

Tien Shan

Spring in Heaven

A Greentours Natural History Holiday

14th – 26th April 2005

Lead by Vladimir Kolbintsev and Phil Benstead

Daily report compiled by Phil Benstead and Vladimir Kolbintsev (last three days)

Day 1 14th April Journey to Almaty

We all met up at Amsterdam airport en route to Almaty. Our flights to Amsterdam had all gone well but now unfortunately we spent three hours sitting in the plane on the tarmac whilst the groundcrew effected some repairs. Inevitably it was a late arrival at Almaty but Vlad and Sascha were there to greet us with smiles on their faces. We were whisked to the hotel and discovered with great joy that Kazakstan had failed to adopt daylight saving in 2005 (reason unknown) – which meant an extra hour in bed!

Day 2 15th April Almaty to Merke Sanitorium

A late breakfast was taken before we took to the road, battling the traffic chaos of this increasingly busy city. The sun was shining and before long we became aware of the presence of the Tien Shan – which looked fantastic having been given a fresh coat of snow just the day before. After about an hour we stopped for the first of many tulip species (*Tulipa kolpakowskiana*), also here our first long-legged buzzard and a few swallows batted past. A little later a roadside flock of 300+ demoiselle cranes had us piling out again to stand and admire these birds before they took to the air and resumed their migration. These large flocks of cranes were to become a daily occurrence in the steppe as the entire population migrates from the wintering grounds to the breeding grounds at this time of year. Also here we found a variety of waders and ducks, corn bunting sang from various low perches.

The road continued arrowing along always with the Tien Shan to our left, roadside elms contained many active rookeries and the smaller, but no less densely packed nests of the Spanish sparrow – the latter still empty and waiting the return of their occupants from warmer climes to the south. Lunch was taken at the Kordoï Pass where we enjoyed *Corydalis shanginii*, *Tulipa buchseana* and the lovely iris *Juno kusakevichii*. Birds were scarce here but we had a surprise lammergier, a few black kites and demoiselle cranes on migration and a pied wheatear. Driving on we headed to the other side of the pass where we spent an hour wandering a slope covered in *Tulipa ostrowskiana*

and hybrids with *kolpakowskiana*. Finally it was time to head to our next hotel – the Merke Sanatorium. We arrived at dusk and settled into our quirky rooms and headed for dinner. Once again we slept well barely noticing the occasional call of a scops-owl.

Day 3 16th April Merke Sanatorium to Dzhabagly

Another beautiful day dawned. We could not believe our luck. Before breakfast Ron and Phil took an early morning walk around the grounds – quite a few birds evident many common European species such as blackbird, mistle thrush, chaffinch and brambling but every now and then something very Asian would appear. A brown dipper fed young in nest under one of the bridges. Blue whistling thrushes defended their territories with vigour and best of all a pair of yellow-breasted tits searched the trees near the hotel for food. The whole area was dripping with ‘grey-headed’ greenfinches which certainly added colour.

After breakfast we loaded the bus and headed up the valley on a reasonable dirt road. Eventually we stopped and took to our feet and Vlad led us up a nearby side-valley. Here we were fortunate in seeing many *Tulipa zenaidae* – a species that Vlad is only occasionally able to show people. Also here we saw another new tulip *biflora*. Over the valley three Himalayan griffon vultures hung effortlessly in the air, and later we also saw our first pair of golden eagles. Heading back down into the flat steppe we could not resist a photo stop that allowed us to shoot a carpet of *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* against the snow-covered mountains.

We interrupted our drive for lunch in a field covered in *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* which produced a few new birds including our first Siberian stonechat and good views of isabelline shrike. Another stop later on the very edge of the Muyun-kum desert produced another tulip – *binutans* – that had nearly finished flowering. Also here were some splendid *Iris tenuifolia* and a surprise wryneck. The show was effectively stolen by the reptiles though and we saw two nice rapid runners and one steppe agama before we had to drag ourselves away. It was time to drive on to to Dzhabagly, we made a few stops once for a single roadside *Tulipa greigii* – yet another new tulip – and again briefly in the Karatau. Poor old Sasha got pulled over for speeding both sides of Taras and must of shelled out most of his wages for the two days in fines! [I hasten to add that at no point did we think he was driving fast].

Soon we were in the outskirts of Dzhabagly and our two days on the Silk Road were over, those with romantic notions of this route had come to appreciate the truly ironic nature of its title – it is anything but smooth! On arrival we were greeted by Yevgeny and settled into our rooms quickly before heading for a well-earned dinner and the first checklist session. Outside the weather stayed fine, Jupiter showed well in the night sky and the air filled with the calls of central asian green toad and scops-owl.

