we descend from the alpine zone and pass the next milestone of altitude, the temperature becomes warmer, and we gradually get rid of our warm layers. Its lunchtime, and we turn off the main road into the forest near the Ananuri Fortified Church. We combine our meal with pleasant birding, picking up **Middle Spotted** and **Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Willow Warbler**, singing **Mountain Chiffchaffs** and **Green Warblers**, **Eurasian Nuthatches**, a lot of **Red-breasted Flycatchers**, a nice male of a *samamisicus* **Common (Ehrenberg's) Redstart** one **Hawfinch**, and several others. In a few kilometers we make another, but rather shorter stop and add several migratory birds: one **Black Stork**, several **Black Kites**, one **European Roller**, a group of **European Bee-eaters**, etc.

The rest of the trip is mostly on wheels due to the rain, but the day ends with a wonderful candlelit dinner at the stylish Taba Hall Boutique Hotel.



Red-billed Chough
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Group Photo at the Gudauri Viewpoint
Picture by Beka Burduli

Thursday, 5th May: A cup of coffee at 5:30 and we're ready for a big adventure. This morning we are heading to the Zekari Pass, where, in theory, we are supposed to find **Caspian Snowcocks**, but heavy rain does not bode well. Without saying it out loud, we are all well aware of the scantiness of our chances, but a plan is a plan. After about 40 minutes, including one short stop along the way, when we spot a drenched **Eurasian Scops Owl** on a lamppost, we reach the entrance barrier gate of the Borjomi National Park. One of the rangers' offices is also located here. *I get out of the bus, climb the stairs, knock, and get soaked through before someone wakes up and opens the door. Finally, heavy footsteps are heard from the threshold, the light turns on, the door opens and the silhouette of a classic forester is drawn... and a smell of cheap cigarettes.* In short, due to the thick snow cover and several heavily damaged sections, the road to the pass is temporarily closed. Now that we have plenty of time left, we decide to wait out the rain and explore the forest parks in and around the village of Abastumani, a famous health resort a couple of kilometers away in the opposite direction.

We arrive at the place. The rain has subsided, but it's not fully dawn yet - it's time for a quick snack and hot coffee before getting to work. Taking advantage of the moment, we quickly extract a couple of **Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, numerous **Mountain Chiffchaffs** and **Green Warblers**, both **Lesser** and **Common Whitethroats**, **Common Nightingale**, **Common (Ehrenberg's) Redstart** and other regular woodland species, but the real highlight for us was a pair of very localized **European Serins**.

Driving back, we make one extended stop in the scrubby field. Heavy rain has obviously forced some birds to pause migration and we got to see large groups of **Western Yellow Wagtails**, as well as **Ortolan**, and especially **Black Headed Buntings**. A couple of **Cetti's Warblers** are also new for the trip. Meanwhile, several migrating raptors appear on the horizon - **Black Kites**, **European Honey Buzzards**, and at least 5 **Montagu's Harriers**, plus three other slim-winged harriers that remain unidentified due to distance and poor lighting, but presumably also Monty's.

Upon returning to the hotel in Akhaltsikhe, we check out, pick up our luggage left in the lobby, and after a cup of coffee, we head to Vardzia, our home for the next two nights. Whenever the rain allows, we make a short spontaneous stops here and there, and since we are now traveling along the river, **Armenian Gulls** are becoming an increasingly frequent sight. For lunch, we take shelter in a local café, which offers some of the nicest views of the Vardzia Cave Monastery, but since the rain leaves no chance for birding, after lunch we decide to check into the hotel, dry off and have a short siesta until the weather improves. Fortunately, our hotel is only 5 minutes away, a lovely, cozy place called Valodia's Cottages.

The rain stops just in time for the evening activity... a little sunlight breaks through the clouds, and the sounds of birds wake up everywhere again. There is no need to look far, but we can have a great time in the immediate vicinity of the hotel, where a number of valuable local species can be found. Several **Western Rock Nuthatches**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Whinchats**, **European Stonechats**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** and **Rock Buntings** are showing well in a small rocky gorge across the road. Meanwhile, an impressive migration of **European Honey Buzzards** unfolds over the opposite hill, lasting until sunset, or until the second wave of clouds and rain - at least 700 individuals according to our rough estimates, plus one single **Lesser Spotted Eagle**. As for the local raptors, all four **Bearded**, **Egyptian**, **Griffon** and **Cinereous Vultures**, and several **Golden Eagles** gave us a great close-up show, becoming a happy ending to this challenging day.



European Serin
Picture by Stef Houben



A Rock Bunting on the windshield of our car
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Friday, 6th May: Breakfast at dawn, and we set off on a short trip to the high-altitude lake Tabatskuri, where a small population of much localized **Velvet Scoters** lives, completely isolated from their northern relatives - the only surviving population of this species in the South Caucasus.

Halfway to the lake, our attention is drawn to the high activity of various birds of prey; **Western Marsh** and **Montagu's Harriers** are spectacularly maneuvering over agricultural fields, several **Common** and **European Honey Buzzards** are roosting on shelterbelt of trees along the road, while another part is already developing a kettle, ready to escape from the overhanging storm clouds. A light snowfall undoubtedly adds a bit of romance to this event ☺ Further along the way, the snowfall increases, as does the size of snowflakes. Such weather madness almost in the middle of May is just a complete paradox, which is also confirmed by the great surprise of the locals, *and the head of the project for the protection and conservation of Velvet Scoters, when I informed him about the current conditions ... and he makes a special note in his project diary.* It is what it is.

