

Winter Birding in Kyrgyzstan

29.November – 10.December 2005

- Michael Westerbjerg Andersen



Dear Birdwatcher

All observations are made by my Kyrgyz friends and me in central and eastern Kyrgyzstan 29.November – 10.December. Acknowledgement certainly goes to my Kyrgyz friends who accompanied me during the journey: Luba and her husband Sasha. Misha, Vitalia, Pasha in Tamga (They are my friends and those I always trust) as well as numerous local Kyrgyz who provided me with lots of ornithological information and friendship. These people together with the marvellous landscapes makes travelling and birding in Kyrgyzstan unrivalled!

Majority of time were spending trying to track Saker *Falco cherrug* and investigate the bird's winter diet, occurrence and other aspects. Nevertheless it also gave me the opportunity to check the country's winter birds. I was aware of some of the species presence or absence, but was anyway surprised by the avifauna this time of year. I knew the possibility for huge numbers of waterfowl wintering in Issyk Kul Lake, but was actually surprised by the absence of waterfowl described by other authors.

Issyk Kul Lake covers an enormous area and masses of waterfowls easily can hide somewhere. I assumed the majority were to find in eastern and western part of the lake due optimal water level. As you might think when reading there actually were no enormous amounts of waterfowl and the reason for this might be more or less accurate descriptions by former visitors or simply the fact that birds were not arrived due mild weather conditions. Also I missed more species described from the area, but I doubt anyway the occurrence of some of these species without neglecting and describe observations as misidentified. I easily could have overlooked some birds while I only explored the southern and eastern part of Issyk Kul Lake and nearby fields.

Also, some species like Ibisbill and species occurring in forests by the simple fact that I did not have the time exploring the usual habitats for these species. The same is the reason for fairly few observed mountain species. On the other hand, I think the list fairly well represent the species for the visited areas.

The birds of prey were excellent – and rather difficult to identify. For some of the species mentioned I simply did not obtain good views and for some species I simply lack useful identification reference books – some species/subspecies seen during my stay, simply are not described in the most important field guides – and I really have read and used most of books available. It's not surprising while Central Asia is still ornithological underdeveloped and almost every visit in these years give the observer either grey hair or wonderful challenging birding. Or both.

The buntings were excellent, too.



Winter birding in Kyrgyzstan with Miksture/Michael– December 2006

In 2006 I go again for winter birding in Kyrgyzstan and I already have scheduled an itinerary for 8 days excellent birding in Kyrgyzstan. It will give you the possibility for seeing the species mentioned in this list; furthermore I will take you to other places for getting more mountainous and forest living species. As other Miksture projects these tours welcome everyone though winter birding in Kyrgyzstan might be most interesting for raptor and bunting-freaks... As all Miksture the costs are low and the quality excellent!

All itineraries are accompanied by the staff by my local Kyrgyz team who posses the knowledge and experience to make the tour wholly successful. They know the areas thoroughly and take pride in showing those who travel the local hotspots, confidently coping with any problems that may arise and so greatly increasing the chance that everything will run smoothly. Leading a tour in Europe or North America is one thing, leading one in Central Asia where logistical problems are a fact of life is quite another! Where practicable and necessary we obtain the assistance of local leaders who have both an intimate knowledge of their home areas and the ability to look after the group to the required standard.

Miksture was established with the purpose of encourage and combine Eco-tourism and ornithological scientific research in Central Asia; mainly Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The approach of combining Eco-tourism and Nature Conservation is in many ways opposite activities, but in Kyrgyzstan we have done it without severe compromises for the visitors and the environment. Our tours are the result of friendship and strange ideas and our carefully planned itineraries and intensive approach have since 1994 given those who travel with us an unusually experience.

You are welcome to check this itinerary and contact me for further details & I wish you pleasure in reading and you are naturally welcome to contact me for further information.

All pictures are photographed by me during the journey and further pictures are to be found on my website

Yours Sincerely
Michael, Rungsted Kyst 24.December 2005

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Itinerary

November 29. Bishkek and birds seen along road to Tokmok. Arrival Bishkek at midday after 6 hours flight delay due foggy weather in Bishkek.. 1430 – 1800 Visit village Tokmok east of Bishkek, for getting info about Saker Falcon and meetings friends.

November 30. Bishkek and Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve. Later we drove from Tokmok to Tamga village at Issyk Kul Lake. Several stops along the road gave fine observations, especially at lakeshore in south-western Issyk Kul.

December 1. Tamga village and fields east of village.

December 2. 0730-0920 obs in Tamga, 0925 – Tamga Ala Bash Valley and 1220-1700 Ala Bash Valley.