Day 4 17th April Taldibulak Valley

Another fine day and dawn saw Ron and Phil again taking an early morning walk before breakfast. Not much doing birdwise but good to have a nose around before the village woke up. We did get

great views of laughing dove and a few chiffchaff were around too. It was also pleasant just to watch the tree sparrows as they clumped together in the cool of the early morning.

After breakfast and a short wait for the necessary permit, we took to our feet for a walk up the Taldibulak Valley. The villagers greeted us as we picked our way out of town and many photographs were taken. Walking up the grassy slope to the foothills we passed evidence of an Iron Age settlement which included a splendid gaming stone. Before long we were climbing into the valley and soon came across our first *Korolkovia severzovii*. As we made the first of three stream crossings we disturbed a dipper which flashed downstream calling indignantly.

We climbed up through the old orchard to the steep slope behind for yet more tulips. Stopping halfway up for a breather we sat and admired the landscape below us and around us. Golden eagle, lammergier, long-legged buzzard, common buzzard, sparrowhawk and black vulture all cruised the skies during this short stop! Continuing on we found a slope covered in *Tulipa greigii* and then wandered down into the bottom of the small valley where we found some equally splendid *Tulipa kaufmanniana*. Nearby areas recently revealed by snow melt were covered with the nodding flowerheads of *Gymnospermum albertii*. Walking back through the rather thorny scrub we made it back to the shade of the orchard where we waited for the lunch horse to deliver our victuals. Whilst we waited we saw greenish warbler and yellow-breasted azure tit and some of us even had a little nap. It really was a splendid spring day.

After lunch we continued walking up the main valley and quickly came across a splendid male Camberwell Beauty patrolling its beat up and down and defending it against all comers. Also here we had another *Corydalis*, the delicate *glaucescens* and yet another tulip – *bifloriformis*. But there was more to come as higher up we found a small patch of *Tulipa turkestanica* – our tenth tulip of the trip and all in flower! Reaching snow we turned back, after posing for a few photos and headed back down, the multiple river crossing once again testing our balance and coordination. And so to dinner!

Day 5 18th April Karasai Gorge, Berkera and a lake nearby

This morning we took the bus, ably driven by Abu Hassim and explored a bit further afield. Again the weather was fantastic and sun cream and hats were the order of the day. Our first stop was by the railway where we looked a colony of *Corydalis sewerzovii* that was just past its best but good to see all the same. Later we stopped for an osprey near Ters Lake before stopping again at the Kujuk Pass. Here a fine showing of the delicate yellow *Juno orchioides* was evident, and as we snapped away with our cameras yet another flock of demoiselle cranes made their way noisily north.

Our first real destination was the Karasai Gorge, here we drove off the main road and headed over the rolling grassy steppe until we reached the start of the small gorge which is completely hidden from the road. Here we had a pleasant walk quickly seeing the target *ainii* subspecies of *Corydalis shangini* and then spending some time looking for the special birds that are found here. We quickly located eastern rock nuthatch at its impressive mud nest. The adults were obviously busy feeding young and not difficult to see at all. The nest resembled a miniature mud volcano stuck to a

rockface and is a structure passed down through the generations. Also here we saw short-toed eagle, Egyptian vulture and tawny pipit as well as migrant redstart and isabelline shrike.

Driving ever onwards the road deteriorated rapidly and we bumped along to Berkera, arriving at lunchtime. The usual spread appeared and we retired to the 'blue pavilion' to eat it in the shade. Berkera is an odd place – a former soviet children's camp that is slowly falling into disrepair. The grounds are pleasant though and it was very evident that spring was much further advanced here than elsewhere – evidence of a favourable micro-climate perhaps influenced by the proximity of the nearby lake. After lunch we trekked up the valley behind the grounds and had a great walk in the blazing sun. Vlad showed us wild apple species, wild pears and almonds. Marit showed us a splendid dice snake that quickly slipped into the river and was off before Vlad could get his hands on it. Marsh frogs hopped about and were very vocal. After about one kilometre we all had a rest in the shade, surrounded by enormous ash coppice stools, before continuing on to the slopes covered in *Tulipa greigii* of a dazzling array of colours – from white, through yellow to dark red. This show of tulips is the real reason for visiting this site and once again the cameras were busy.

Walking out we heard a few birds including a blue whistling thrush and our first Hume's warbler before getting back to the bus and heading off for some birdwatching. Most of our usual lakes were way too high to approach easily in the bus so we tried a new one that was crawling with little bustards. The first was a splendid displaying male and we located six females in his vicinity. Lucky boy. The lake produced some good birds including red-crested pochard and gull-billed tern and was surrounded by singing calandra larks. But time was pressing and before long we had to get back into the bus for the drive back to Dzhabagly and dinner.