Before reaching the lake, we make a short stop along the boulder fields. There is also a shallow wetland and grassy marshes next to the artificial planting of a pine plot, where we come across a pair of so-called **Transcaucasian Cranes** (*archibaldi* subspecies of a **Common Crane**), several **White Storks**, a single **Purple Heron**, and other common aquatic birds. Later, we spot an eagle-like, large, dark raptor on a tree. Snowfall, limited light and wet feathers create identification challenges - our thoughts vary between **Lesser**

Spotted Eagle and **Long-legged Buzzard**... both species nest in this area, by the way, but after looking closely, taking a couple of pictures and seeing a bird in flight, we come to the reasoned conclusion that this is a **dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard**. A lucky encounter in any case.

Not the best conditions awaited us on the lake, but we still managed to see what we came for, plus **Mallards**, **Common Pochards**, **Armenian Gulls**, **White-winged Terns**, a single **Citrine Wagtail**, etc. Since it was quite damp, and the snow and fog did not really give a sense of comfort to our presence, soon after a cup of coffee, drunk with hands shaking from the cold, we packed up and went back to Vardzia. Having descended from the highlands and out onto a flat road, as if ordered, the weather radically changes and, accordingly, our mood. The gray clouds have been replaced by a bright warm sun, and we, of course, make a stop at the first opportunity, adding **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Eurasian Hobby** and **Peregrine Falcon** to the checklist.

Soon after that, we arrive in Vardzia, and without wasting the slightest minute, we begin to explore the possessions of the monastery complex. Starting from the lower reaches and boulder slopes on both sides of the trail, on a leisurely walk, we slowly climb the terraces of the cave town, where we meet **Red-backed** and **Woodchat Shrikes**, **Red-billed Choughs**, **Eurasian Crag Martins**, **Mountain Chiffchaffs**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Black Redstarts**, **Blue Rock Thrushes**, one *hemprichii* subspecies of a **Siberian Stonechat** (also known as **North Caspian Stonechat**), **Rock Sparrows**, **Red-fronted Serins**, **Rock** and **Ortolan Buntings**, and much more, as well as **Bearded**, **Griffon** and **Cinereous Vultures** again – we all have it easy. We close this day with another lovely dinner and homemade wine by the fireplace.



European Honey Buzzards
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia





Montagu's Harrier
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Montagu's Harrier
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Red-fronted Serins
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Black Redstart... singing
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Blue Rock Thrush
Picture by Stef Houben



Western Rock Nuthatch
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Saturday, 7th May: After an early breakfast, saying goodbye to our gracious hosts, we load into our bus and move on to conquer another famous ornithological region of the country. Today we have to make a long journey to eastern Georgia, but according to the plan, we have several extended stops along the way. First we need to get to the intersection on the main road leading towards Tbilisi. This is in a small town of Ninotsminda, in the vicinity of which there are several other protected alpine lakes of the so-called Javakheti Volcanic Plateau. We intend to visit only two of these lakes, plus other wetlands, but this is later.

The weather is good so far. We set off and in about half an hour we make a short unplanned stop near a garbage dump, where we observe a large mobilization of **Black Kites** and gulls, mostly **Armenians**... everywhere - in the air, on the meadow and on the power lines. Before that we had a few **Rosy Starlings** along the road, but it's a drop in the bucket, as we expect much larger groups in the east.

The next stop we make at a small roadside pond before reaching the town - a completely inconspicuous place in the middle of concrete ruins, probably some unfinished factory from the Soviet era, but criticism is definitely inappropriate after seeing its load of many different aquatic birds, including **Black-winged Stilts**, a single **Grey Plover**, and one **Little Bittern**. **Common Swifts**, **Barn Swallows** and **Common House Martins** are everywhere on all wetland sites today, as are **White-winged Terns**. Unfortunately, Matthew misses a **Lesser Grey Shrike**, but he nails it at the next spot, like many others in the coming days.

We arrive in Ninotsminda. To get to Khanchali Lake on the outskirts of the town, we need to drive a few hundred meters along the central road, then about 3 kilometers through narrow village streets and alleys, where **White Storks** nest on electric poles and roofs of houses.

The first thing we notice streaking across the lake is an exceptionally large number of **White-winged Terns** - at least 3000 according to our approximate, but fully democratic estimate. Everything else is fairly simple from this side of the shore, with mainly **Gadwalls**, **Mallards**, a good-looking male of a **Northern Pintail**, **Eurasian Teals**, **Common Pochards**, many **Eurasian Coots** and **Great Cormorants**, as usual, **Red-necked** and **Great Crested Grebes**, **Armenian Gulls**, **Black-crowned Night Herons**, several pairs of **Transcaucasian Cranes**, a few tens of **Western Marsh Harriers**, and other stuff. **Eurasian Skylarks** are common in the fields, and we also add a **Woodlark**, **Sand Martin**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Whinchats**, more than a hundred *feldegg* type **Western Yellow Wagtails**, **Tree** and **Red-throated Pipits**, numerous **Corn** and **Ortolan Buntings**, etc. Then, forming a semicircle, we move to the western shore to get a better look at the distant birds, which are difficult to identify

due to the ghostly shapes across the sun-hazed surface. These silhouettes turn out to be **Glossy Ibises**, **Squacco** and **Purple Herons**, **Western Cattle Egrets**, and **Dalmatian Pelicans**.