December 3. Tamga.

December 4. Tamga.

December 5. Morning: Tamga village, 1005 – 1700 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka.

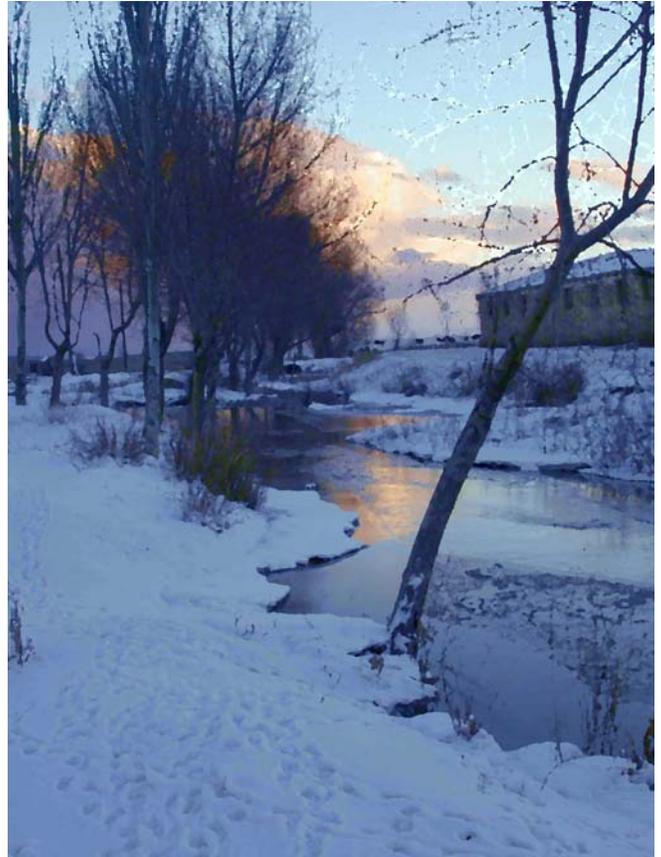
December 6. Area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

December 7. 0830 – 1030 Tamga, 1045 - 1430 Barskaun Gorge and 1500 – 1700 area west of Tamga village – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

December 8. Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

December 9. Tamga - fields east of the village. Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

December 10. Bishkek – Copenhagen, Denmark – home!



Weather

Were in general tolerable... Of course wintertime is not as pleasant as summertime in Kyrgyzstan. In mountainous area at altitudes above 2800 meter the snow were covering the landscape and passage very difficult – impossible. On the other hand, the climate around Issyk Kul Lake is very different. Due thermal underground streams the lake never freezes during winter, this also account the presence of high winter numbers of waterfowls. When water temperatures above zero the surrounding landscape and climate is dominated hereby. It means that winters are milder and warmer than in the mountains and areas away from the lake. Snow cover varies tremendous travelling around the Issyk Kul Lake. Locally there is surprisingly a difference e.g. travelling from the almost snow less Tamga to areas 30 km eastwards the landscape shifts from autumn-like to cold and snow filled landscapes at Karakol area! The weather around Bishkek is very often foggy in winter, making arrival and departure flights something variable thing – very often flights are delayed. This is due occurrence of fog and low temperatures around the city – winter days in Bishkek can be extremely cold! However, very often it's foggy and bad weather in Bishkek whereas a short distance away – in the mountains – its beautiful blue sunny skies! At Issyk Kul it was most days' sunny and excellent weather.

*Systematic List of the Birds observed during our journey. I have included taxonomical remarks issued by AERC TAC (2003) AERC TAC's Taxonomic Recommendations. Online version: www.aerc.be . I assume most travelers in the region would appreciate some taxonomical hints. Subspecies are mentioned, though not in every occasion detailed. In many occasions it's impossible or difficult to pinpoint the ssp. marked with a parenthesis e.g. *Podiceps grisegena (holboellii)*. The AERC TAC recommendation is a useful tool for every taxonomist and certainly a great help for any birder travelling in the region. No doubt, there is several non-described ssp. in the region. Lots to see - lots to do!*

PODICIPEDIDAE

***Podiceps auritus* (monotypic) - Horned Grebe - Nordisk Lappedykker**

5/12 2 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka.

***Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis* - Black-necked Grebe - Sorthalset Lappedykker**

1/12 20 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga, 2/12 50 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 4/12 25 Tamga Bay, 5/12 20 Tamga Bay, 5/12 c.40 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka and 6/12 c.100 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Tachybaptus ruficollis (capensis)* - Little Grebe - Lille Lappedykker**

30/11 5 Tokmok Nature Reserve.