Day 6 19th April Halfway House

We had noticed that the weather was changing last night and sure enough the fine spell was broken and as we headed into the hill to meet the horses it became apparent that we may well get some rain towards the end of the day. The weather was the last thing on most people's minds though as they faced the first horse-ride. We waited at the base of the foothills for the horses to arrive and had yet more great views of yellow-breasted tit. Eventually the horses hove into view and after a short period of huffing and puffing we were all installed on a beast. The horses were as usual a mild-mannered bunch and bore their loads with little if any complaints.

Halfway to our destination we took a break to ease the aching parts and the botanistas scampered off to look at more tulips whilst Phil searched in vain for anything moving on the surrounding slopes. The botanical types eventually returned with tales of the yellow form of *Tulipa turkestanica*. We arrived at Halfway House in good time and had 50 minutes to potter around or scan the crags. Phil's persistence eventually paid off when he found three distant mammals on a far slope. Vlad pronounced these to be arkhar – a very rare sheep indeed. All around the house the fresh droppings of brown bear kept us vigilant and later we found some splendid tracks too. Perhaps not unsurprisingly we never did catch up with the bear though.

Lunch was taken in the cosy little house and much tea was drunk before we headed off to take a look at the waterfall. A short-toed eagle flew past complete with snake and nearby rocky slopes held the delicate pink fritillary *Rhinopetalum stenatherum*. After admiring the view we dropped

down into the valley and crossed the river easily on a snow bridge. The huge amount of snow that fell last winter did us a real favour here as the usual crossing is a slippery pole affair. Our target on this side of the stream was the beautiful yellow *Colchicum luteum* and we did not have to walk far before we found some of these great little plants. Heading back we decided to try a little further up the main track and were rewarded with the splendid *Iridiodictum kalpakowskianum* and great views of the hyperactive rufous-naped tit.

Sadly as we turned back for the house the first drops of rain were felt and this eventually built up into a bit of a downpour that certainly dampened the enthusiasm on the way down and little was seen as we trudged or rode down. Interestingly the trudgers beat the horses back by some margin. Arriving back at Yevgeny's it was glorious to get out of our wet gear and into a shower before hitting the vodka and biscuits and waiting patiently for dinner. Gives you an appetite this mountain air.

Day 7 20th April to Kizilkol and back again

Today we woke to clear blue skies again, a big surprise after yesterdays downpour. Because of the troubles in Kyrgistan we decided to try something new today and headed off for a long day in the bus at 0730 after an early breakfast. We were heading for Kizilkol and another two new tulips and hopes were high that our good fortune would continue. After a couple of hours we stopped at the curious Uzbek village of Karabulak. This village is entirely Uzbek and is an artefact of a Russian relocation programme in the 1860s. We spent some time spotting the differences in the bustling marketplace and despite already having had breakfast we were drawn to the stalls selling "Uzbek pasties". These were rather splendid constructions and cooked tandoor-style in a clay oven. As we drove on we munched on the pasties and quickly came across some incredible tulip fields – they were red with *Tulipa griegii* and just as impressive as poppy fields in the UK. Also here we had *Astragalus siversianus*, *Ixiolirion tartaricum* and *Crambe orientalis*.

Our next stop was a river crossing where the famous Russian collector Severtzov was grabbed by the Uzbeks in 1864 and ransomed back to Moscow for a tidy sum. Nearing Kizilkol Vlad jumped from the vehicle and proclaimed that we had found *Tulipa borszczowii* – one of our target species for the day. We spent some time here photographing this fine tulip and seeing our first Horsfield's tortoise (an animal completely caked in dry mud).

Lunch was taken overlooking a quiet end of the lake which produced a big surprise in the shape of one (perhaps two) long-tailed duck – a real vagrant in these parts. Also here was one female white-headed duck – the sole remnant of a large wintering population at this site. The shrubby *Artemesia* steppe here held enormous numbers of larks and tawny pipits. The far end of the lake had much shallower water and plenty of peninsulas and had the lion's-share of the birds. So we walked out over the dry mudflats. Huge numbers of shoveler were evident and in amongst them we had a number of interesting new species including wigeon, pintail, black-necked grebe, Caspian tern and slender-billed gull. Around the margins we found two stone-curlew and a number of Kentish plover. As we left the site we had close views of a big old southern grey shrike of the steppe race (*pallidirostris*).