From here we head to Lake Bugdasheni, and during this short trip a strong wind rises, and then the rain begins. We escape from inclement weather in a picnic shelter next to the observation tower. The lake is now in a deep slumber. There are a couple of floating **Ruddy Shelducks**, and quite a number of mostly **Armenia Gulls** on a little island, but everything is rather deactivated, except for a few **Montagu's Harriers** in an epic struggle with fickle winds over the fields. In this situation, the fussiness of waders, and especially **Northern Lapwings**, looks suspicious, but it soon becomes clear why when Stef hits upon a **Saker Falcon** hiding in the short grass on the opposite bank.

Mission complete! After a quick lunch and a cup of coffee at an outdoor table, we are ready to move on. It rained heavily for most of the journey. Sometimes there were short pauses, but there was a mist. For more than 2 hours of a trip, we barely managed any successful birding. Then we arrive at the next planned location - a parcel of pine forest near the center of Tbilisi, where we intend to see **Krüper's Nuthatches**. We do it on the first attempt and find a pair right at the nest, but we do it carefully, from a distance, without disturbing the birds.

From here to the final destination in the village of Dedoplistskaro, where we will spend the next three nights, is about the same distance as from the last lake to Tbilisi. We arrive at the hotel right in time for dinner.



Little Bittern
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Krüper's Nuthatch
Picture by Stef Houben





White-winged Terns
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia

Sunday, 8th May: The sound of thunderbolts and rain at dawn make us get used to the idea that we are unlikely to return home with sparkling clean shoes today ☺ We move out after an early breakfast and make our way to the famous Chachuna Nature Reserve and Dali Reservoir. Due to poor visibility and partly muddled roads, we have to drive slowly. Sometimes the rain subsides, but still rarely any movement is noticed - all living things are in a stupor, trying to hide from the rain, like that **Black-headed Bunting** in the photo, under the crowns of young leaves. Soon we reach an olive plantation, next to which there is a so-called sheep pond – a small steppe lake, also used for watering a young olive plantation. On one side of the pond, even with the naked eye and through the fogged windows, one can see a small group of some waders, but in order to see them properly, we need to get out of a comfort zone. That's what we do - we step out of the bus, letting our shoes feel all the charm of the wet and sticky mud of the Taribana Plains, install our equipment and get down to business. These waders turned out to be **Black-winged Stilts, Common Ringed Plover, Ruffs, Wood Sandpiper, Common Greenshanks, Little Stints,** and one single **Temminck's Stint** to our great surprise.

Later, scanning the surroundings, in the depths, behind the plantation, we spot a pair of **Eastern Imperial Eagles** on an old electric pylon. It's still a long way from here. Approaching at least a couple of hundred meters would do the great job, but it's risky by bus - we can easily get stuck in the mud. Fearing to miss the only possible opportunity due to the weather, we decide to take this dirty and wet walk. Through the rain, slush and muddy path trodden by hundreds of sheep, we get to the right position and distance. All this is just for a few blissful minutes, but everyone is happy and satisfied. Returning back somehow, we diligently clean our shoes from a thick layer of dirt before boarding our aesthetic tour bus. Taking a short cut is no longer an option, so we return to the main road, also unpaved, but much more reliable, and continue our way towards the park. The irony is that after a couple of kilometers we meet another pair of **Eastern Imperial Eagles**. This time from a better distance and angle, right next to the road, and later we encounter two more others.

The rain has already stopped and the process is becoming more and more interesting. We are starting to enrich our list with such species as **Eurasian Hoopoes**, more and more **European Rollers, Eurasian Wryneck**, all three **Red-backed, Lesser Grey** and **Woodchat Shrikes, Greater Short-toed** and **Calandra Larks, Rosy Starlings**, quite a number of **Isabelline Wheatears** as usual, **Rock Sparrows, Western Yellow Wagtails, Red-throated Pipits**, plenty of **Corn Buntings** everywhere, not many **Ortolan Buntings**, but then **Black-headed Bunting** – quite frequent today.

Before reaching the reservoir, we were lucky enough to encounter feasting vultures, stripping the carcass of a sheep. It's hard to say how long ago the carcass got into their prey, but after our arrival they evaporated it in a matter of minutes. And yet, we were delighted with what we saw. There were at least, as we managed to count, 17 **Griffon** and 13 **Cinereous Vultures**. One of them even managed to steal the whole hind thigh, so the carcass obviously did not get to everyone. **Eurasian Magpies** were also allowed to eat some meager leftovers. Then **Eastern Imperial Eagles** suddenly appeared from somewhere, but they were definitely late for the feast. In short, it was our reward after the hard start of the day.

At the Dali Reservoir itself and in its surroundings, we mostly re-observed the same species as this morning, or on previous days of the tour, but there were also several new and especially target species, which is why we came here in fact. A **White-tailed Eagle** is a new species on our checklist, and while walking along the densely overgrown shore, we even heard a **Savi's Warbler**. It was picked up by Stef. Later during a picnic on the bridge, we enjoyed watching **Black Francolins**, however, as well as throughout the rest of the day. Singing males are real show-makers.