***Podiceps cristatus cristatus* - Great Crested Grebe - Toppet Lappedykker**

4 and 5/12 1 Tamga Bay and 5/12 5 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

***Phalacrocorax pygmeus* (monotypic) - Pygmy Cormorant - Dværgskarv**

30/11 1 shot by local hunters Tokmok Nature Reserve – app. 70 birds present in the area, though very much in danger of getting shot The local hunters accuse the small cormorant for predated small fish in the lakes. Very sad indeed.

ARDEIDAE

***Casmerodius albus albus* - Great Egret - Sølvhejre**

30/11 2 Tokmok Nature Reserve. More birds are present according local hunters.

ANATIDAE

***Cygnus olor* (monotypic) - Mute Swan - Knopsvane**

6/12 c.400 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.



***Cygnus cygnus cygnus* - Whooper Swan - Sangsvane**

30/11 10 Issyk Kul, 1/12 2 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga and 6/12 (+) area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Anser anser rubrirostris* - Greylag Goose - Grågås**

6/12 c.200 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Anser fabalis rossicus* - Bean Goose - Sædgås**

6/12 ++ area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Tadorna ferruginea* (monotypic) - Ruddy Shelduck - Rustand**

2/12 c.355 Issyk Kul – 3 major flocks arriving at night roost in western part of Issyk Kul Lake. This species are seen here and there (where food are present I assume) – at wintertime commonly in groups of considerable numbers. During day they are feeding in fields, sometimes at considerable distance from the lake. 6/12 c.80 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 7/12 c.50 Tamga and 8/12 c.100 Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

***Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos* – Mallard - Gråand**

30/11 350 Tokmok, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve, 2/12 100 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 4/12 c.150 Issyk Kul 2 km east of Tamga, 6/12 c.1000 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 9/12 ++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

***Anas strepera strepera* – Gadwall - Knarand**

6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Anas acuta acuta* - Northern Pintail - Spidsand**

6/12 c.100 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Anas clypeata* (monotypic) - Northern Shoveler - Skeand**

6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Aythya ferina* (monotypic) - Common Pochard - Taffeland**

2/12 + Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3 and 4/12 c.40 Tamga Bay, 4/12 50 Tamga Bay, 6 and 7/12 c.80 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 9/12 c.500 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

***Netta rufina* (monotypic) - Red-crested Pochard - Rødhovedet And**

1/12 16 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga, 2/12 5 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 415 Tamga Bay, 4 and 5/12 c.450 Tamga Bay, 6 and 7/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 8/12 + area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.



***Aythya nyroca* (monotypic) - Ferruginous Duck - Hvidøjet And**

6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Aythya fuligula* (monotypic) - Tufted Duck - Troidand**

2/12 + Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3 and 4/12 c.40 Tamga Bay, 5/12 c.50 Tamga Bay, 6 and 7/12 c.800 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Bucephala clangula clangula* - Common Goldeneye - Hvinand**

6/12 c.80 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 9/12 + Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

***Mergus merganser merganser* – Goosander - Stor skallesluger**

6/12 c.100 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 9/12 + Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



ACCIPITRIDAE

***Gypaetus barbatus aureus* – Lammergeier - Lammegrib**

7/12 2 ad. Barskaun Gorge.

***Gyps himalayensis himalayensis* - Himalayan Griffon Vulture - Himalayagrib**

7/12 1 ad. Barskaun Gorge

***Aquila chrysaetos* (*chrysaetos*) - Golden Eagle - Kongeørn**

1/12 1 imm. fields east of Tamga, 2/12 3 ad. Ala Bash Valley and 7/12 1 ad. Barskaun Gorge.

***Haliaeetus albicilla* (monotypic) - White-tailed Eagle - Havørn**

6/12 3 (1 ad. + 2 1k.) area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol. Hunting coots at Issyk Kul and 9/12 5 (1ad.+2 imm and 2 1.K.) Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate. Some questions may be raised whether this species are monotypic – I wonder whether there actually are intermediate forms present in central Asia.



***Milvus migrans migrans* - Black Kite - Sort Glente and *Milvus migrans lineatus* - Black-eared Kite**

Ssp unrecognised. 29/11 1 Bishkek and birds seen along road to Tokmok and 30/11 3 Tokmok – Tamga; incl. observations along lakeshore.

