

Kyrgyzstan: June 26 - July 25, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the bird observations I made during a very enjoyable month-long independent trip to Kyrgyzstan with my girlfriend. It was based around birdwatching, hiking, and camping, but was not a focused birding trip. Nevertheless, I found many of Kyrgyzstan's more interesting species, and saw a lot of this scenically spectacular country in the process. There are very few independent birding trip reports from Kyrgyzstan, and actual site details and directions were hard to come by in some cases – hopefully this will help fill the gap. In addition to relatively well-known sites in the east, I also include notes from the west of the country south down to the Pamirs, a region infrequently visited by traveling birders. If you have questions or comments, get in touch at hrt506@alumni.ku.dk.

TRANSPORT

We got around during the first week using taxis, but upon reaching Karakol arranged a car and driver through the city's excellent tourist information center (phone +996 03922-23425; +996 03922-53775; or +996 03922-52341. Email: tourinfocentre@gmail.com). They set us up with a muscle-bound ethnic Kyrgyz driver named Marat, who did a terrific job for us. His car was a pretty recent-model 4WD Mitsubishi SUV which performed admirably. Marat speaks only a little English in addition to Kyrgyz and Russian, but he was nevertheless very good at improvised communication. He is an outdoorsman and while certainly not a bird guide, is pretty familiar with the country's birds and particularly large mammals. Marat charged 20 som per kilometer, plus 400 som per day for living expenses, which was much cheaper than rates we were quoted in Bishkek. The easiest way to get in touch with him is through the information center.

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

Birds of Central Asia by Aye *et al.* – a luxury to be able to travel with this new field guide, which is generally very good. Understandably, some of the range maps and altitudinal distributions aren't totally accurate.

Lonely Planet: Central Asia 5th Ed. by Mayhew *et al.* – pretty sub-par, but sometimes useful.

Bradt Travel Guides: Kyrgyzstan 2nd Ed. by Mitchell – ditto above.

TRIP REPORTS:

Miksture produces trip reports from all of their many bird tours in Kyrgyzstan; these are useful, but predictably light on site details. See <http://www.miksture.com/index.php?mode=birds>

E. Foekens “Nature Trip Kyrgyzstan 2012” Good report from a tour with Kyrgyz Muras company, covering the eastern and central parts of the country.

<http://mammalwatching.com/Palearctic/Otherreports/EF%20Kyrgyzstan%202012.pdf>

O. Pfister “Kyrgyzstan: 12th to 29th July 2000 – a rare independent trip report, briefly covering Ala Archa and Son-Kul. <http://www.osme.org/tripreports/kirgtrip2.shtml>

V. van der Spek “Kyrgyzstan: 20 May – 1 June 2007” – solid trip report from a group tour to the eastern half of the country, with a map showing site locations.

<http://77.167.75.191/doc/doc00042.pdf>

ITINERARY

June 25: arrived Bishkek

June 26: Bishkek

June 27: Bishkek

June 28: Bishkek > Alamedin Valley

June 29: Alamedin Valley

June 30: Alamedin Valley

July 1: Alamedin Valley > Bishkek > Karakol

July 2: Karakol

July 3: Karakol > May-Saz

July 4: May-Saz

July 5: May-Saz

July 6: May-Saz > Karakol

July 7: Karakol and Arashan River

July 8: Karakol > Jetti-Oguz > lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu > Lake Issyk-Kul’s south shore