After lunch, we move on and relocate to the opposite side of the reservoir. Here we linger for some time, watching a small local colony of **Lesser Kestrels**. After, during the last walk along the rugged sand hills behind the reservoir, we find a pair of **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** and one not quite obvious light wheatear with a beautiful white triangle on its back, which we really wanted to christen a male **Finsch's**, but our conscience and the birder's code did not allow us ☺ Unfortunately, it was a fleeting observation from the wrong angle - we did not have the opportunity to see enough details and we do not have a photo, but it is interesting that, a few days after, a group of Dutch birders found a male **Finsch's Wheatear** in the same place and even managed to document it on a photo. The conclusions are up to the reader. It was getting dark... time to fly back to our cozy nest - Savannah Guesthouse, where the dinner table, as always, was covered with various local dishes.



Black-headed Bunting
Picture by Jaak Janssen





Griffon and Cinereous Vultures
Picture by Stef Houben



Lesser Kestrel
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Lesser Kestrel
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia

Monday, 9th May: The weather is great and we start this day with 5 **Red-necked Phalaropes** on a small pond, right at the exit of the village. A real surprise foreshadowing a great day. Today we are heading to the Vashlovani National Park. Our first destination is the so-called Black Mountain at the end of the last settlement in the east. We drive along vast plains and agricultural fields, and certainly make some interesting stops along the way - we don't want to miss anything interesting, while these places deserve special attention. During the first stop, we pick up a few **Common Quails** whistling under the cover of young wheat. **Crested Larks**, **Calandra Larks** and **Corn Buntings** are plentiful today, as are **Eurasian Hoopoes**. Almost all the lean trees along the road are dotted with **Eurasian Magpies** and a variety of passerines, but **Lesser Grey Shrikes** and **Black-headed Buntings** stand out from all of them. *The number of **Black-headed Buntings**, in turn, hits up at least 200 individuals, but for the whole day.*

It has almost completely dawned and the view of the peaks of the Greater Caucasus is gradually beginning to appear on the horizon. Then a huge flock of several hundred **Rosy Starlings** soars out of the field, eclipsing the entire scenery, or rather giving it a richer splash of colors.

After enjoying all the beauties, we continue on our way, but literally after a few hundred meters we stumble upon a large raptor. Since the bird is sitting against the sun, we find it difficult to determine the species, but as soon as it flies to another tree, in a more open and consecrated place, everything falls into place - another **dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard**. There were later other Long-legged Buzzards, including one individual with pale plumage. We also added a few **Montagu's Harriers**, an **Egyptian Vulture** and two **Eastern Imperial Eagles**. One of them circled so close above us that we even gasped with delight.

Soon after, we arrive at Black Mountain and quickly find several **Common Pheasants**. From here we continue our way towards the central part of the park and the Pantishara Gorge. On the way we meet a couple of **Little Owls**, several **European Rollers**, another *hemprichii* type **Siberian Stonechat**, and others.

We are almost there, but before driving down to the sandy canyons, we take a short break for lunch near the observation deck, which offers beautiful views of the entire Pantishara Gorge. Both **Griffon** and **Cinereous Vultures**, **Short-toed Snake Eagles**, and **Peregrine Falcon** - all this during lunch, plus several dozen **Alpine Swifts**. Coffee, a keepsake photo, and we start exploring the gorge. A leisurely walk in such a beautiful place brings us **Chukar Partridges**, **European Turtle Doves**, **Eastern Orphean Warblers**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Rock Buntings**, **Ortolan Buntings**, and much more.

While returning home, and it was already quite dark when we drove into our village, right in front of our minibus, an unidentified flying object spilled across the road ☺ Well, it was a large owl, the details of which were impossible to see. Knowing the species of this area, we can only speculate around the **Short-eared Owl**, but these are just guesses and assumptions.



Red-necked Phalaropes
Picture by Stef Houben



Rosy Starlings
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Rosy Starlings
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Rosy Starlings
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Dark-morph Long-legged Buzzard
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



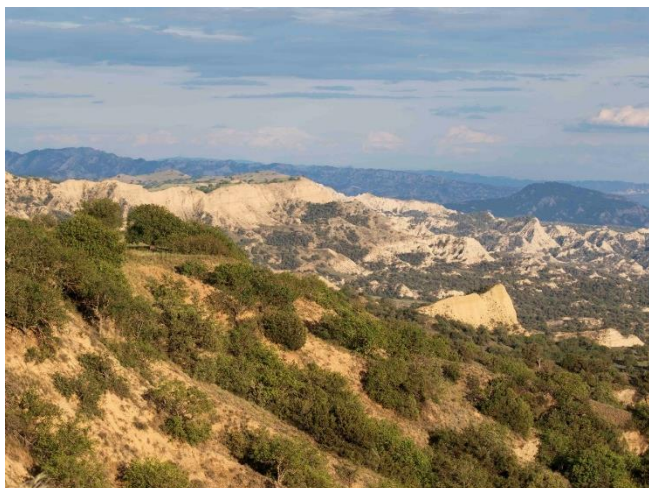
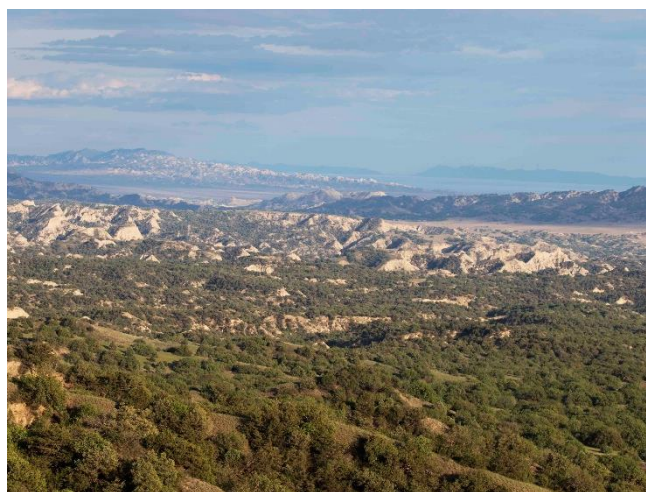
Long-legged Buzzard
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Eastern Imperial Eagle
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Egyptian Vulture
Picture by Stef Houben