***Circus cyaneus cyaneus* - Hen Harrier - Blå Kærhøg**

30/11 2 ♀♀/juv Tokmok – Tamga; incl. observations along lakeshore, 6/12 2 ♀♀/juv Area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 8/12 1 ♀ Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

***Buteo rufinus rufinus* - Long-legged Buzzard - Ørnevåge**

(29/12 1 possible Bishkek – Tamga; to little light present for good identification), 2/12 2 ad. and juv. Ala Bash Valley, 4/12 3 fields east of Tamga, 5/12 1 Tamga, 7/12 1 ad. Barskaun Gorge, 8/12 1 Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 4 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

***Buteo buteo (vulpinus)* - Eurasian Buzzard - Musvåge (ssp Steppevåge)**

29/11 2 – nominate and one unrecognised ssp Bishkek and birds seen along road to Tokmok, 30/11 Bishkek and Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve, 30/11 1 Tokmok – Tamga; incl. observations along lakeshore, 2/12 3 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 2/12 1 Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 1 valley south of Saruu, 4/12 1 nominate Tamga, 5/12 3 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 10 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 8/12 3 – hereby one extreme, almost all-dark chocolate collared specimen. It also occurred to me, that the bird were slightly smaller than nominate, but further identification were not possible due blizzard and distance; Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 1 Tamga – and fields east of the village and 9/12 2 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

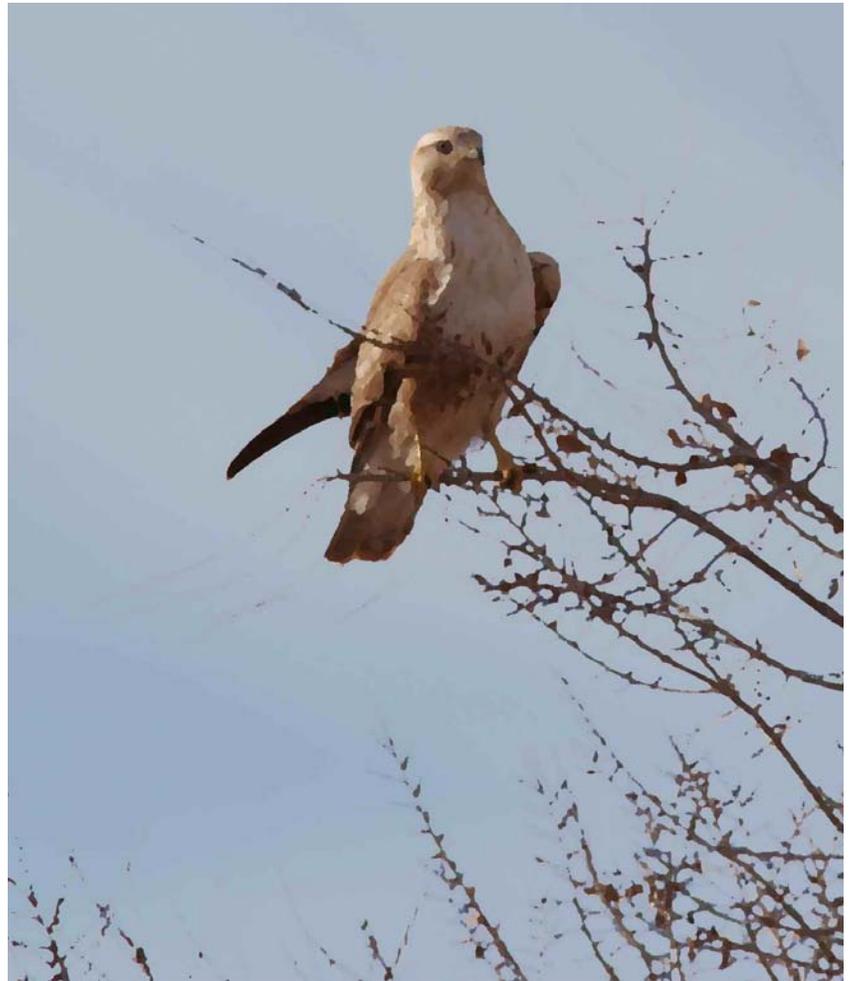
***Buteo burmanicus* - Himalayan Buzzard)**

2/12 2 might be this species; Ala Bash Valley. Pictures are mailed to other birders for further ID - birders with experience about this species. I also have an idea that these birds could be ssp. *Buteo buteo japonicus* present in southern Himalayas.



***Buteo hemilasius (hemilasius)* - Upland Buzzard**

(1/12 1 juv. fields east of Tamga village), (2/12 2 Ala Bash Valley), 4/12 1 juv. Fields east of Tamga, 5/12 1 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 3 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 8/12 1 juv. Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 1-2 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



***Accipiter nisus (nisus/nisosimilis)* - Eurasian Sparrowhawk - Spurvehøg**

1/12 1 ♀ fields east of Tamga village, 4/12 1 ♂ Tamga.