The last dedicated stop was to look for *Tulipa albertii*, which involved a hike across the steppe and up onto a rocky ridge. We were rewarded with a number of examples and were elated to have seen 12 species of tulip in seven days. That just left the walk back to the van and the long drive back to Dzhabagly. We had one last stop though near Ters Lake where roughly 4300 demoiselle cranes stunned us into silence at dusk. Also here we had two displaying male little bustards. As the day darkened we crossed the railway tracks outside the village and a hooded crow made its belated way onto the trip list.

Day 8 21st April horseride up to Baitana

Once again the day dawned well and clouds remained absent throughout the day – how lucky can you get? After breakfast we climbed aboard a set of horses and headed towards Baitana. As usual we made a stop halfway and took a rest. Ron and Phil elected to walk up from here and managed to see a few good animals on the way up. The rest eventually overhauled them and continued onto the high tops. Phil spotted another wryneck, a sub-adult imperial eagle and a feisty diene snake as he puffed up the hill. Ron 35 years his senior motored along reaching the lunch spot in 55 minutes! Once up on the top we scouted around finding carpets of *Crocus alatavicus*, some splendid yellow form *Tulipa turkestanica* and the beautifully delicate iris *Iridodictyum kolpakovskianum*.

Lunch was taken looking out over the village and the Chokpak pass. Overhead a succession of raptors thermalled up and migrated onwards. After a rest we headed back down on foot to the base of the foothills enjoying more fine tulips in the form of some enormous *kaufmanniana*. At the bottom we met up with the horses again and those that wished climbed back on board for the trip back to the hotel. Ron and Phil once again elected to carry on walking and made it back in good time – making a few friends along the way. So an early return – but one that was appreciated by all and gave us all a bit of free time.

Day 9 22nd April Chokpak OS, Ters Lake, Taskol and Kuyuk Pass

Another super day but with some clouds building over the Tien Shan during the afternoon. We set off in the bus again this morning for a tour of the local steppe lakes. But first stop was an interesting visit to the Chokpak Ornithological Station. As we drove in we had two genuine common pheasants which was a great start. Unfortunately the winds had not been conducive to catching birds in the massive Heligoland traps used by this observatory but they had kindly kept a hoopoe for us to admire before it was sent on its way.

Driving on we headed next to Ters Lake. Here large fidgety flocks of demoiselle cranes were present as usual. Out on the lake we had a few surprises in the form of a single white stork and a mute swan both good birds for round here. We also had great views of a long-tailed shrike. Driving further round the lake we put the wind up a male little bustard who strutted off indignantly. Leaving the lake we headed for Taskol and lunch.

Taskol produced some new additions including great black-headed gull, paddyfield warbler, reed warbler and bluethroat. Amazingly the first dragonfly of the trip was also recorded – a single lesser emperor on what must be a very early date.

Last stop on a short day was at Kujuk Pass that had changed yet again. Now the *Eremurus lactiflorus* were flowering splendidly and we also had flowering *Allium karatavensis* and *Astragalus atrovinosa*. And then it was back to Yevgeny's for an early dinner (Phil's farewell supper – as he was leaving the group to return to the UK).

Day 10 23rd April Aksu Canyon, return to Almaty

In the morning we drove to the Aksu Gorge, with a few stops on the way up to allow the bus a break from the climb. From the top of Buranchi-Asu pass we had view on Tulkubass valley. In the small remote village of Irsu we walked along the “main” street with its fascinating scenes of everyday Kazakh life. Next stop was behind the village after crossing Irsu River where we had a look on *Scilla puschkinoides* and three Common Sandpipers. Then we drove to the gorge and saw several Long-legged Buzzards flying along our way. Next stop was the gorge – a spectacular rift in the landscape. Along the top of the gorge we found several spots with *Tulipa kaufmanniana* and last *Tulipa turkestanica* and also very first flowers of *Tulipa greigii* on south exposed slopes. As usual Vladimir found Dione Snake which was very friendly and allowed us to take some pictures. For the lunch we drove higher up along the top and stopped at 2000m. On this place we found Porcupine diggings for *Tulipa greigii* bulbs. Rain was on the way and we decided to move back as soon as possible not to miss our evening train to Almaty.

The gorge area is always a great spot for raptors, and allows good views. Today we saw Steppe Eagle, Black Vultures, Egyptian Vultures, Griffon Vultures and Montagu's Harrier.

After a final meal we said our goodbye to our cooks and the horsemen before driving to the train station.

Day 11 24th April Kapchagai Desert and Lake

Our train arrived in Almaty on time after 13 hours journey and we were quickly back in the minibus to go in Jetysu Hotel. After breakfast we headed back out in the minibus to spend some time in the Kapchagai area.

