

Altai



A report from a bird watching trip in S Russia and NW Mongolia May 24 – June 10 2007

Compiled by Mikael Malmaeus

Introduction

Between May 24 and June 8 in 2007 four Swedish ornithologists – Fredrik Friberg, Magnus Hellström, Mikael Malmaeus and Mats Waern – traveled in Southern Siberia and Northwestern Mongolia. This report contains details about practicalities, observations and events from the journey.

Appendix 1: Maps and a list with coordinates for all the major sites that we visited. Each site has been given a number which frequently will be related to in the text.

Appendix 2: A list of observed species.

Photos from the trip can be found at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/mats.waern>

<http://picasaweb.google.com/stenura>

Itinerary

RUSSIA

May 25: Barnaul area (including wetland 11 km E of Pavlovsk and a valley a couple of km's NE of the village Barakino). Night in Barnaul.

May 26: Barnaul airport. Night in Gorno-Altai.
May 27: Seminskiy pass – Chike Taman – Village Inya – Belyy Bom – Chuya river – Kuray steppe – Tashanta. Night near Tashanta.
May 28: Tashanta – village Kurley – settlement Buguzun – village Aktal. Night near village Aktal.
May 29: Village Aktal

MONGOLIA

May 29: Village Tsagaannuur – gorge E from Tsagaannuur – semi-desert plains E from gorge – Lake Achit Nuur. Night by Lake Achit Nuur.
May 30: Lake Achit Nuur – mountain pass N of Achit Nuur – Lake Uureg Nuur – Ulaangom. Night outside Ulaangom.
May 31: Ulaangom – village Kharkhira – Türgen mountains. Night in mountains.
June 1: Türgen mountains – village Kharkhira – Lake Khar Us Nuur. Night by the lake.
June 2: Lake Khar Us Nuur. Night by the lake.
June 3: Lake Khar Us Nuur – village Namir - river connecting Achit Nuur with the Khovd river – Lake Tsagaannuur. Night by the lake.
June 4: Lake Tsagaannuur

RUSSIA

June 4: Belyy Bom. Night near Belyy Bom.
June 5: Shavla Wildlife Refuge. Night in Shavla.
June 6: Shavla Wildlife Refuge – Seminskiy pass. Night in Seminskiy pass.
June 7: Seminskiy pass - Barnaul

Transportation, accommodation

We traveled with Aeroflot from Stockholm to Moscow and from Moscow to Barnaul return journey. The price was around €600 per person.

In Russia and in Mongolia we were transported by a private car provided by our hosts. The car was a UAZ van with four wheel drive and excellent cross-country properties. The roads in Mongolia require cross-country capabilities while some roads in the visited parts of Russia may be explored with a standard car. In Western Mongolia petrol stations are very sparse so our driver brought a sufficient amount of fuel in a reserve tank.

Accommodation was mostly in a large tent. A few nights were spent at the airport hotel in Barnaul (cost: around €15 per person) and one night in Gorno-Altai (cost: less than €10/person).



The UAZ van with four wheel drive had excellent cross-country properties.

Weather

Compared to a Scandinavian climate it seemed to rain more in Russia and in Mongolia it was rather windy. We have obtained better tans elsewhere and nights and mornings were often cold (close to 0 °C). Days were often warm in Mongolia.

Visas

From Sweden, Mongolian visas are easily obtained from the consulate by mail correspondence. The cost was around €70 per person.

Russian visas are more difficult to obtain and usually require invitations from local people. Hotels and travel agents may assist in these procedures and we used Spectrum (www.spectrum.se) to obtain our visas and invitations. Since we were traveling back and forth into Mongolia and thus entered Russia twice business visas were the most appropriate in terms of cost and convenience. For these documents we paid around €350 including visas, invitations and administration fees.

Food and currency

Most of the food was bought in Russia and cooked in the field. In Russia it is not hard to find roadside bars and restaurants while Western Mongolia is more or less void of comforts.

We brought some rubles into Russia but acquired most of it from local cash machines. Mongolian currency was exchanged in Ulaangom.

Planning

Among the advantages of traveling outside your most familiar places and regions is that you can't control everything. And certainly you learn that mostly you don't need it. The best experiences were those you were not able to imagine before you got there. There remains a lot to be discovered in the vast regions of Southern Siberia and Western Mongolia, and we were lucky enough to be forced off the roads of our intended route.