FALCONIDAE

***Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus* - Common Kestrel - Tårnfalk**

30/11 1 Tokmok – Tamga; incl. observations along lakeshore, 2/12 3 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 2/12 4 Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 2 valley south of Saruu, 5/12 1 Tamga, 5/12 4 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 9/12 1 Tamga – and fields east of the village and 9/12 + Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

***Falco columbarius (pallidus)* – Merlin - Dværgfalk**

8/12 1 Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 1 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



***Falco cherrug (cherrug/milvipes)* – Saker - Slagfalk**

In total 5-6 birds present along south shore of Issyk Kul. Present in breeding areas apparently occupied all year round. Prefers areas with little or no snow on ground. I think there are more birds wintering around Issyk Kul, but I am sure they are persecuted by illegal collectors for capture and selling.

PHASIANIDAE

***Alectoris chukar* – Chuckar - Chukarhøne**

2/12 3 Ala Bash Valley.

***Perdix dauurica* Daurian Partridge and *Perdix perdix* Grey Partridge (Agerhøne)**

7/12 3 area west of Tamga village – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 8/12 c.15 Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline. Birds quickly flushed away in opposite direction, which make identification almost impossible. Nevertheless at least 7/12 some of the birds were Grey Partridge. Its stated in *Birds in Kyrgyz Republic*

by Joost van der Ven that only Daurian is present in Kyrgyzstan. Both species occur and I think Grey Partridge is present especially in fields eg. Outside Karakol.

***Phasianus colchicus (principalis)* - Common Pheasant - Fasan**

30/11 1 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 6/12 1 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 6/12 1♂ area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 6/12 1♂ Jeti-Öguz valley.

RALLIDAE

***Rallus aquaticus (aquaticus)* - Water Rail - Vandrikse**

30/11 1 Tokmok Nature Reserve.

***Gallinula chloropus chloropus* - Common Moorhen - Grønbenet Rørhøne**

29 and 30/11 5 Tokmok and Tokmok Nature Reserve.

***Fulica atra atra* - Eurasian Coot - Blishøne**

30/11 c.2000 Issyk Kul, 1/12 15 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga, 5/12 c.400 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 c.1000 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol and 9/12 c.1500 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at southwestern part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.





SCOLOPACIDAE

Tringa tetanus (ussuriensis) - Common Redshank - Rødben

1/12 3 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga.

LARIDAE

The times that gulls were easy to classify are long past. Three species are recognized for this region among the larger gulls.

Larus cachinnans [includes ponticus, mongolicus] - Caspian Gull

5/12 2 ad. area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka and 9/12 c.40 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

PTEROCLIDIDAE

Syrhaptus paradoxus (monotypic) - Pallas's Sandgrouse - Steppehøne

1/12 14 in one flock at broad sandy lake-shore peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga. This is good stuff indeed and certainly not a common sight in this area. Anyway I have for several years suspected this species to occur at suitable habitats along southern shore of Issyk Kul lake. This record might support this theory; anyway this species is known to winter at Issyk Kul and for sure I know breeding sites along northern shore of Issyk Kul. More is to be researched for this enigmatic species.

COLUMBIDAE

Columba livia neglecta - Rock Dove - Klippedue

9/12 2 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



Streptopelia decaocto decaocto [includes stoliczkae] - Eurasian Collared Dove - Tyrkerdue

30/11 1 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 2/12 5 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 2/12 1 Ala Bash Valley, 4/12 20 Tamga, 5/12 + area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 c.80 in total, area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 7/12 6 Tamga, 8/12 + area west of Tamga –



near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 + Tamga – and fields east of the village and 9/12 + Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

PICIDAE

***Dendrocopos leucopterus leucopterus* - White-winged Woodpecker**

30/11 1 Tokmok Nature Reserve.