July 9: Fairy Tale Canyon > Salt Lake

July 10: Salt Lake > Lake Son-Kul

July 11: Lake Son-Kul > Kara-Koo Pass

July 12: Kara-Koo Pass > Kazarman > Kaldama Pass

July 13: Kaldama Pass > Jalalabad > Osh

July 14: Osh

July 15: Osh > Lenin Peak base camp

July 16: Lenin Peak base camp > Byloly River

July 17: Byloly River > Arslanbob

July 18: Arslanbob

July 19: Arslanbob > Sary-Chelek Lake

July 20: Sary-Chelek Lake > Suusamyr area

July 21: Suusamyr area > Bishkek

July 22: Bishkek > Ala-Archa National Park

July 23: Ala-Archa National Park

July 24: Ala-Archa National Park > Bishkek

July 25: departed Bishkek

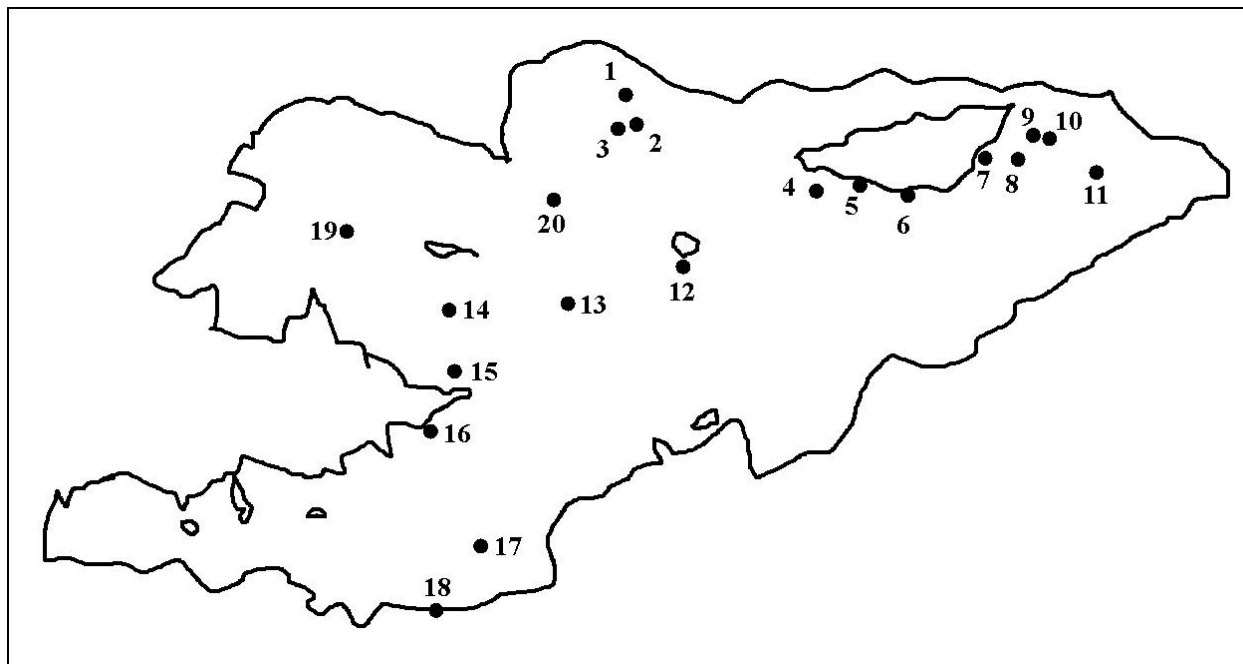


Fig. 1. Important sites mentioned in text. 1) Bishkek; 2) Alamedin Valley; 3) Ala-Archa NP; 4) Tura-Suu; 5) Salt Lake; 6) Fairy Tale Canyon; 7) Kyzyl-Suu lagoon; 8) Jeti-Oguz; 9) Karakol; 10) Arashan River; 11) May-Saz Valley; 12) Lake Son-Kul; 13) Kazarman; 14) Arslanbob; 15) Jalalabad; 16) Osh; 17) Sary-Tash; 18) Lenin Peak; 19) Sary-Chelek Lake; 20) Suusamyr

DAILY NOTES (WITH SITE DETAILS)

June 25-27. We stayed in Bishkek for three days waiting to recover lost luggage (don't fly Pegasus). Interesting birds seen in the city were Eurasian Hobby (1 or 2 daily), Red-rumped Swallow (several daily), Alpine Swift (up to 20 daily), Indian Oriole (1, more seen driving through city outskirts on later dates), and Eurasian Sparrowhawk (1).

June 28. Luggage still missing, we went to Alamedin Valley for the weekend. We chose this site rather than the better-known Ala-Archa National Park immediately to the west because it is reportedly much less crowded on weekends. It also has good, cheap accomodation and meals at the sanatorium, which, without our camping gear, we were in need of. It's around 40km from the city, and we paid 800 som for a taxi ride out there. It's a gorgeous valley with good walking trails along the river, but the sanatorium (42°36.4'N 74°39.7'E) is at only 1800m, so many of the high-altitude species at Ala-Archa are missing here.

We spent the afternoon exploring around the sanatorium and several kilometers up the eastern side of the river. Rufous-naped and Azure Tits were easily observed in the gardens. Some individuals of the latter species showed a yellowish tinge to their breasts, but I believe these were *C. c. tianshanicus* rather than *C. c. flavipectus* ("Yellow-breasted Tit"). Also seen were Blue Whistling-Thrush (1), Rock Bunting (1), Greenish Warbler (common), Oriental Turtle-Dove (common), etc.

June 29. A long morning spent walking five kilometers or so up the western side of the river. Several more Blue-Whistling Thrushes were seen, and upon reaching the base of some tall slopes

some kilometers upstream, it was possible to pick out soaring Himalayan Griffons (2), Lammergeiers (2), and a very distant group of 6 unidentified *Gyps* vultures. Hume's Leaf-Warblers were also common here. In the afternoon, I hiked a little way up a side valley south of the sanatorium on the west side of the river, and found Red-fronted Serin (2).

June 30. Took an early morning walk up a side valley which begins just southeast of the sanatorium complex, and reached c. 2150m. Not much interesting except for a family of Blue-capped Redstarts near the highest point reached. Nothing new added to my site list during a walk along the eastern side of the river in the afternoon, but another Blue-capped Redstart, a juvenile, was spotted.

July 1. Returned to Bishkek first thing in the morning to retrieve our luggage and arrange onward transport to Karakol. On the drive down, a Blue Rock Thrush was seen in an arid spot at the bottom of the valley, as well as the first of the day's many Long-tailed Shrikes. A couple flocks of Rosy Starlings were seen before reaching Bishkek, and 2 male Indian Orioles flew overhead at the city outskirts. We traveled to Karakol via shared taxi, which turned out to be comfortable and cheap (500 som p.p.). Many more Rosy Starlings were seen en route, along with Common Tern (1) and Caspian Gull (1).

July 2. Day spent in the city. European Greenfinch and Rook were more common here than in most of the other places we visited.

July 3. Left Karakol early for May-Saz. The primary target for this leg was Ibisbill, which bird tours often see here. These were found quite easily early in the going, with excellent views of two adults. The birds seemed generally unconcerned with our presence, but upon returning to the same spot on the trip back, the adults were accompanied by two juveniles, and became agitated when we left the car. Thus, as they may be sensitive to disturbance here, I am hesitant to describe the exact location. I will say that the road from Karakol follows a river up to May-Saz Pass, and if you begin scanning along it once reaching an appropriate altitude you should be able to find Ibisbills without too much trouble. If missed here, another site for the species is at Tura-Suu (42°8.4'N 76°20.5'E); birds can apparently be found by following the river running west from the village (see Foekens 2012). Our driver said they occur along Karakol Valley as well.

Upon reaching May-Saz Pass, we walked for c. 1km down in the direction of May-Saz Valley, finding Altai Accentor (5) and Guldenstadt's Redstart (1) on the way. On the drive onwards to the valley, another Guldenstadt's Redstart was seen, along with Water Pipit (common), Eurasian Crag Martin (a few), and White-throated Dipper (1). Brandt's Mountain Finch should be possible, too, but I missed them here.

After reaching May-Saz Valley, we drove c. 15km west along the north side of the river to a campsite by a shepherds' camp and a seemingly abandoned ecotourism hut (42°12.5'N 78°57.7' E, c. 2900m; "A" in Fig. 1). I expect the shepherds would be pleased with some booze and cigarettes if you're interested in pitching a tent there. It is worth noting that the north and south sides of the river are quite different in character, and there is no bridge connecting them except at the main road. The south side has a strip of thorny scrub merging into conifer forest along most of its length, but this is entirely absent along the north shore. Birds found in the afternoon around camp included Hill Pigeon (2), Horned Lark (common), Golden Eagle (1),

Northern and Isabelline Wheatears (common), and Plain Mountain Finch (common). Following the river up the side valley to the north (“B” in Fig. 2) in the evening produced 4-5 singing male White-tailed Rubythroats and a White-throated Dipper.