"We had managed to find and ride the road up the mountainside 2 260 m.a.s.l. and we climbed up to 3 000 meters without Gandalf's supervision, but we were rewarded with heavy snowfall and no birds..."

Still for obvious reasons some planning is necessary, as already Dostoyevsky noticed you don't get anywhere in Russia without documents. That is you need a visa and to get that you need an invitation. And anyhow, to get you out of any trouble it is invaluable to have a local contact or preferably a guide. Passing the border between Russia and Mongolia twice, as we did, requires additional rubles and much time at the border crossing. That part of the planning might have been a mistake... Russian visas and invitations were arranged by a travel agency specialized in Russia (Spectrum). The Mongolian visas were cheaper and easily obtained from the Mongolian consulate in Gothenburg.

We started out planning from maps and Google Earth, looking for interesting habitats. From internet contacts, step by step we found reliable people in Russia that would arrange the transports and other things. Our contact at the university in Gorno-Altai, Mikhail Paltsyn is a scientist working with nature conservation and speaks good English. He arranged for us a car (UAZ), an excellent driver (Max) and an experienced field guide (Sergey). We communicated mostly in German. They were familiar with the terrain also in Mongolia from earlier expeditions. They also had a large tent where we slept well most nights and they made all the cooking on a gas stove.

So we had a very carefully prepared plan. In fact, nothing went wrong at this stage. But we made some mistakes later on and here's the story. You may turn directly to Appendix 2 if you are only interested in the bird species.

Mistake no1: Checking in the luggage the whole way. (May 24-25)

We hesitated when the staff at the luggage desk told us we could get our luggage checked in all the way from Stockholm to Barnaul. We didn't have to see it through in Moscow. We gained little extra time at the airport in Moscow but were surprised to find two bags missing when we arrived in Barnaul early in the morning. Apparently they had been sent to Frankfurt and would possibly appear in Barnaul the next day, if we were "extremely lucky". We spent several hours in the customs and at the Aeroflot office in what seemed like a downright grilling. Mikael and Magnus had to give details about the color of their underwear and other things, as if that would help Aeroflot solve the pretty basic task of sending our bags to the destination they were intended. They made us feel like criminals and typing this we are right now paying them back in a currency that may be termed "Bad publicity". Rats.

No shadow should ever fall upon our hosts, Mikhail and Max, who really made the waiting worthwhile. We spent the day birding in the vicinity of Barnaul, especially the western surroundings. We tried to reach the brinks of the Ob River where the maps said there would be wetlands, but we were not quite successful. Examining the various tracks and trails that could have taken us to the river we found several attractive habitats and inhabitants already on our first day in Russia.

We followed a small stream valley (from site 2 and northward) that would eventually enter the river but we never got that far. On our various stops along the way we found among other things 2+2 **Gadwalls**, a female **Black Grouse**, several **Common Quails**, **Corn Crane**, 4+2 **Black Terns**, 3+1 **White-winged Terns**, 4 **Oriental Turtledoves**, a **White-backed Woodpecker**, **Yellow Wagtails** (some 20 *beema* and 30 *thunbergi*), 2 singing **Bluethroats**, quite a few **Common Stonechats**, around 15 **Blyth's Reed Warblers**, around 10 **Chiffchaffs** (*tristis*) and 7 **Eurasian Golden Orioles**.

The most exciting site of the day was a small and open valley with lush vegetation a couple of kilometres **northeast of the village Barankino** (site 3). Hunting from the north came a beautiful male **Pallid Harrier**, which later proved to be the only sighting of this species during the trip. In this place we also saw a **Black Stork**, 3 **Corn Crakes**, a **White-backed Woodpecker**, several pairs of **Common Stonechats**, 1 **Common Grasshopper Warbler**, at least 10 hybrid males of **Yellowhammer** × **Pine Bunting** (some individuals looking almost like clean specimens).

Due to the jet lag we were rather exhausted in the evening. We made a dinner consisting of bread and vodka in our rooms at the **Barnaul airport** hotel. In the morning we took walks in the forest and datja area by the airport and hotel. We encountered **Lesser Whitethroats**, **Common Whitethroats**, **Chiffchaffs** and **Greenish Warblers**.