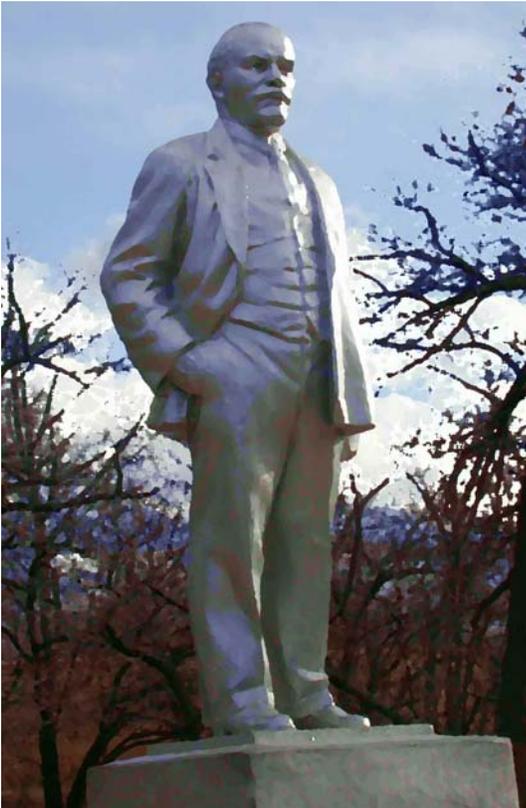
ALAUDIDAE

***Alauda arvensis (dulcivox)* - Eurasian Skylark – Sanglærke**

1/12 2 fields east of Tamga, 4/12 c.3 heard in fields east of Tamga and 6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Galerida cristata (magna)* - Crested Lark - Toplærke**

1/12 1 peninsula in Issyk Kul c.5 km west of Tamga, 2/12 5 Ala Bash Valley, 4/12 3 fields east of Tamga and 9/12 5 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



***Eremophila alpestris (ssp unrecognised)* - Horned Lark - Bjerglærke**

2/12 300+ Ala Bash Valley – unevenly distributed in groups of few to dozens of birds, 6/12 c.250 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 8/12 c.100 Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 2 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

MOTACILLIDAE

***Anthus spinoletta (coutelliis)* - Water Pipit - Bjergpipit**

2/12 1 Ala Bash Valley.

TROGLODYTIDAE

***Troglodytes troglodytes (ssp unrecognised)* - Winter Wren - Gærdesmutte**

20/11 2 Bishkek and 10/12 1 Bishkek.

BOMBYCILLIDAE

***Bombycilla garrulus garrulus* - Bohemian Waxwing - Silkehale**

1/12 20 Tamga village, 4/12 5 Tamga and 7/12 25 Tamga

CINCLIDAE

***Cinclus cinclus leucogaster* – White-throated Dipper – Vandstær (local ssp Hvidbrystet Vandstær)**

2/12 4 Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 3 Valley south of Saruu, 6/12 1 Jeti-Öguz valley.

***Cinclus pallasii pallasii* - Brown Dipper - Himalaya Vandstær**

3/12 2 Valley south of Saruu.

PRUNELLIDAE

***Prunella fulvescens fulvescens* - Brown Accentor**

4 and 7/12 1 in little forest at Tamga Bay.

TURDIDAE

***Erithacus rubecula (rubecula)* - European Robin – Rødhals**

4/12 4 Tamga.

***Phoenicurus erythronotus (monotypic)* - Eversmann's Redstart - Altairødstjert**

30/11 1 ♂ Tokmok Nature Reserve, 4/12 3 in bushes at Tamga Bay and 5/12 3 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka.

***Turdus viscivorus viscivorus* - Mistle Thrush - Misteldrossel**

3/12 2 Valley south of Saruu, 5/12 1 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka and 7/12 1 Tamga, 8/12 c.50 in one flock foraging in the bushes and trees - area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

***Turdus merula intermedius* - Common Blackbird - Solsort**

30/11 2 ♂♂ Bishkek and Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve, 1/12 5 Tamga village, 4/12 1 ♂ Tamga, 5/12 1 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 1 Karakol, 7/12 3 Tamga, 8/12 + area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 1 Tamga – and fields east of the village and 10/12 1 Bishkek.



PARIDAE

Parus major (major) - Great Tit - Musvit

30/11 5 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 1/12 2 Tamga village, 2/12 1 Tamga village, 3/12 2 Tamga, 4/12 8 Tamga, 6/12 5 Jeti-Öguz valley, 7/12 12 Tamga, 8/12 + area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 + Tamga - fields east of the village and 10/12 1 Bishkek.

Parus bokharensis bokharensis - Turkestan Tit

1/12 and 2/12 1 Tamga village showing characters as this species, though not seen well enough for detailed study. Nevertheless more pale and with typical headpatterns, but also different than typical Turkestan Tit.

Parus cyanus (cyanus) - Azure Tit - Azurmejse

30/11 2 Bishkek, 1/12 4 Tamga village, 4/12 1 Tamga, 6/12 3 Jeti-Öguz valley and 10/12 2 Bishkek.

Parus ater (ssp unrecognised) - Coal Tit – Sortmejse

6/12 2 Jeti-Öguz valley.