Caucasian Agama
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia

Tuesday, 10th May: This is the final day and we are returning back to the capital through the monastery of David Gareji, but besides that we have planned to visit a couple of other locations along the way. We leave after breakfast and arrive at the monastery in about a couple of hours. Even though it's Tuesday, it's still crowded as always - mostly visiting tourists. However, this does not prevent us from having a good time. We take a walk in a relaxed manner around the surroundings of the monastery, step by step picking up such birds as **Chukar Partridges**, **Eurasian Hoopoes**, **European Rollers**, **European Bee-eaters**, all three **Red-backed**, **Lesser Grey** and **Woodchat Shrikes**, **Eurasian Golden Orioles**, **Eastern Orphean Warblers**, **Rosy Starlings**, numerous **Black-headed Buntings**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** and a pair of **Pied Wheatears**, plus several raptors, such as **Griffon** and **Cinereous Vultures**, **Steppe Eagle**, etc.

After the walk, we have a short picnic and move on. The steppe fields along the dirt road are crowded with **Crested** and **Calandra Larks**, **Corn Buntings**, but we arrange a real hunt for **Greater Short-toed Larks** in the hope of finding a **Turkestan Short-toed Lark** among them. We managed to find a couple of birds, but it was a very brief observation before they finally disappeared into the grass. Such fields usually attract a lot of harriers too, and today we saw quite a number of **Monty's**. We also added some **Isabelline Wheatears** - the last pair in almost the same place where we found a **European Hare**.

Now, through the industrial town of Rustavi, 30 kilometers from Tbilisi, we go out onto the main highway, and then after 10 minutes we arrive at the Ponichala Forest Park. We simply repeat the same standard route as Matthew and I did on the first day and immediately find, this time, a whole pair of **Eurasian Scops Owls** - in the same place. Then we also find a **Levant Sparrowhawk**. To top it all off, of course, we have added several other woodland birds, including **Middle Spotted** and **Syrian Woodpeckers**. Everything is done qualitatively.

The job is done, but before we go to the hotel, we need to visit another forest park located less than an hour's drive from Tbilisi, but there is not much time. It starts to rain, but fortunately it doesn't last long. We arrive, enter the park and begin to examine all the branches and all the holes of all the trees. We are focused around a single species – a **Semicollared Flycatcher**. Having searched the whole park, and it's not too big, we finally reach the goal. Now we are enjoying a stunning view of two birds for the next half hour... in fact, until sunset.

Then there was a farewell dinner and all that. Belgian guys stayed for another couple of days and even visited Lake Kumisi, while Matthew stayed even longer, probably arranging a wonderful Georgian vacation.



Pied Wheatear
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Pied Wheatear
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



European Hare
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Levant Sparrowhawk
Picture by Stef Houben



Semicollared Flycatcher
Picture by Alexander Rukhaia



Caucasian Squirrel
Picture by Stef Houben

Annotated List of Birds

Developed on the basis of the IOC World Bird List (v 12.1) 2022,
The names of subspecies used mainly for the breeding birds.

Observation status code:

Number = quantity seen and counted
 Number + = more than mentioned quantity seen (roughly counted)
 n/f = numerous or frequently observed (uncounted)
 H number = heard a certain amount, but not seen
 H s = heard several, but not seen
 (m) = male
 (f) = female