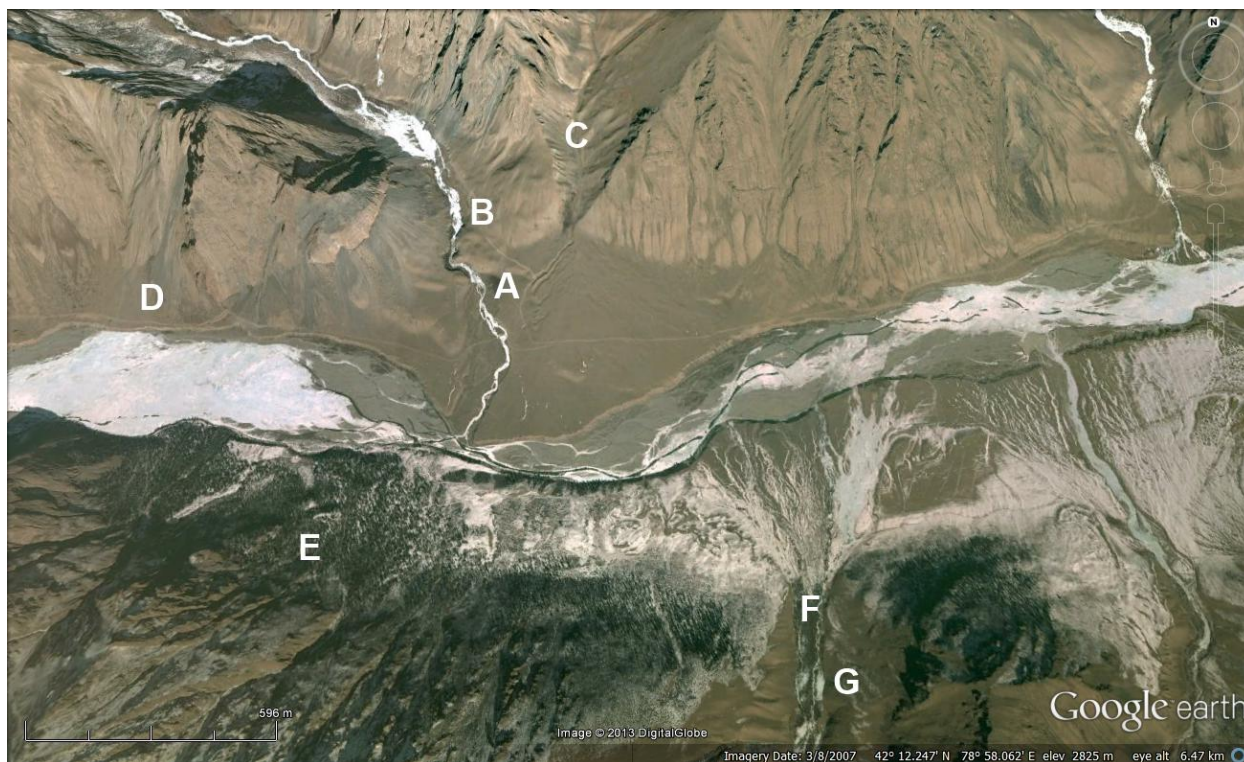


Fig. 2. May-Saz Valley. Letters correspond to areas mentioned in text.

July 4. Local shepherds said that Himalayan Snowcock could be found all along the higher reaches of May-Saz valley, including the small side valley just northeast of camp (“C” in Fig. 2). I headed up this side valley at 4:30 am, and eventually heard snowcocks calling from the peaks atop the western slopes. From about 5:15-6:30am, I had good views of 15-20 birds calling and flying overhead to feed on the grassy slopes of the opposite side of the valley. Other interesting birds in this side valley were Brown Accentor (several), Sulphur-bellied Warbler (1), Black Redstart (2), and Common Rock Thrush (1).

The rest of the morning was spent walking a few kilometers along the small river north of camp (“B” in Fig. 2). Observations here included more White-tailed Rubythroats (common), Hill Pigeon (1), Golden Eagles (3), Sulphur-bellied Warbler (1), Altai Accentor (1) and Red-fronted Serin (common), along with a Stoat and a group of 11 female and young Siberian Ibex. During a walk west along the main valley (“D” in Fig. 2) in the afternoon, Chukar (5) and Guldenstadt’s Redstart (1) were seen. Another short walk up the river north of camp in the evening yielded Eversmann’s Redstart (1 ad and 3 juvs).

July 5. The early morning was spent at the snowcock site; the weather was rather dismal and they were not quite as active today. About 7 birds seen. Other sightings here were Red Fox (mother with cub), a pair of rubythroats, and a pair of Grey-necked Buntings. We then backtracked to the main road to reach the opposite shore, and drove back in to make a new camp almost opposite the first camp (“F” in Fig. 2). This was up the hill from the house of a friendly

family of herders; stop by and chat with them first if you want to pitch a tent nearby. My goal here was to search the belt of scrub and conifer forest for Black-throated Accentor and White-browed Tit-warbler. An afternoon spent in this habitat ("E" and areas east in Fig. 2) produced the accentor (2), lots of Eversmann's Redstarts, and a Eurasian Nutcracker. I flushed what I suspect was a Daurian Partridge; a local shepherd confirmed that they occur here. No tit-warbler, though.

July 6. A rainy morning spent searching the scrub along the side valley south of camp ("G" in Fig. 2) for the tit-warbler, with no luck. But lots of rubythroats and Eversmann's Redstarts, a Black-throated Accentor and two Tree Pipits. Michael Westerbjerg Andersen's tours regularly find the tit-warbler at May-Saz, but I have no idea where, especially as I couldn't find any juniper scrub.

Some nice observations on the drive back to Karakol, including Guldenstadt's Redstart (1), Twite (2), White-throated Dipper (3), and Ibisbills again (as noted above).

July 7. I spent several hours in the afternoon walking up the Arashan River to c. 2200m. This site, a rushing river at the bottom of a steep canyon lined with conifers, is just a few kms east of Karakol, and easy to find using a travel guide. You can drive several kms south of the main A364 to begin the walk where the road really starts to deteriorate. This walk was great for Blue-capped Redstart, with 16 seen, most of which were ad. males. Also Blue Whistling-Thrush (3), Eurasian Crag Martin (1), and White-throated Dipper (1). On the walk back down, I found a pair of Songar Tits at c. 2100m, and then the skies opened. A Brown Dipper was seen during the downpour.