Leptopoccile sophiae - White-browed Tit-warbler

2/12 2 Ala Bash Valley and 3/12 2 Valley south of Saruu.



TIMALIIDAE

Panurus biarmicus (russicus) - Bearded Reedling - Skægmejse

30/11 10 Issyk Kul.

LANIIDAE

Lanius meridionalis (pallidirostris) - Southern Grey Shrike

7/12 1 Barskaun Gorge – ssp unrecognised; the bird were perching on a pole and quickly flew away when I getting a better view.

CORVIDAE

Pica pica (bactriana) - Common Magpie - Husskade

30/11 + Bishkek and Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve, 1/12 10 Tamga village and fields east of village, 2/12 1 Tamga village, 2/12 + Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 + Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 16 Tamga, 4/12 16 Tamga, 5/12 6 Tamga, 6/12 c.75 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 6/12 2 Jeti-Öguz valley, 7/12 6 Tamga, 8/12 + area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 ++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.

Nucifraga caryocatactes (macrorhynchos) - Spotted Nutcracker - Nøddekrige

3/12 1 Valley south of Saruu.

Corvus monedula soemmeringii - Western Jackdaw – Allike

5/12 2 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka and 6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.



Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax (brachypus) – Red-billed Chough - Alpekrage

1/12 5 Tamga village and fields east of village, 4/12 5 Tamga, 5/12 1 Tamga, 7/12 5 Tamga, 7/12 + Barskaun Gorge, 8/12 c.150 in one flock; Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline. The latter observation was seen after heavy snowing and probably forced the mountainous species down from their usual habitats to more tolerable conditions near



Issyk Kul, 9/12 2
 Tamga – and fields
 east of the village and
 9/12 ++ Tamga –
 Bishkek; incl. stops
 along the road – es-
 pecially at south-
 western part of Issyk
 Kul Lake where most
 of this day's observa-
 tion originate.

***Corvus frugilegus*
 frugilegus – Rook –
 Råge**

29/11 ++ Bishkek and
 birds seen along road
 to Tokmok, 30/11 ++
 Bishkek and Tokmok
 area, including forest
 near Tokmok village
 and nearby nature
 reserve, 1/12 200
 Tamga village and
 fields east of village,

2/12 5 Tamga village, 2/12 100 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 2/12 ++ Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 ++ Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 50 Tamga, 5/12 ++ area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 + Karakol, 7/12 40 Tamga, 7/12 ++ Barskaun Gorge, 9/12 +++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate and 10/12 1 Bishkek.

***Corvus corone orientalis* and *C. c. cornix* - Carrion Crow - Gråkrage (og Sortkrage)**

C. corone: 30/11 1 Bishkek - Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village, 30/11 10 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 1/12 50 Tamga village and fields east of village, 2/12 10 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 ++ Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 15 Tamga, 5/12 + area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 7/12 1 Tamga, 7/12 ++ Barskaun Gorge, 8/12 + Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 1 Tamga – and fields east of the village, 9/12 ++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate and 10/12 1 Bishkek.

C. c. cornix: 1/12 50 Tamga village and fields east of village, 4/12 15 Tamga, 5/12 20 Tamga, 5/12 ++ area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 7/12 ++ Barskaun Gorge and 8/12 + Tamga village, fields and area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline.

***Corvus corax corax* - Common Raven - Ravn**

1/12 3 Tamga village and fields east of village, 3/12 3 Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 1 Tamga and 7/12 3 Barskaun Gorge.

STURNIDAE

***Acridotheres tristis tristis* - Common Myna -
 Almindelig Mynah**

29/11 + Bishkek and birds seen along road to Tokmok, 30/11 1 Bishkek, 30/11 1 Tokmok area, including forest near Tokmok village and nearby nature reserve, 30/11 20 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 30/11 5 Tokmok – Tamga; incl. observations along lakeshore, 1/12 2 Tamga village and fields east of village, 2/12 3 Tamga village, 2/12 5 Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 2 Tamga, 4/12 25 Tamga, 6/12 + area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-



Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 7/12 20 Tamga, 8/12 c.50 area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 c.10 Tamga - fields east of the village, 9/12 c.10 Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate and 10/12 + Bishkek. Wintertime this species occur in small flocks usually 5-8 birds, but larger flocks were seen. At other places far away from Kyrgyzstan I have seen this species at wintertime roosting in large flocks with several hundred birds. I don't think its found in Kyrgyzstan, but it might be possible that larger flocks are present in Bishkek and Karakol when speaking about central and eastern Kyrgyzstan.