Mistake no2: Checking in together. (May 26-27)

No, the bags did not turn up that day. The responsible people in Moscow could confirm that the bags were in Moscow and they would send them with the evening flight to Barnaul. It thus made sense for us to wait another night but taking no chances we kept the contact with the local airport crew which to us seemed to be the only ones we could trust in that building. Around noon we made a visit to their office and asked them to check one more time that the bags were really sent with the next flight. Then it appeared that while

the two missing bags were actually checked in together with the two bags that did arrive, we should not have given our personal details in some of the forms we filled in during the grilling the day before. We should have filled in the personal details of Mr. Waern who obviously checked in the bags in Stockholm. To correct this enormous mistake was not possible to do in such a short time. It was around twelve hours before the evening flight would take off and so the answer was definitely 'no', the bags would not arrive. Not the next day and not even the day after that because the next day was Sunday and blah blah blah.

Thus two of us had only binoculars and telescopes, but no tripods and no clothes or sleeping bags or whatever. However, it appeared that we could borrow tripods, sleeping bags and some other things and Sergey, who was waiting for us in Gorno-Altai, would buy us some things we couldn't borrow. It made sense. We set sails for Gorno-Altai where we met Sergey, and took two rooms in a cheap hotel at the city square. Early in the morning we started driving towards the Mongolian border in Tashanta.

In the morning the rain was pissing down heavy but during the day the weather improved slightly. We noticed that the **Hooded Crows** that were common around Barnaul were replaced by **Carrion Crows**. We made several stops along the way. In **Chike Taman** (site 6) we found two male **Dark-throated Thrushes** singing in the rain, a **Siberian Rubythroat**, **Isabelline** and **Pied Wheatear**.

Soon after the Chike Taman pass the rain ceased. Near **Village Inya** (site 7) we stopped to buy fuel. The habitat was open and short grazed pastures and by a ditch a **Tawny Pipit** and two **White Wagtails** resided (one *ocularis* and one *alba*). Other birds on the site included a subadult **Eurasian Black Vulture**, around 10 **Lesser Kestrels**, some 20 **Citrine Wagtails**, and 3 **Rose-colored Starlings**.

We made a somewhat longer stop for lunch and birdwatching by some forest meadows just *south of Chuya River* (site 9). Only a few kilometers before this stop we had stopped to hear our first **Scaly Thrush**. The lunch stop itself produced e.g. 2 **Imperial Eagles**, **Common Buzzard**, both **Common** and **Oriental Cuckoo**, **Spotted Nutcracker** and 2 grey-headed **Goldfinches** (*subulata*).

Soon after lunch the **Kuray Steppe** appeared before our sight. On the western side of the steppe we found three **Imperial Eagles** by a nest, **Ruddy Shelducks** and 3 **Rose-colored Starlings**. Further along the road we met our first **Upland buzzard**.



Morning near Tashanta

On the **Chuya Steppe**, near **Kosh Agash**, we found our first 2 **Isabelline Shrikes**. We stopped **3,5 km northwest from Tashanta** (site 10) and the Mongolian border and made our first camp. The wind was blowing very strongly and we had to put stones on the tarpaulin to make the tent stay on the planet. Inside the tent Sergey and Max prepared an excellent dinner, basically made from tinned meat and lentils, made

up with onion and vegetables. Variants of the same meal (lentils exchanged for noodles or rice, meat exchanged for sardines or lentils et cetera) were provided for lunch and dinner for the coming two weeks, and it tasted supreme this first night. It must have been very healthy too since we stayed on our feet without any trouble wheresoever during the whole expedition. We slept well in the tent but we also learned that the nights were rather cold and some of the sleeping bags were not quite suitable for this activity.

We woke up to a calm and beautiful morning and strolled around the camp to find i.a. **Eurasian Black Vulture**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Tawny Pipit**, **Rock Sparrow** and around 3 **Père David's Snowfinches**. This place was also where the **Horned Larks** started to dominate the avifauna as it would all the way through Mongolia.

Mistake no3: We shouldn't have waited for the bags at all. (May 28-29)

At 9 a.m. we arrived at the customs first in line only to find that the border was closed. We knew it would be closed the day before because it was Sunday, and that was why we allowed ourselves to wait for the bags in Barnaul. Today was Whit Monday and the disciples were in seventh heaven. We had to wait another day before we were let in.