July 8. In the morning, we walked down Jetti-Oguz River from the Valley of Flowers to the Seven Bulls cliffs. This area is well described in the travel literature. In a country filled with spectacular wildflowers, there were zero in the Valley of Flowers. Lots of tourists, though. On the walk we saw Booted Eagle (1), Coal Tit (2+), Blue Whistling-Thrush (2), Eurasian Griffon (1), Blue-capped Redstart (2+), Rock Bunting (2), Common Redstart (common), etc. I wanted to walk around the scrub at the base of the Seven Bulls, but our driver was for some reason adamant that I take a circuitous route around the village and the sanatorium along the edge of the forest to reach this area, saying "security." No idea what this meant, but it seemed important. Encountered a lot of wet ground and an aggressive little dog on this route. Around the base of the cliffs were pretty nice views and a female Red-mantled Rosefinch in the bushes. Probably a better way to bird Jetti-Oguz would be to walk up rather than down from the Valley of Flowers; I assume this is how van der Spek *et al.* (2007) found the abundance of White-winged Grosbeaks and Red-mantled Rosefinches they report from the site.

At midday we visited a lagoon connected to Issyk-Kul, inland from the town of Kyzyl-Suu and near a sanatorium (42°22.5'N 77°54.4'E). Walking down to the northeastern shore through a wet pasture and in the surrounding scrub for an hour yielded Common Tern (common), Turkestan Shrike (1), Ruddy Shelduck (10), Little Ringed Plover (2), Paddyfield Warbler (2), Cetti's Warbler (1), as well as Hoopoe, Common Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Northern Lapwing, etc. I expect this would be a very nice area to explore for a few hours in the early morning. In the evening we camped along the southern shore of Issyk-Kul, just a couple kilometers east of Fairy Place Canyon. Most of the southern shore of the lake we could see from the car seems to be largely devoid of birdlife, and this site was no exception. Lots of Common

Cuckoos and a Turkestan Shrike, but little else of note. In the evening I walked up into the semi-desert behind the lake, finding Tawny Pipit (1), Grey-necked Bunting (1), and Pied Wheatear (c. 8).

July 9. In the morning we visited Fairy Tale Canyon, an area of semi-desert with some pretty rock formations. It's about half-way along the southern shore of Issyk-Kul, near Kadj-Sai, and signed from the main road. Interesting birds here were Pied Wheatear (common), Grey-necked Bunting (c. 4), Hume's Whitethroat (c. 6), Turkestan Shrike (1), and a flock of probable Mongolian Finches.

At midday we moved on to Salt Lake (42°15.1'N 76°44.9'E), which is on the western end of Issyk-Kul and signed from the main road. At noon in summer it is a pretty unappealing place; after you pay to get through the gate, you reach a sweltering, dirty little lake surrounded by a wire fence and hordes of tourists. Many of these are jet black after having slathered themselves from head to toe in the lake's mud. Circumnavigating the lake, I found Ruddy Shelduck (common), Black-necked Grebe (1), Sykes's Warbler (4+), and Hume's Whitethroat (common). I missed the Rock Sparrow colonies and Mongolian Finches mentioned in other trip reports, however. I'm sure this site would be much more agreeable and provide better birding at dawn.

The beach back down the road had a couple Caspian Gulls, and Tawny Pipits up behind it. Where the river which the access road follows empties into the lake, there was a flooded field with Common Redshank (6), Little Ringed Plover (4), and Black-headed and more Caspian Gulls. In the afternoon we set up camp along the river next to the access road, amidst riparian forest. Some nice birds here, including several singing Common Nightingales, Cetti's Warbler (common), Hume's Whitethroat (several), Pied Wheatear (common), European Bee-eater (1), Chukar (1), Azure Tit (a family, pure white breasts here), Green Sandpiper (3), etc. An hour-long walk east along a dry canyon was not productive, though.

July 10. Birding along the access road from the campsite produced a family of White-crowned Penduline Tits, but otherwise mostly more of the same. Leaving the river and entering agricultural fields to the north, I found a few Corn Buntings, Crested Lark (1), a flock of Linnets, Common Raven (1), and Turkestan Shrike (4).

From here, we drove onwards to Lake Son-Kul (3100m) via Kalmak-Ashuu Pass, where my main target was Pallas's Gull. Driving through the pass ("A" in Fig. 3), we saw White-winged Snowfinch (c. 6), Twite (2), and Altai Accentor (1). Driving along the southern shore of the lake I recorded another snowfinch, Common Raven (common), Horned Lark (common), and a juv. Lesser Sand Plover where the road was washed out. We set up camp along the southwestern shore ("B" in Fig. 3), which was extremely scenic and pleasantly isolated, but mostly free of birds apart from Black-headed and Caspian Gulls and Common Terns. The afternoon and evening were spent huddled in the car during a rain storm, though it cleared up shortly before sunset.



Fig. 3. Lake Son-Kul. Letters correspond to areas mentioned in text.

July 11. Son-Kul is a huge lake which turned out to be a difficult place to bird. There is very little direct access to the lake shore, the main road along the southern reaches being set back a couple kilometers from the shoreline. There seem to be no access roads to the southeast shoreline. We experienced ever-changing (but mostly terrible) weather, which, from reading other reports, seems about par for the course here. The night was well below freezing, but the morning was beautiful, at least until about 11am. I used this brief window to search for Pallas's Gull in an area I judged most promising from looking at a satellite map, namely the southeastern shoreline, which has marshy edges ("C" in Fig. 3). This was a bad decision; it's at least 2km from the road to the shoreline, but by the time I made it to within several hundred meters of the shoreline, the ground had become impossibly boggy. I waded through this morass for an hour or so heading west, but never made it within 500m of the shoreline. Nothing down there looked like Pallas's Gull, in any case. Upset Common Redshanks and Common Terns scolded me as I slogged through the muck. Best birds were a singing Eurasian Skylark and a displaying Common Snipe. Definitely not worth the trouble. As we drove away from Son-Kul, headed west, I noted an area where the main road comes within about a hundred meters of the lakeshore ("D" in Fig. 3). The ground here looks solid, and there were a lot of gulls along the shore to the north, but the impending snow/sleet/hail storm on the horizon made exploration here impossible. This is definitely where I'd search for the gull if there had been more time.

From here we began the long drive to Jalalabad on rough roads via Kazarman town. I thoroughly recommend this route, as the scenery was among the best of the trip, highly varied and often utterly spectacular. After descending from the mountains, Red-headed Bunting, Lesser Grey Shrike and European Bee-eater became common along the roadsides. A Short-toed Eagle flew over the road before Ak-Kyya village. In the afternoon we set up camp just short of Kara-Koo Pass (about half the distance to Kazarman), with incredible views of the landscape below in

the clear weather. Another Short-toed Eagle, an Egyptian Vulture, and Tawny Pipit were seen here.