TRICHODOMINAE

***Tichodroma muraria* - Wallcreeper**

8/12 1 Tamga village.

PASSERIDAE

***Passer domesticus domesticus* - House Sparrow - Gråspurv**

6/12 + Area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.



***Passer montanus dilutus* - Eurasian Tree Sparrow - Skovspurv**

1/12 40 Tamga village and fields east of village, 2/12 100 Tamga, 2/12 60 Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 c.150 Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 ++(+ Tamga, 5/12 ++ area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 ++(+ Area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 7/12 ++ Tamga and 9/12 ++ Tamga – and fields east of the village.

***Fringilla coelebs (coelebs)* - Common Chaffinch - Bogfinke**

1/12 10 Tamga village, 2/12 4 Tamga village, 2/12 5 Tamga – Ala Bash Valley, 3/12 1 Valley south of Saruu, 4/12 55 Tamga, 7/12 c.100 Tamga, 8/12 + area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline, 9/12 + Tamga – and fields east of the village and 10/12 1 Bishkek.

***Fringilla montifringilla* – Brambling - Kvækerfinke**

1/12 10 Tamga village and 7/12 1 Tamga.



***Carduelis cannabina (bella)* - Common Linnet – Tornirisk**

6/12 15 in one group, area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Carduelis carduelis paropansi* - European Goldfinch - Stillits**

Ssp *paropansi* are very distinctive and probably splitted within few years to Grey-headed Goldfinch. 3/12 15 Valley south of Saruu and 6/12 2 area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol.

***Carduelis chloris (turkestanicus)* - European Greenfinch – Grønirisk**

30/11 5 Tokmok Nature Reserve, 7/12 1 Tamga.

***Loxia curvirostra (curvirostra)* – Common Crossbill - Lille Korsnæb**

10/12 1 Bishkek

***Uragus sibiricus* - Long-tailed Rosefinch**

5/12 c.10 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka



EMBERIZIDAE

Emberiza citrinella (*citrinella*) - Yellowhammer – Gulspurv

5/12 c.100 in total area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka.

Emberiza leucocephalos leucocephalos - Pine Bunting - Hvidkindet Værling

3/12 huge flock c.500 birds in one flock mixed with *Emberiza calandra* Corn Bunting and *Passer montanus* - Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Majority c.90% were Pine Buntings. Very interesting and difficult to pinpoint were all these birds come from. Pine Bunting breeds in the valleys E of Karakol, but not in high numbers; locally uncommon breeding bird. Anyway Pine Buntings were seen regularly on most days but nowhere in such numbers as 3/12. 5/12 c.10 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka and 7/12 1 Barskaun Gorge.



Sp Emberiza citrinella/*Emberiza leucocephalos* - Yellowhammer/Pine Bunting

1/12 50 fields east of Tamga, 5/12 40 Tamga, 5/12 c.100 area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 ++ (c.800) area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 8/12 ++(+) area west of Tamga – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 ++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate. The visitor without doubt observes several over flying flocks of buntings in these areas during wintertime. Both species occur and both species are localised common – and are seen in mixed flocks. Very interesting and troublesome to handle, while it takes times identifying and reading through all the birds when encounter one of these flocks. Mixed flocks of buntings and sparrows are present at many habitats. Also we passed flocks of bunting while driving and not always had the time and opportunity to make a stop for precise identifying; just to mention that these birds are interesting and occur fairly common everywhere at the countryside. I am suspicious that some of the flocks include buntings of different species than observed by me. On the other hand I too observed “pure” flocks with only one species present.

Eberiza cioides - Meadow Bunting

2/12 c.20 in one flock Ala Bash Valley.

Emberiza calandra (*calandra*) - Corn Bunting - Kornværling

1/12 10 Tamga village and fields east of village, 3/12 c150 Tamga – Saruu – Tamga including valley south of Saruu, 4/12 10 Tamga, 5/12 +(+) area NW of Kyzyl-Suu; incl. peninsula Kaynar and south-shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk/Lipenka, 6/12 ++ Area east of Tüp and Mikhaylovka-penninsula; incl. Issyk Kul shore from Tüp, Ak-Bulang and northern shore of Pristan-Prjevalsk to Karakol, 7/12 + area west of Tamga village – near Issyk Kul shoreline and 9/12 ++ Tamga – Bishkek; incl. stops along the road – especially at south-western part of Issyk Kul Lake where most of this day's observation originate.



References: AERC TAC Checklist of bird taxa occurring in Western Palearctic region, With distributional notes on subspecies - 15th Draft and observations Michael Westerbjerg Andersen in the period 1994-2005

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