We stopped right behind the dam to have a look on slopes hoping to find last flowers of *Tulipa alberti* and it was there, a very beautiful yellow form of this species. Very abundant *Tulipa talievi* on the same place, all were over. Next stop was in an half of kilometre where we found fantastic spot for *Tulipa behmiana* growing on the bare sands laying on very old rocks. Several Horsfield's Tortoises were busy amongst hundreds of tulips and one was climbing rocks. For our lunch we drove north on plains along Ili River and we saw dozens of Calandra Larks, must be nesting around. Lunch spot was spectacular with view along the river running in wide rocky gorge. Two Swallowtails were flying around us.

Our evening meal was in huge yurt shaped restaurant of Otyrar Hotel. It seems only our group was visiting that day in the restaurant which has room at least for a hundred people, but food was really splendid.

Day 12 25th April Tuyuksu Valley

In the morning after breakfast we headed back out in the minibus to drive up in the mountains as high as possible. There wasn't easy to get out of the city full of traffic jams. Eventually we managed to find right road. First stop was on the dumb of Medeo where we walked along and saw ice ring sport resort from the top. Driving higher we saw Red Squirrel crossed our road. Next stop was especially for *Tulipa dasystemon* – species number sixteen! It was just in the beginning of flowers on its lowest altitude – 2000m.

Next stop was on the snow line on 2200m where we found first *Primula algida*. It was about ski resort where we saw many new very expensive houses.

We had our picnic near line of big snow where misty weather from below meets sunshine from above. Sasha (our driver) showed many good quality pictures taken by himself in the most spectacular places around Almaty.

After lunch we went back down to the city and visited book shop to buy maps. Also we stopped for the walk in wooden Russian Orthodox Cathedral.

Our final dinner was in the same yurt shaped restaurant and than after very short time to sleep we taken minibus to go in airport to fly back home.

Systematic List Number 1

Plants

Flowers of the Tien Shan		April 2005		25 April	24 April	23 April	22 April	21 April	20 April	19 April	18 April	17 April	16 April	15 April
		Only the more significant species seen in leaf and seed included!		Tuyuksu	Kapchagay, III	Aksu canyon	Ters, Taskol	Baidana	Kizilkol Lake	Kshi-Kaindy	Karasay, Barkara	Taldybulak	Merke-Jabagly	Almaty-Merke
<u>EQUISETACEAE</u>														
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>										X				
<u>ASPLENIACEAE</u>														
<i>Ceterach officinalis</i>												X		
<u>CUPRESSACEAE</u>														
<i>Juniperus semiglobosa</i>						X		X		X		X	X	
<i>Juniperus seravschanica</i>						X								
<i>Juniperus turkestanica</i>								X		X		X		
<u>EPHEDRACEAE</u>														
<i>Ephedra equisetina</i>								X		X	X	X	X	
<i>Ephedra regeliana</i>									X		X	X	X	X
<u>ARACEAE</u>														
<i>Arum korolkovii</i>												X		
<u>LILIACEAE</u>														
<i>Colchicum luteum</i>										X				
<i>Eremurus lactiflorus</i>									X		X		X	X
<i>Eremurus robustus</i>												X		
<i>Gagea chomutovae</i>													X	
<i>Gagea emarginata</i>														
<i>Gagea filiformis</i>										X		X	X	
<i>Gagea minutiflora</i>										X		X	X	
<i>Korolkovia severzovii</i>											X	X		X
<i>Rhinopetalum stenanthrum</i>														
<i>Rhinopetalum karelinii</i>									over					
<i>Scilla puschkinoides</i>														X
<i>Tulipa alberti</i>									X					X
<i>Tulipa behmiana</i>														X
<i>Tulipa biflora</i>									over					
<i>Tulipa bifloriformis</i>											X	X	X	X
<i>Tulipa binutans</i>											over			