July 12. Driving through Kara-Koo Pass, I had Blue Rock Thrush (2) and a group of Chukars. En route to Kazarman: Red-headed Bunting, Lesser Grey Shrike, Rosy Starling (all common), Booted Eagle (1), Tawny Pipit (2). In Kazarman: Long-tailed Shrike, Laughing Dove, Indian Oriole. Onwards past Kazarman, in a valley thickly carpeted with diverse wildflowers, I found a pair of Siberian Stonechats calling from the roadside. We crossed Kaldama Pass in the afternoon, and camped on the other side where the switchbacks ended and the road began to flatten. Not great bird diversity here, but Eurasian Scops-Owls began calling at dusk, and I easily tracked one down in the sparse riparian forest.

July 13. Indian Oriole, Blue Whistling-Thrush and two “Yellow-breasted Tits” (*C. c. flavipectus*) at a nest at the campsite, along with a probable White-crowned Penduline Tit heard calling. From here we drove onwards to Osh via Jalalabad. Two Short-toed Eagles seen en route to Jalalabad. I tried to spot Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and Black-bellied Sandgrouse during the drive from Jalalabad to Osh at midday, but without any luck.

July 14. Osh. Didn't do any birding.

July 15. Drove to the base camp below the 7134m Lenin Peak (via Sary-Tash), our first foray into the Pamirs. The first leg of the journey from Osh to Chyyrchyk Pass is fairly boring, but the scenery gets progressively more impressive from there. Birds between Osh and the 3600m Taldyk Pass just before Sary-Tash included Indian Oriole, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Himalayan Griffon (9 total), and Golden Eagle. During short stops around Taldyk Pass, Altai Accentor (1), Plain Mountain Finch (1), and White-winged Snowfinch (common) were spotted. Two Lammergeiers were seen well in Sary-Tash. Driving west along the floor of the Alay Valley, I spotted a Crimson-winged Finch sitting on a telephone line, and stopped the car to confirm the ID. I couldn't check all of the birds on these wires (which stretch over dozens of kilometers), so there may have been more.

The Lenin Peak base camp is accessed by driving south from, as I recall, the next village to the west of Sary-Moghul in the Alay Valley. There's no signage, so you will have to ask around if you're not with someone who knows the way. From the village, you drive about an hour on dirt roads to the camp at 3600m. There are several unmarked splits along the dirt track, so again you will need to ask local nomads for directions if you don't know the way. The guidebooks say that you technically need a permit to travel here, but that it's rarely checked. We had no permit, and although there was a checkpoint in the Alay Valley, we were not stopped here. The guidebooks also say that you need to make arrangements through trekking companies to use the base camp, but our driver's brother-in-law helped run one of the camps, so this was not an issue for us. I would be very surprised if you have any trouble just showing up there to camp.

The base camp is actually a collection of smaller individual camps. There are yurts serving as basic restaurants and shops. Above the camps is a gravel plain, and beyond this a broad, gently sloping meadow stretching for a couple kilometers up towards the peaks. At the southern end of this flat area is a deep gorge, the mountains rising up spectacularly on the other side. A very rough jeep track leads up through the meadow, ending where it becomes steep, and turns into the walking trail to the first camp on the way up Lenin Peak.

Driving up to the camp from the bottom of the valley, I found a flock of Rock Sparrows after taking a wrong turn. Horned Larks and Isabelline Wheaters were abundant. The late afternoon/evening was spent exploring near base camp. Birds included Lammergeier (1), Golden Eagle (1), White-winged Snowfinch (common), Plain Mountain Finch (1), Altai Accentor (c. 4), and Lesser Sand Plover (1 ad. and 1 juv. on gravel plain near camp).

July 16. Spent the morning exploring the meadow, then driving up to the beginning of the walking trail near the edge of the gorge, and walking a couple kilometers up to nearly 4000m. Brandt's Mountain Finches (c. 10) were found foraging together with Plain Mountain Finches (c. 15) amongst wildflowers at the base of the gravel plain near our camp. Also seen were Yellow-billed Chough (a few flocks) and many more snowfinches and Altai Accentors. I ascended steeply near a point where there are two plaques commemorating deceased mountaineers, and soon passed a waterfall in the cliffs. Just next to the waterfall I found a Wallcreeper dustbathing and sunning. Further up, I found a couple more small flocks of Brandt's Mountain Finch, two Lammergeiers, and Guldenstadt's Redstart (10+, including many juveniles). I was disappointed not to find Spotted Great Rosefinch, as Aye *et al.* (2012) describe it as being common in the Pamirs. The brother-in-law working here was not familiar with the species, however, nor with Snow Pigeon (another possibility), so they are probably uncommon or entirely absent at this site.

Late in the morning we drove back towards Osh, camping along the Byloly River prior to reaching Chyyrchyk Pass. The river is signed from the main road, and we set up camp about 1km up the side road that runs along it. This was at the bottom of a very deep, rocky canyon, which seemed promising for Eastern Rock Nuthatch and White-capped Bunting. Neither of these on the first evening, though: sightings included up to 20 *Gyps* vultures, all the identifiable individuals being Himalayan. Also Blue Whistling-Thrush, a family of "Yellow-breasted Tit," and a probable Saker Falcon high overhead.

July 17. Used the early morning to explore a side canyon on the opposite side of the river from the road. Away from the rushing river, some birdsong could be heard from the canyon walls, but it was very hard to actually see anything. I had Pied Wheatears and several Rufous-naped Tits here. Many White-capped Buntings were calling, but aside from a few frustratingly poor glimpses, actually seeing one eventually required ascending a high, loose scree slope. No nuthatches. Back at the campsite, a Lammergeier flew overhead.

From Byloly River, we drove up through Osh and Jalalabad to Arslanbob, which is firmly on the tourist map. After visiting the helpful CBT office, we went to Homestay #7 (run by Louisa and Beck) to spend a couple nights. This was several km south of town on the edge of a shady walnut grove. In their garden, White-winged Woodpecker, "Yellow-breasted Tit," Indian Oriole, and Spotted Flycatcher were common. Behind the house is a steep hill covered with walnut trees, beyond which are some patches of scrub and hawthorn, and more walnut groves. Exploring this area turned up more woodpeckers, a Hawfinch, and a few White-capped Buntings in the dry scrubby areas (much easier here than by Byloly River). Birding aside, this was a wonderful, relaxing homestay with a friendly family, a great place with excellent food.