Total = **199 species; 197 seen and 2 heard**

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
Anatidae		Swans, Geese & Ducks										
1	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Ruddy Shelduck							2		2	2
2	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	Garganey	5									
3	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	Northern Shoveler	6								10	
4	<i>Mareca strepera strepera</i>	Gadwall							4			
5	<i>Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard						10	10			
6	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Northern Pintail							1 m			
7	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Eurasian Teal							2		1	
8	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Common Pochard						2	10			
9	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	Velvet Scoter						4				
Phasianidae		Pheasants & Allies										
10	<i>Lyrurus mlokosiewiczi</i>	Caucasian Grouse		5	19							
11	<i>Phasianus colchicus colchicus</i>	Common Pheasant	H2								4	
12	<i>Francolinus francolinus francolinus</i>	Black Francolin								6 m		
13	<i>Tetraogallus caucasicus</i>	Caucasian Snowcock		5	4	Hs						
14	<i>Coturnix coturnix coturnix</i>	Common Quail									5	
15	<i>Alectoris chukar kleini</i>	Chukar Partridge									8	5
Apodidae		Swifts										
16	<i>Tachymarptis melba melba</i>	Alpine Swift	1				2	1			50+	
17	<i>Apus apus apus</i>	Common Swift	10			n/f	10	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f
Cuculidae		Cuckoos										
18	<i>Cuculus canorus canorus</i>	Common Cuckoo	2	2	1	H1	2	2	4	2	1	2
Columbidae		Pigeons & Doves										
19	<i>Columba livia livia</i>	Rock Dove	3	n/f	n/f	n/f		n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
20	<i>Columba oenas oenans</i>	Stock Dove					27			6	3+	
21	<i>Columba palumbus columbus</i>	Common Wood Pigeon								3	6	3
22	<i>Streptopelia turtur turtur</i>	European Turtle Dove									4	
23	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Eurasian Collared Dove	3						2	4	8	n/f
24	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	Laughing Dove					1					
Rallidae		Rails, Crakes & Coots										
25	<i>Rallus aquaticus aquaticus</i>	Water Rail	H2									
26	<i>Gallinula chloropus chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	5							1		
27	<i>Fulica atra atra</i>	Eurasian Coot						15	n/f			
Gruidae		Cranes										
28.1	<i>Grus grus archibaldi</i>	Transcaucasian Common Crane						2	8			
Podicipedidae		Grebes										
29	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis ruficollis</i>	Little Grebe								6		1
30	<i>Podiceps grisegena grisegena</i>	Red-necked Grebe							20			
31	<i>Podiceps cristatus cristatus</i>	Great Crested Grebe						n/f	n/f			
Haematopodidae		Oystercatchers										
32	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian Oystercatcher	6									
Recurvirostridae		Stilts & Avocets										
33	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	12						13	22		
Charadriidae		Plovers										
34	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Northern Lapwing							10			
35	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover							1			
36	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Common Ringed Plover								1	1	1
Scolopacidae		Sandpipers & Snipes										
37	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	Ruff							7	27	15	
38	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	Temminck's Stint								1		
39	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Little Stint								21		
40	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	3		2				1		1	
41	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Green Sandpiper			1			1	2		2	
42	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper							4	1	2	
43	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common Greenshank								2		
44	<i>Gallinago gallinago gallinago</i>	Common Snipe	1									
45	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Red-necked Phalarope									5	
Laridae		Gulls, Terns & Skimmers										
46	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull	7						15			
47	<i>Larus armenicus</i>	Armenian Gull	2				n/f	n/f	n/f	1		40+
48	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Gull-billed Tern							10			
49	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern	6					1				
50	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	White-winged Tern						24	3000	11	3	
Ciconiidae		Storks										

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
51	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Black Stork				1					1	
52	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	White Stork						7	60+			1
Phalacrocoracidae		Cormorants & Shags										
53	<i>Microcarbo pygmaeus</i>	Pygmy Cormorant	1									
54	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant	2				n/f	n/f	n/f			1
Threskiornithidae		Ibises & Spoonbills										
55	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy Ibis							36			
Ardeidae		Hérons & Bitterns										
56	<i>Ixobrychus minutus minutus</i>	Little Bittern	1						1			
57	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Black-crowned Night Heron	16						20+			10+
58	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Squacco Heron						1	2			
59	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Western Cattle Egret							13+			
60	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Heron	3					2	n/f			
61	<i>Ardea purpurea purpurea</i>	Purple Heron	2					1	3			1
62	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great Egret								1		
63	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	17						15+			
Pelecanidae		Pelicans										
64	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	Dalmatian Pelican							14			
Accipitridae		Kites, Hawks & Eagles										
65	<i>Gypaetus barbatus barbatus</i>	Bearded Vulture		1	2		2	1				
66	<i>Neophron percnopterus percnopterus</i>	Egyptian Vulture					3				1	
67	<i>Gyps fulvus fulvus</i>	Griffon Vulture		4	6		10	1		17	3	6
68	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Cinereous Vulture					1	1		13	3	2
69	<i>Circaetus gallicus gallicus</i>	Short-toed Snake Eagle						1			3	
70	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>	Lesser Spotted Eagle					1					
71	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	Steppe Eagle										1
72	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	Eastern Imperial Eagle								6	2	
73	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden Eagle		1			4					
74	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	Levant Sparrowhawk	5									1
75	<i>Accipiter nisus nisus</i>	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	1	2	1	1		2	2		1	1
76	<i>Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus</i>	Western Marsh Harrier	1				1	25	30+	1	2	1
77	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Montagu's Harrier		1			5	4	3		6	10
78	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Black Kite			1	4	7	1	40+	1	1	2
79	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla albicilla</i>	White-tailed Eagle								1		
80	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	European Honey Buzzard					700+	65+				3
81	<i>Buteo rufinus rufinus</i>	Long-legged Buzzard						2		1	6	2
82	<i>Buteo buteo menetriesi</i>	Common Buzzard		1	2		2	50+	30+	2	2	11
82.1	<i>B. b. vulpinus</i>	Steppe Buzzard		1	1		1					
Strigidae		Owls										
83	<i>Athene noctua indigena</i>	Little Owl									2	