<i>Ranunculus regelianus</i>	X					X				X
<i>Thalictrum isopyroides</i>	X	X		X	X					X
<u>BERBERIDACEAE</u>										
<i>Gymnospermium (Leontice) alberti</i>		X	X		X		X		X	
<i>Leontice ewersmanii</i>	X	X								X
<u>PAPAVERACEAE</u>										
<i>Papaver pavoninum</i>										X
<u>37. FUMARIACEAE</u>										
<i>Corydalis glaucescens</i>			X		X					X
<i>Corydalis ledebouriana</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
<i>Corydalis schanginii</i>	X									
<i>Corydalis schanginii ainii</i>				X						
<i>Corydalis sewerzowii</i>				X		X				
<u>BRASSICACEAE</u>										
<i>Crambe orientalis</i>						X				
<i>Megacarpaea orbiculata</i>				X	X					
<i>Parrya sp.</i>				X						
<i>Pseudoclausia sp.</i>							X			
<u>ROSACEAE</u>										
<i>Alchemilla tienshanica</i>										X
<i>Amygdalus communis</i>			X		X					
<i>Amygdalus petunnikowii</i>				X						
<i>Armeniaca vulgaris</i>	X	X	X	X						
<i>Cerasus (Padellus) mahaleb</i>			X	X	X					
<i>Cerasus tianschanica</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Cotoneaster karatavica</i>				X						
<i>Crataegus songarica</i>		X	X	X	X		X		X	
<i>Crataegus turkestanica</i>	X	X	X	X					X	
<i>Hulthemia persica</i>		X		X				X		
<i>Malus niedzwetzkiiana</i>				X						
<i>Malus sieversii</i>	X		X	X	X				X	X
<i>Potentilla asiatica</i>										X
<i>Potentilla orientalis</i>				X		X		X		X
<i>Pyrus regelii</i>				X						
<i>Sorbus persica</i>			X		X					
<i>Sorbus tianschanica</i>										X
<i>Spiraea hypericifolia</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<u>FABACEAE</u>										
<i>Astragalus atrovinosus</i>		X		X						
<i>Astragalus severzovii</i>						X				
<i>Astragalus sieversianus</i>						X				

GERANIACEAE*Erodium cicutarium**Geranium transversale***BIEBERSTEINIACEAE***Biebersteinia multifida***EUPHORBIACEAE***Euphorbia helioscopia***CELASTRACEAE***Euonymus koopmannii***ACERACEAE***Acer semenovii***RHAMNACEAE***Rhamnus cathartica***VITACEAE***Vitis vinifera***VIOLACEAE***Viola suavis***UMBELLIFERAE***Ferula penninervis**Ferula tenuisecta**Prangos pabularia***PRIMULACEAE***Primula algida***LIMONIACEAE***Acantholimon albertii***OLEACEAE***Fraxinus potamophila***BORAGINACEAE***Lappula subcaespitosa**Rindera cyclodonta**Rindera oblongifolia**Solenanthus circinnatus*

<u>LAMIACEAE</u>									
<i>Eremostachys</i>	<i>tianschanica</i>				X				
<i>Pseudoeremostachys</i>	<i>severzovii</i>								X
<i>Ziziphora</i>	<i>bungeana</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Ziziphora</i>	<i>tenuior</i>				X			X	
<u>SCROPHULARIACEAE</u>									
<i>Bungea</i>	<i>vesiculifera</i>							X	
<i>Pedicularis</i>	<i>olgae</i>			X		X		X	
<u>CAPRIFOLIACEAE</u>									
<i>Lonicera</i>	<i>karatavica</i>				X				
<i>Lonicera</i>	<i>tianschanica</i>			X		X		X	
<u>VALERIANACEAE</u>									
<i>Valeriana</i>	<i>chionophila</i>			X		X		X	X
<u>ASTERACEAE</u>									
<i>Cousinia</i>	<i>karatavica</i>				X			X	
<i>Ligularia</i>	<i>macrophylla</i>								X
<i>Tragopogon</i>	<i>marginifolius (abolinii)</i>								X
<i>Tussilago</i>	<i>farfara</i>			X		X			X