July 18. Arslanbob. After visiting the "Small Waterfall" tourist trap, we took a pretty walk up into walnut forest interspersed with gardens and fields in the hills to the southeast of the waterfall. A couple White-winged Woodpeckers, a Red-headed Bunting, and some Spotted Flycatchers here, but little else of interest. I had no luck with my target species, Eastern Orphean

Warbler and Bar-tailed Treecreeper. Another few White-capped Buntings behind the homestay in the afternoon.

July 19. Drove from Arslanbob to Lake Sary-Chelek, which is also a well-known tourist spot. A total of 9 Egyptian Vultures seen en route. After paying something absurd like 1300 som for admission, we drove up to the lake itself, which turned out to be a real disappointment. Maybe it was partly because we arrived on a hot Friday afternoon. But the deal is that there's only a small spot from which you can easily access the lakeshore, the edges being so steep. There were about 200 jubilant tourists packed into this tiny area, and the row of outhouses behind the shoreline exuded a stench of simmering dung into the air. The lake itself is very pretty – maybe try for a visit at sunrise on a weekday if you're dead set on seeing it.

Though they'll happily charge you a camping fee, there's nowhere to actually pitch a tent. A friendly park ranger offered us a spot outside the ranger station, above a pond a little ways back on the access road – I gather this was a special favor. Exploring around here, I found an introduced American Mink by the pond, and a probable Barbary Falcon over distant peaks. Lots of mosquitos here.

July 20. Starting in the early morning, I birded several kilometers down the access road, headed away from the lake. Observations included Rufous-naped Tit (6+), "Yellow-breasted Tit" (common, including an active flock of c. 20 juvs.), Hawfinch (1), and White-winged Woodpecker (1). Also what I'm fairly sure was a Golden Jackal, but it would be a pretty unusual altitude and habitat to find this species in. Tourists started pouring in around 7am, and by 7:30am I was being force-fed an enormous vodka shot from a thermos cap and posing at the center of drunken group photos. A Booted Eagle was seen on the drive out of the park.

From here we began the drive back towards Bishkek on the M41, eventually camping in the Suusamyр area, after having turned off the main road below the Too-Asuu Pass and driven about a kilometer towards Suusamyр village. This was open agricultural land, where I found Montagu's Harrier (1), and heard Common Grasshopper Warbler (3+) and Common Quail (4+). Again, lots of mosquitos.

July 21. Spent a little while birding around the campsite; more Common Grasshopper Warblers and Common Quails heard, and a Turkestan Shrike seen. Then back to Bishkek.

July 22. Left Bishkek for Ala-Archa early in the morning. I had thought it was possible to camp up past the gate by the Alplager, but we were turned back – a presidential villa has been built a little way beyond the gate, so camping is apparently a no-go due to security concerns. We pitched our tent half a kilometer down the road, which worked out alright.

Ala-Archa turned out to be excellent despite its close proximity to Bishkek – there are quite a few people, but the birds and scenery are terrific. There are three main walking paths, which are described in the guidebooks. This afternoon, I walked a few kilometers up the Ak-Say Canyon trail – here I had Lammergeier glide past at 15 meters distance (plus another). Other highlights included Blue-capped Redstart (especially in conifers at the start of the trail), Red-mantled Rosefinch (4), Tree Pipit (1), Eversmann's Redstart (1), Himalayan Griffon (2), and White-browed Tit-warbler (2 in mixed juniper scrub).

July 23. Ala-Archa. In the morning we walked some kilometers up Ala-Archa Valley along the east side of the river. This necessitated making a stream crossing shortly after the end of the paved road. In and around the conifer forest just beyond the Alplager, I found Blue Whistling-Thrush, Goldcrest (2), and Rufous-naped (1) and Coal Tit (1). A Brown Dipper was foraging at the edge of the river a little ways beyond the end of the paved road. Beyond the stream crossing, the birding was actually pretty slow. Highlights were a single Eversmann's Redstart and a probable Barbary Falcon. However, the scrubby slope just southeast of the stream crossing was pretty productive; here I found Red-fronted Serin (1), Blue-capped Redstart (3+), and Black-throated Accentor (4+).

In the afternoon, I walked a couple kilometers up the Adygene Valley trail, and explored the adjacent juniper forest-covered hillside. Not too much here except for Golden Eagle (1), Blue Whistling-Thrush (1) and Black-throated Accentor (1).

July 24. Morning in Ala-Archa. I took a slightly improvised route which turned out to be terrific. There is a very tall rocky outcrop looming immediately to the east of the Alplager. I walked a couple kilometers up the Ak-Say Canyon trail, past a flat, lush alpine meadow, then headed up through sparse juniper scrub and over the saddle connecting the rocky outcrop to the slopes to the east at c. 2700m. I descended from the saddle along the other side of the rocky outcrop, dropping back down a few hundred meters below the Alplager. This took about 4 hours.

Starting up through the conifers beyond the Alplager, I had 7+ Blue-capped Redstarts. Climbing up out of the conifers, I saw Rock Bunting (1), Black-throated Accentor (1) and Red-mantled Rosefinch (8 before reaching the saddle). Hiking uphill from the main path to the saddle, I found a pair of White-tailed Rubythroats, a total of 6 White-browed Tit-warblers, and a pair of White-winged Grosbeaks. Atop the saddle, I could hear Himalayan Snowcocks calling from higher altitudes to the east. I couldn't locate them with my binoculars as I was short on time and the glaring sun had just emerged above the peaks from which they were calling, but I think that with a very early start and some hard work climbing and scanning, it would be possible to spot them here. Descending from the saddle I found Tree Pipit (5+), Siberian Stonechat (1), two more White-browed Tit-warblers, another Red-mantled Rosefinch, two more White-winged Grosbeaks (including a male which came in to feed in a juniper bush 2m from my feet), Rufous-naped Tit (1), and Eversmann's Redstart (1). Back to Bishkek afterwards.

July 25. Left Bishkek early in the morning for Copenhagen.