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
84	<i>Otus scops scops</i>	Eurasian Scops Owl	1				1			H1		2
	Upupidae	Hoopoes										
85	<i>Upupa epops epops</i>	Eurasian Hoopoe	4		1		2	3	3	3	10	6
	Coraciidae	Rollers										
86	<i>Coracias garrulous garrulous</i>	European Roller			2	1	1	3		17	30+	15
	Meropidae	Bee-eaters										
87	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	European Bee-eater	34			30+				Hs	15+	n/f
	Picidae	Woodpeckers										
88	<i>Jynx torquilla torquilla</i>	Eurasian Wryneck								1		
89	<i>Dendrocoptes medius caucasicus</i>	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	4			H1						3
90	<i>Dryobates minor colchicus</i>	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1									
91	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus transcaucasicus</i>	Syrian Woodpecker	7									2
92	<i>Dendrocopos major tenuirostris</i>	Great Spotted Woodpecker				1	2					1
93	<i>Dryocopus martius martius</i>	Black Woodpecker	2									
94	<i>Picus viridis karelini</i>	European Green Woodpecker	2					1				1
	Falconidae	Falcons										
95	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Lesser Kestrel								8		1
96	<i>Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus</i>	Common Kestrel		2	1	2			3	2	6	3
97	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Eurasian Hobby	3				1	1		1		
98	<i>Falco cherrug cherrug</i>	Saker Falcon							1			
99	<i>Falco peregrinus brookei</i>	Peregrine Falcon						1			1	
	Laniidae	Shrikes										
100	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Red-backed Shrike		1		1	3	8	10+	4	5	15+
101	<i>Lanius minor</i>	Lesser Grey Shrike		1	1				2	3	20+	7+
102	<i>Lanius senator niloticus</i>	Woodchat Shrike						2	2	2	5	6+
	Oriolidae	Orioles										
103	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Eurasian Golden Oriole	H5							1	3	5
	Corvidae	Crows & Jays										
104	<i>Garrulus glandarius krynicki</i>	Eurasian Jay	7			4	1				2	3+
105	<i>Pica pica bactriana</i>	Eurasian Magpie	n/f			n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f
106	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax docilis</i>	Red-billed Chough	1			4+	2	2				
107	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus graculus</i>	Alpine Chough		7	n/f							
108	<i>Coloeus monedula soemmerringii</i>	Western Jackdaw					65+	n/f	n/f			
109	<i>Corvus frugilegus frugilegus</i>	Rook						1				20+
110	<i>Corvus cornix sharpii</i>	Hooded Crow	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	2	n/f	
111	<i>Corvus corax corax</i>	Northern Raven	2	n/f	n/f	n/f	4	6	2		2	n/f
	Paridae	Tits										
112	<i>Parus ater michalowskii</i>	Coal Tit		2	3	3	2	4				
113	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus satunini</i>	Eurasian Blue Tit			1	1		1				1
114	<i>Parus major major</i>	Great Tit	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f		1	1	3

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
Aegithalidae		Bushtits										
115	<i>Aegithalos caudatus major</i>	Long-tailed Tit			2		Hs					
Alaudidae		Larks										
116	<i>Lullula arborea pallida</i>	Woodlark					H1		1			
117	<i>Alauda arvensis cantarella</i>	Eurasian Skylark						n/f	n/f			
118	<i>Galerida cristata caucasica</i>	Crested Lark								n/f	n/f	n/f
119	<i>Eremophila alpestris penicillata</i>	Horned Lark				6						
120	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla artemisiana</i>	Greater Short-toed Lark								3		15+
121	<i>Melanocorypha calandra calandra</i>	Calandra Lark								30+	100+	30+
122	<i>Alaudala heinei heinei</i>	Turkestan Short-toed Lark										2
Hirundinidae		Swallows & Martins										
123	<i>Riparia riparia riparia</i>	Sand Martin							1			
124	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	Eurasian Crag Martin			1	10		n/f				
125	<i>Hirundo rustica rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	n/f		2	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f
126	<i>Delichon urbicum urbicum</i>	Common House Martin	n/f			2	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	
Cettiidae		Cettia Bush Warblers & Allies										
127	<i>Cettia cetti cetti</i>	Cetti's Warbler					2	1	H1			
Phylloscopidae		Leaf Warblers & Allies										
128	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Willow Warbler	2	2		1	1	3	2	1		
129	<i>Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzii</i>	Mountain Chiffchaff		17	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f				
130	<i>Phylloscopus collybita caucasicus</i>	Common Chiffchaff						2				
131	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>	Green Warbler	2		3	H2	2					
Acrocephalidae		Reed Warblers & Allies										
132	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus arundinaceus</i>	Great Reed Warbler	2							H2		
133	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Sedge Warbler	H2		1				1			
Locustellidae		Grassbirds & Allies										
134	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	Savi's Warbler								H1		
Sylviidae		Sylviid Babblers										
135	<i>Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla</i>	Eurasian Blackcap	1		1	Hs	1					1
136	<i>Curruca curruca curruca</i>	Lesser Whitethroat		5			2	1	1		2	2
137	<i>Curruca crassirostris crassirostris</i>	Eastern Orphean Warbler									2	3
138	<i>Curruca communis communis</i>	Common Whitethroat	1				1	2			1	
Regulidae		Crests										
139	<i>Regulus regulus buturlini</i>	Goldcrest					1					
Troglodytidae		Wrens										
140	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes hyrcanus</i>	Eurasian Wren	1				1	1				
Sittidae		Nuthatches										
141	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>	Krüper's Nuthatch							2			
142	<i>Sitta neumayer neumayer</i>	Western Rock Nuthatch					3	1			1	
143	<i>Sitta europaea caucasica</i>	Eurasian Nuthatch				2						2