Systematic List Number 2

Birds

Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Recorded at Taskol, near Dzhabagly and at Kizilkol.
Great-crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Recorded at Taskol, Ters Lake and Taskol.
Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	
Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Widespread.
White stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	A single at Ters Lake.
Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	A single at Ters Lake.
Ruddy shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Recorded en route to Berkera and at Kizilkol.
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Recorded in small numbers at Taskol, Ters Lake and Taskol.
Eurasian wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Small numbers at Kizilkol, Taskol and Ters Lake.
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Recorded in small numbers en route to Merke, at Taskol, Ters Lake and Kizilkol.
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Widespread in small numbers.
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Small numbers en route to Merke and two at Kizilkol.
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Widespread in suitable wetlands.
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Scattered in small numbers. Enormous numbers at Kizilkol.
Red-crested pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	A few at Taskol, Ters Lake and Taskol.
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Three birds at Kizilkol.
Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	
White-headed duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	A single female at Kizilkol.
Long-tailed duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	One male or perhaps even two at Kizilkol were the biggest surprise of the trip.
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaeetus</i>	Up to four near Ters Lake. Another near Bilikol.
Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Most numerous between Almaty and Dzhabagly. Two at Ters Lake.
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Single over the Kordoi Pass on the first day. 2 in Taldibulak valley and another low above us from the Baitana horseride.
Egyptian vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	1 in the Karasai Gorge, two near Kizilkol and another over the Chokpak Pass.
Himalayan griffon vulture	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	Three in valley above Merke and two on Baitana horseride.
Black vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Small numbers almost daily.
Short-toed eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Pair over the Karasai Gorge and another complete with snake in the Kshy Kaindy valley. Single migrants from Baitana and Chokpak.
Marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Two near Berkera and at Taskol.
Montagu's harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Singles noted en route to Merke and just outside Dzhabagly. Two around Kizilkol.
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Scattered.
Long-legged buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	Widespread in low numbers.
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Occasional migrant birds.
Imperial eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	Single subadult on the horseride to Baitana.
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Two adults in the Merke Valley. Another two in Taldibulak Valley and singles in the Kshy Kaindy valley and on the horseride to Baitana.
Booted eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	Single in Kshy Kaindy Valley.
Lesser kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Small numbers in Dzhabagly area.

Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Widespread and common.
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Two females near Chokpak Ornithological Station
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	Widespread and common.
Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Scattered.
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Locally common.
Demoiselle crane	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	Several large flocks on migration, max daily count of 4300+ at the usual Ters Lake stopover site.
Little bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	Seven birds near Taskol, one there on another day. Three displaying males at Ters Lake.
Eurasian thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	Two at Kizilkol.
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	
Black-winged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Scattered.
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	18 at Kizilkol.
Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Scattered.
Kentish plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Small numbers at Kizilkol.
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Scattered.
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	
Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	
Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	
Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Widespread in small numbers
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3 at Kizilkol.
Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Widespread.
Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Single on Ters River.
Great black-headed gull	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>	Single at Taskol.
Black-headed gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Widespread.
Slender-billed gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	Small numbers at Kizilkol.
Caspian gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	Scattered in small numbers.
Gull-billed tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Three at Taskol. Small numbers at Kizilkol.
Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Single at Kizilkol.
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Small numbers at Taskol.
Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	The feral type widespread and common.
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Widespread and common.
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Widespread and common.
Laughing dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	In villages.
[Scops owl]	<i>Otus scops</i>	Heard at Merke and Dzhabagly.
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Widespread.
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Single in the Muyun-kum and another on the horseride to Baitana.
Calandra lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	Common in steppe areas.
Short-toed lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	Common at Kizilkol.
Bimaculated lark	<i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>	
Crested lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Scattered roadside bird, also at Kizilkol.
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Rather local, recorded on two days.
Sand martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Small numbers at Taskol.
Crag martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Widespread.
House martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Only recorded at Merke.
Tawny pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	Single at Karasai and many at Kizilkol.
Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Grounded migrants noted most days, many others calling overhead.

Water pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	
Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava beema</i>	Many migrants on the day we went to Kizilkol.
Citrine wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Common along watercourses.
White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Single migrant on steppe lakes day..
Masked wagtail	<i>Motacilla personata</i>	Widespread and common.
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Pair nesting in Taldibulak Valley as usual.
Brown dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasi</i>	A single feeding young at Merke.
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	
Black-throated accentor	<i>Prunella atrogularis</i>	
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	Single female at Taskol.
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	
Common redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Migrants noted in small numbers on 2 days.
Blue-headed redstart	<i>Phoenicurus coeruleocephalus</i>	Noted only at Merke.
Siberian stonechat	<i>Saxicola maura</i>	Widespread.
Isabelline wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	Widespread in steppe areas.
Northern wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Some migrants noted.
Pied wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	Widespread.
Rock thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Widespread and common.
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Scattered.
Black-throated thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>	Just one on ride up Kshy Kaindy valley.
Blue whistling thrush	<i>Myiophonus caeruleus</i>	Scattered.
[Cetti's warbler]	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Heard at Taskol.
Paddyfield warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	Several at Taskol.
Reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Small numbers at Taskol.
Hume's lesser whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca althaea</i>	Single at Taskol.
Greenish warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	Single in Dzhabagly.
Hume's warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	Scarce.
Sulphur-bellied warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>	
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Widespread.
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	
Yellow-breasted tit	<i>Parus flavipectus</i>	Pairs at Merke, the orchard in the Taldibulak Valley and at the start of the Kshy Kaindy valley horseride.
Boukhara tit	<i>Parus bokharensis</i>	Fewer than normal – just one in Dzhabagly.
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Recorded at Almaty, Merke and Kshy Kaindy valley.
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	
Songar tit	<i>Parus songarus</i>	
Rufous-naped tit	<i>Parus rufonuchalis</i>	Two above Halfway House.
Eastern rock nuthatch	<i>Sitta tephronata</i>	2 in Karasai Gorge.
Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	
[Penduline tit]	<i>Remiz pendulinus macronyx</i>	Nests seen in lowland areas related to this subspecies.
[Penduline tit]	<i>Remiz pendulinus coronatus</i>	Last years nests much in evidence in Aksu-Dzhabagly.
Isabelline shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	Scattered.
Southern grey shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	Single bird by the roadside near Kizilkol.
Long-tailed shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	Two birds seen, one en route to Kizilkol and another at Ters Lake.
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Widespread and common.
Alpine chough	<i>Pyrrhonorax graculus</i>	Small numbers in Aksu-Dzhabagly Reserve.
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Widespread and fairly common outside the mountains.
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Locally very common.
Carriion crow	<i>Corvus corone corone</i>	Widespread in low numbers.