BIRD SPECIES LIST (taxonomy follows Aye *et al.* 2012)

Himalayan Snowcock *Tetraogallus himalayensis* – 15-20 (7/4) and c. 7 (7/5) May-Saz Valley; calling group heard only Ala-Archa (7/24)

Chukar *Alectoris chukar* – 5 May-Saz (7/4); 2 Salt Lake access road (7/9-10); c. 6 Kara-Koo Pass (7/12)

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* – c. 10 heard only Suusamyr area campsite (7/20-21)

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* - present around lakes, ponds, and slow-moving rivers throughout

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* - 1 Salt Lake access road (7/10); a few Son-Kul (7/11)

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* - several lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); common Son-Kul (7/11)

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* – 1 Salt Lake (7/9)

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* - several lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); several Son-Kul (7/11)

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – common throughout, up to nearly 4000m in places

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* – common throughout, but more so in eastern half of country

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* – 2 Alamedin (6/29); 2 Sary-Tash (7/15); 3 Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16); 1 Byloly River (7/17); 2 Ala-Archa (7/22)

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* – 1 Kara-Koo Pass (7/11); 9 Arslanbob to Sary-Chelek (7/19)

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* - 2+ Alamedin (6/29); 9 Osh to Taldyk Pass (7/15); c. 20 Byloly River (7/16), 2 Ala-Archa (7/22)

Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* – 1 Jeti-Oguz (7/8)

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* – common in many places, particularly east and far west

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* – 1 Suusamyр area campsite (7/20)

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* - 1 Bishkek (6/26); 1 Karakol (7/2); 1+ Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 3+ Ala-Archa (7/22-24), etc.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* – seen regularly throughout; some buzzards were left unidentified

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* – up to 4 daily May-Saz (7/3-6); 1 Osh to Taldyk Pass (7/15); 1 Lenin Peak base camp (7/15); 1 Ala-Archa (7/23)

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata* – 1 Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 1 near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); 1 Kara-Koo Pass to Kazarman (7/12); 1 Sary Chelek (7/20). all birds identified pale morph.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* – 1 Son-Kul to Kara-Koo Pass (7/11); 1 Kara-Koo Pass (7/11); 2 Kaldama Pass to Jalalabad (7/13)

Common Coot *Fulica atra* – hundreds lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu ((7/8)

Common Morhen *Gallinula chloropus* – 1 Salt Lake (7/9)

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* – 2 Karakol to May-Saz Pass (7/3), 4 May-Saz Pass to Karakol (7/6)

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* – 1 Bishkek to Karakol (7/1); c. 4 lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8)

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* – 1 Son-Kul (7/10), 2 Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* – 2 lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); 4 Salt Lake area (7/9)

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* – 1 Son-Kul (7/11); a snipe flushed at Kyzyl-Suu lagoon (7/8) was prob. this sp.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* – 6 near Salt Lake (7/9); common Son-Kul (7/11); 2 Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* – 3 Salt Lake access road (7/9)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* – regularly observed along rivers throughout

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* - 1 near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); common at and around Salt Lake (7/9); common Son-Kul (7/10-11)

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* – 1 Bishkek to Karakol (7/1); several near Salt Lake (7/9); fairly common Son-Kul (7/10-11)

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* – 1 Bishkek to Karakol (7/1); common lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); common Son-Kul (7/10-11); 1 Jalabad to Osh (7/13)

Rock Dove *Columba livia* – common throughout, but probably no pure wild birds; a few domestic colored birds could always be found at even fairly remote sites

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris* – small numbers daily May-Saz (7/3-6)

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* – present throughout, often common

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* – common Alamedin (6/28-30); common below Kaldama Pass (7/12-13); common Byloly River (7/16-17); common Arslanbob (7/17-19); common Sary-Chelek (7/19-20); 5+ Ala-Archa (7/22-24), etc.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaoto* – fairly common around human habitation throughout

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* – common around human habitation in western part of country

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* - 1 Alamedin (6/30); common campsite near Fairy Tale Canyon (7/8), etc.

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* – several heard, 1 seen campsite below Kaldama Pass (7/12)

Common Swift *Apus apus* – common throughout

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* – up to 20 daily Bishkek (6/25-27, 7/21)

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* – commonly seen along roadsides in arid country throughout

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – 1 Salt Lake access road (7/9); common along roadsides in west

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – small numbers in dry country throughout, more common in west

White-winged Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucopterus* – common Arslanbob (7/17-19); 1 Sary-Chelek (7/20)

Turkestan Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides* - 1 lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); 1 campsite near Fairy Tale Canyon (7/8); 1 Fairy Tale Canyon (7/9); 5+ Salt Lake access road (7/9-10); several along southern shore of Issyk-Kul; 1 Suusamyр area campsite (7/21)

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* – commonly seen along roadsides west of Son-Kul

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* – common around Bishkek to Lake Issyk-Kul, and in areas from Kazarman west

Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* – 1 May-Saz (7/5)

Common Magpie *Pica pica* – common throughout

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* - often common in montane areas throughout

Yellow-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus* - often common in montane areas throughout

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* - common around karakol; present Kyzly-Suu area (7/8)

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* – common throughout

Common Raven *Corvus corax* - 1 Salt Lake access road (7/10); common Son-Kul (7/10-11); 50+ below Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16), etc.

Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo* – a few in and around Biskek; fairly common from Kazarman west in appropriate habitat

Great Tit *Parus major* - common Bishkek (6/25-27, etc.); common Alamedin (6/28-30); fairly common Karakol; present lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); a few Ala-Archa (7/22-24)

Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus* - common Alamedin (6/28-30); common Salt Lake access road (7/9-10); 2 below Kaldama Pass (7/13); 1 family Byloly River (7/16-17); common Arslanbob (7/17-19); common Sary-Chelek (7/19-20); 1 family Ala-Archa (7/22)

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* – 2+ Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 1 Ala-Archa (7/23)

Rufous-naped Tit *Periparus rufonuchalis* – common Alamedin (6/28-30); c. 6 Byloly River (7/17); 2 Ala-Archa (7/23-24)

Songar Tit *Poecile songara* – 2 Arashan River (7/7)

White-crowned Penduline Tit *Remiz coronatus* – 3 Salt Lake access road (7/10); 1 probably heard campsite below Kaldama Pass (7/13)

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* - 1+ Jetti-Oguz (7/8); common lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); common Salt Lake (7/9); a few Salt Lake access road (7/9-10)

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* - a few May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3); a few May-Saz (7/4); 1+ Arashan River (7/7)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – common throughout

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* – small numbers most days Bishkek (6/25-27, 7/21, 7/24); regularly small numbers in west (Osh, Jalalabad, Arslanbob, etc)