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
	Tichodromidae	Wallcreeper										
144	<i>Tichodroma muraria muraria</i>	Wallcreeper		1	1							
	Certhiidae	Treecreepers										
145	<i>Certhia familiaris caucasica</i>	Eurasian Treecreeper			1							
	Sturnidae	Starlings										
146	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	Rosy Starling	n/f					1	5	77	300+	200+
147	<i>Sturnus vulgaris caucasicus</i>	Common Starling					8	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f
	Turdidae	Thrushes										
148	<i>Turdus philomelos philomelos</i>	Song Thrush		Hs		H1	1	1				
149	<i>Turdus viscivorus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush		2	1							
150	<i>Turdus merula aterrimus</i>	Common Blackbird	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	2	2	3+
151	<i>Turdus torquatus amicornum</i>	Ring Ouzel	6	19		2						
	Muscicapidae	Chats & Old World Flycatchers										
152	<i>Muscicapa striata neumanni</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	2		2		3	2	2	1		7
153	<i>Erithacus rubecula caucasicus</i>	European Robin			1	2						
154	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos africana</i>	Common Nightingale	3	H1			1			1	1	Hs
155	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	Red-breasted Flycatcher	30			2		H1				2
156	<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	Semicollared Flycatcher										2
157	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros ochruros</i>	Black Redstart	2	n/f	n/f	3		2	1 f			
158	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisticus</i>	Common (Ehrenberg's) Redstart									2	
159	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogastrus erythrogastrus</i>	Güldenstädt's Redstart		5	1							
160	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	Common Rock Thrush			1							
161	<i>Monticola solitarius solitarius</i>	Blue Rock Thrush					1	3				
162	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Whinchat	2	5	1		2	2	4		4	1
163	<i>Saxicola rubicola rubicola</i>	European Stonechat					2				1	
	164.1 <i>Saxicola maurus hemprichii</i>	Siberian (North Caspian) Stonechat						1			1	
165	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe libanotica</i>	Northern Wheatear	3	n/f	n/f	n/f		1	2			2
166	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	Isabelline Wheatear								9	2	4
167	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>	Eastern Black-eared Wheatear					2			2		5
168	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	Pied Wheatear										2
	Cinclididae	Dippers										
169	<i>Cinclus cinclus caucasicus</i>	White-throated Dipper		1		4	1					
	Passeridae	Old World Sparrows										
170	<i>Petronia petronia exigua</i>	Rock Sparrow						11		2	1	
171	<i>Passer montanus transcaucasicus</i>	Eurasian Tree Sparrow					15	3	3			8+
172	<i>Passer hispaniolensis transcaspicus</i>	Spanish Sparrow								n/f		
173	<i>Passer domesticus (ssp uncertain)</i>	House Sparrow		2	1	8	2	1			7	5
	Prunellidae	Accentors										
174	<i>Prunella modularis obscura</i>	Dunnock		n/f	n/f	2		1				
	Motacillidae	Wagtails & Pipits										

N	Family Scientific Name		English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
175	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>		Western Yellow Wagtail					30			4		
	175.1	<i>M. f. thunbergi</i>	Grey-headed Wagtail						8	2			
	175.2	<i>M. f. feldegg</i>	Black-headed Wagtail						n/f	200+			
176	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>		Citrine Wagtail						1				
177	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		Grey Wagtail		1	5	1	1					
178	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>		White Wagtail	n/f	2	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f			1
179	<i>Anthus campestris</i>		Tawny Pipit										1
180	<i>Anthus trivialis trivialis</i>		Tree Pipit		Hs			n/f		2			
181	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>		Red-throated Pipit		7	1		H1	1	4	2	H1	
182	<i>Anthus spinoletta coutellii</i>		Water Pipit	27	n/f	n/f	n/f		n/f				
Fringillidae			Finches										
183	<i>Fringilla coelebs coelebs</i>		Common Chaffinch	Hs		n/f	n/f	n/f					n/f
184	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes nigricans</i>		Hawfinch				1					1	
185	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula rossikowi</i>		Eurasian Bullfinch		4								
186	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus kubanensis</i>		Common Rosefinch			2	1						
187	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla rubicilla</i>		Great Rosefinch		21								
188	<i>Chloris chloris bilkevitchi</i>		European Greenfinch	Hs					2		1	n/f	
189	<i>Linaria flavirostris brevirostris</i>		Twite		2		30						
190	<i>Linaria cannabina cannabina</i>		Common Linnet		10	2			18	1			1
191	<i>Carduelis carduelis brevirostris</i>		European Goldfinch		2	2	Hs	3	n/f	n/f	4	4	6
192	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>		Red-fronted Serin		H1	4	2	H1	12				
193	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		European Serin					2					
Emberizidae			Buntings										
194	<i>Emberiza calandra calandra</i>		Corn Bunting		1		n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f	n/f
195	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		Yellowhammer		H1	H1							
196	<i>Emberiza cia prageri</i>		Rock Bunting			1		6	4			2	
197	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>		Ortolan Bunting					15	29	30+	3	2	
198	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		Black-headed Bunting					40			30+	200+	25+
199	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus caspia</i>		Common Reed Bunting	1									

Birds that are not on the list

N	Family Scientific Name		English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	
1			Unidentified (slim-winged) Harrier					3					
2			Unidentified (small) Falcon										1
3			Unidentified (b-and-w) Wheatear								1		
4			Unidentified (large) Owl									1	

Mammals

N	Family Scientific Name	English Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
1	<i>Capra cylindricornis</i>	East Caucasian Tur		24	47							
2	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red Fox							1			
3	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	Least Weasel	1									
4	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Red Squirrel		2								
5	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>	Caucasian Squirrel										1
6	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	European Hare										1

Thank you for reading our report.

We wish you strong health and good birding!



Birding Adventures Caucasuswide

www.birdingcaucasus.com
 info@birdingcaucasus.com
 +995 557 900909

Or find us also on Facebook & Twitter: @BirdingCaucasus