Hooded crow	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Single bird near Dzhabagly.
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Scattered.
Common mynah	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Widespread and abundant.
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Widespread and common.
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	A few in Almaty.
Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Very common around habitation.
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Small numbers at Merke and Dzhabagly.
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Two birds at Merke and small numbers at Dzhabagly.
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Many of the grey-headed ' <i>caniceps</i> ' race at Merke.
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	One between Merke and Dzhabagly.
Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	
Rock bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	Locally common.
Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	
Corn bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Scarce but locally common in the steppe areas.

Systematic List Number 3

Mammals

Mouse-eared bat	<i>Myotis blythi</i>	Several noted around the Hotel Almaty.
Large-toothed suslik	<i>Spermophilus fulvus</i>	Noted between Almaty and Dzhabagly and also in the Karatau.
Severtzov's jerboa	<i>Allactaga severtzovi</i>	Burrows noted near Dzhabagly.
Mole vole	<i>Ellabius talpinus</i>	Their holes and other signs of activity frequently noted.
Stone martin	<i>Martes foina</i>	Signs found in Aksu-Dzhabagly.
Brown bear	<i>Ursos arctos</i>	Plenty of fresh sign around Halfway House.
Wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Signs in the Kshy Kaindy.
Roe deer	<i>Capreolus pygargus</i>	
Arkhar	<i>Ovis ammon</i>	Three animals in distance from Halfway House.
Siberian ibex	<i>Capra sibirica</i>	Tracks and dung found in the Aksu-Dzhabagly Reserve.

Systematic List Number 4

Amphibians and reptiles

Marsh frog	<i>Rana ridbunda</i>	Heard en route to Dzhabagly. Common in steppe lake areas and very vocal and conspicuous.
[Central Asian green toad]	<i>Bufo danatensis</i>	Heard at Dzhabagly.
Horsefield's tortoise		Two on the Kizilkol day.
Rapid runner	<i>Eremias velox</i>	Two in Muyun-kum desert.
Steppe agama	<i>Agama sanquinolenta</i>	Single in Muyun-kum desert.
Alpine lidless skink	<i>Asymblespharus alaicus</i>	Single at Merke, several in Aksu-Dzhabagly.
Desert lidless skink	<i>Ablepharus deserti</i>	Single near Alamaty.
[Glass snake]	<i>Ophisaurus apodus</i>	Single dead individual near Dzhabagly.
Dice snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>	Single in the Berkera Valley.
Dione snake	<i>Elaphus dione</i>	Single on horseride up to Baitana.

Systematic List Number 5

Butterflies

Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	Single in the Berkera Valley.
Orangetip	<i>Anthocharis cardamine</i>	Widespread and common.
Eastern pale clouded yellow	<i>Colias erate</i>	Only noted in the Kujuk Pass.
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	Noted at Merke and in the Taldibulak Valley.
Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Scattered records.
Holly blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	Small numbers in the Aksu-Dzhabagly.
Mazarine blue	<i>Cyaniris semiargus</i>	Small numbers in the Aksu-Dzhabagly.
Queen of Spain fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>	Small numbers at Merke.
Camberwell beauty	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	Single in the Taldibulak Valley.
Yellow-legged tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis xanthomelas</i>	Small numbers throughout.
Small tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	Small numbers throughout.
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	Single at Kordai Pass.
Painted lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>	Small numbers throughout.
Large skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>	Noted on two days.

Systematic List Number 6

Dragonflies

Lesser emperor	<i>Anax parthenope</i>	An incredibly early individual at Taskol on 22 nd April was the only dragonfly of the trip.
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