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – common throughout, up to nearly 4000m at Lenin Peak base camp

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* – 1 Salt Lake access road (7/10); fairly common along roadsides in Jalalbad/Osh area

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* – 1 Son-Kul (7/11); a few more skylarks west of here prob. this sp.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* - common May-Saz (7/3-6); common Son-Kul (7/10-11); common Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* – 1 lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8); common Salt Lake access road (7/9-10)

Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* – c. 4 heard only Suusamyr area campsite (7/20-21)

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* – 2 lagoon near Kyzyl-Suu (7/8)

Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama* – 4+ Salt Lake (7/9)

Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus* – 3 May-Saz (7/4-5)

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* - common in montane forest and scrub

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* – common in appropriate habitat throughout

Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea* – c. 6 Fairy Tale Canyon (7/9); common Salt Lake and Salt Lake access road (7/9-10)

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* - common Alamedin (6/28-30); common Jetti-Oguz (7/8); common Osh to Taldyk Pass (7/15); common Sary-Chelek (7/19-20); common Ala-Archa (7/22-24)

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* – 1 Lenin Peak base camp (7/16)

White-browed Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae* – 2 (7/22) and 8 (7/24) Ala-Archa

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* – 2 Ala-Archa (7/23)

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* – common throughout

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* - several flocks Alamedin to Bishkek and Bishkek to Karakol (7/1); more flocks outside Bishkek (7/20 & 7/24); common in west

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* – seen regularly along roadsides throughout

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* – seen at many sites, typically 2-4 daily, at Alamedin, Arashan River, Jetti-Oguz, below Kaldama Pass, Osh to Taldky Pass, Byloly River, Ala-Archa, etc.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* - fairly common May-Saz (7/4-5); 1 Fairy Tale Canyon (7/9); 2+ Salt Lake access road (7/9-10); present Kara-Koo Pass (7/12); present Alay Valley (7/15), etc.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – 1 Alamedin to Bishkek (7/1); 2 Kara-Koo Pass (7/12)

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* – common throughout

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* – fairly common at many sites throughout

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* – several Salt Lake access road (7/9-10)

White-tailed Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis* – fairly common May-Saz (7/3-6); 2 Ala-Archa (7/24)

Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus caeruleocephala* – 4+ Alamedin (6/30); 16 Arashan River (7/7); 2+ Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 10-15 Ala-Archa (7/22-24)

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* - 4 north side of May-Saz Valley (7/4); common south side of May-Saz Valley (7/5-6); 3+ Ala-Archa (7/22-24)

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* - common May-Saz (7/4-5); 1 Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 1 Lenin Peak base camp (7/16)

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* - common Jeti-Oguz (7/8)

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* - 2 May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3); 1 May-Saz (7/4); 1 May-Saz to May-Saz Pass (7/6); 10+ Lenin Peak base camp (7/16)

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* – 2 Kazarman to Kaldama Pass (7/12); 1 Ala-Archa (7/24)

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* - common May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3); common May-Saz (7/3-6); common May-Saz to May-Saz Pass (7/6); present Son-Kul (7/10-11); present Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* - common May-Saz (7/3-6); common Salt Lake access road (7/10); common below Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* - c. 8 near Fairy Tale Canyon (7/8); common Fairy Tale Canyon (7/9); common Salt Lake access road (7/9-10); 2 Byloly River (7/17)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* – common Arslanbob (7/17-19); common Sary-Chelek (7/20)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* - common Bishkek (6/25-27, 7/21, 7/24)

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* – common throughout near human habitation

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* – c. 30 Alay Valley (7/15)

White-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis* - c. 6 Kalmak-Ashuu Pass (7/10); 1 Son-Kul (7/10); common Taldyk Pass (7/15-16); common Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* – fairly common May-Saz (7/4-5)

Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis* – 3+ May-Saz (7/5-6); 6+ Ala-Archa (7/23-24)

Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana* – 5 May-Saz Pass (7/3); 1 May-Saz (7/4); 1 Kalmak-Ashuu Pass (7/10); 1 Taldyk Pass (7/15); fairly common Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* – 1 May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3); 2 May-Saz (7/3-4); 3 May-Saz to Karakol (7/6); 1 Arashan River (7/7)

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* – 1 Arashan River (7/7); 1 Ala-Archa (7/23)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – common throughout

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* – common at many sites

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – common along rivers throughout

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* - 1 near Fairy Tale Canyon (7/8); 2+ near Salt Lake (7/9); a few Kara-Koo Pass (7/12)

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* - 2 May-Saz (7/6); 6+ Ala-Archa (7/22 & 7/24)

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* - common May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3); common May-Saz (7/3-6); common May-Saz to May-Saz Pass (7/6)

Eurasian Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* – fairly common throughout

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* - common Karakol (7/1-3, 7/6-8); 1 Salt Lake access road (7/10)

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* – 2 May-Saz to May-Saz Pass (7/6), 2 Kalmak-Ashuu Pass (7/10)

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* - 1 Karakol - May-Saz Pass (7/3); 1 flock Salt Lake access road (7/10)

Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus* - 2 Alamedin (6/29); common May-Saz (7/4-6); 2 Arashan River (7/7); common Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 1 Ala-Archa (7/23)

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola* - common May-Saz Pass to May-Saz (7/3 & 7/6), common May-Saz (7/3-6); 1 Taldyk Pass (7/15); fairly common Lenin Peak base camp (7/15-16)

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti* – 20-25 Lenin Peak base camp (7/16)

Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus* – 1 Alay Valley (7/15)

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* – common at many sites

Red-mantled Rosefinch *Carpodacus rhodochlamys* – 1 Jeti-Oguz (7/8), 13 Ala-Archa (7/22 & 7/24)

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* – 1 Arslanbob (7/17); 1 Sary-Chelek (7/20)

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes* – 4 Ala-Archa (7/24)

White-capped Bunting *Emberiza stewarti* – c. 10 Byloly river (7/17); fairly common Arslanbob (7/17-18)

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* - 1 Alamedin (6/28); 4+ Jeti-Oguz (7/8); 1 Ala-Archa (7/24)

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – 3+ Salt Lake access road (7/10); 2+ Suusamyr area campsite (7/21)

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* - 2 May-Saz (7/5); 1 near Fairy Place Canyon (7/8); c. 4 Fairy Place Canyon (7/9); present Salt Lake access road (7/9)

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps* – commonly seen along roadsides west of Son-Kul