Instead, we invaded the Chuya Steppe again, and our first seizure was a bush habitat **2 kilometers northeast from Kurley** (site 11). Sightings included a **Richard's Pipit**, a male **Barred Warbler**, a female **Taiga Flycatcher** and a hybrid **Isabelline** × **Red-backed Shrike**.

We went on to attack the northern side of a hill **1 km northeast from Baguzun** (site 12). We were bowled over by snowfall, and this produced a fallout of migrants in a grove of spruce trees, yielding at least 50 **Hume's Leaf Warblers**, **Chiffchaff**, a pair of **Eversmann's Redstart** and 5 **Twites**. We also found 15-20 **Water Pipits** passing above us and a magnificent **Upland Buzzard** on the way back.

In the afternoon we besieged a dense *Salix* forest by a small river **3 kilometers east from Aktal** (site 13). The most prominent warbling bird in the habitat was **Booted Warbler** with up to 10 singing individuals. Other birds included **Bluethroat**, **Chiffchaff**, **Greenish Warbler**, 2 pairs of **Azure Tits** and 1 pair of **Long-tailed Rosefinch**.

In the morning we continued birdwatching in the *Salix* forest before we returned at the border. We counted at least 20 singing **Booted Warblers**, 2 **Barred Warblers**, a singing **Scaly Thrush** (apparently on migration), three pairs of **Long-tailed Rosefinches** and a singing **Yellow-breasted Bunting**. 12 **Eurasian Black Vultures** were sitting on a mountain side in the distance.

This time we passed the border successfully, although it took perhaps two hours on the Russian side and 2 hours on the Mongolian. Ironically, the only sighting of **Great/Southern Grey Shrike** during the whole trip was made between the border crossings and we were not allowed to stop! Since the Altai region is extremely interesting for studying the taxonomy of these species this was a really sad experience.

No4: The Achit Nur Mistake. (May 29-30)

After entering Mongolia we made our first stop by a pond along the road some **15 km west from Tsagaannuur** (site 14). 1 pair of **Whooper Swan**, 7 **Bar-headed Geese** and 4 **Water Pipits** were observed.

On a moist meadow by **Lake Tsagaannuur** (site 15) we found a pair of **Whooper Swans**, some 25 pairs of **Black-Headed Gulls**, around 40 **Citrine Wagtails** (showing intermediate characteristics of *calcarata* and *citreola*).

The road entered into a gorge for several kilometers. Inside this gorge we saw around ten **Eurasian Crag Martins** and two **Brown Accentors**. We made one significant stop at a *Salix* shrubbery **23 kilometres east of Tsaagannuur** (site 16) where we found a **European Pied Flycatcher** (4:th record for Mongolia) together with a **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** and a **Brown Shrike**.

The gorge emerged into a gorgeous plain with red mountains on the horizon. The afternoon was spent mainly on the road, but the gravel road more or less disappeared along the way and we could not follow the pathway written on the GPS. The landscape was mostly semi-desert dominated by **Horned Larks**, **Desert** and **Isabelline Wheatears**. We also (at site 17) encountered 7 **Henderson's Ground-Jays**, around 5 **Isabelline Shrikes** and one hybrid **Isabelline** × **Red-backed Shrike**.

The closer we came to **Lake Achit Nuur** the more frequently gullies and boulders interrupted our way. We advanced very slowly. We arrived at the lake (site 18) in the last of daylight and managed to see a flock of around 30 **White-winged Terns** before the sun went out. We heard a **Great Bittern** calling in the darkness.

Morning came, we rose and shone as the sun. The wetland at the southwestern edge of the lake held lots of birds including 5 **Arctic Loons**, around 50 pairs of **Great Crested Grebes**, 30 **Great Egrets**, 5 **Greylag Geese**, 50 **Garganeys**, 250 **Red-crested Pochards** and several other species of ducks (see species list). Other highlights were 1 **Little Crake**, 2 **Long-toed Stints**, 2+9 **Asian Dowitchers** and 15 **Paddyfield Warblers** and a **Savi's Warbler**. Close to the lake we also spotted around 35 **Pallas's Gulls**, **Pacific Swift**, **Lesser Short-toed Larks** (common), 5 **Richard's Pipits** and **Yellow Wagtails** (*leucocephala*, *beema* and intermediates).



Asian Dowitchers

One of the ornithologists were so thrilled by the clearness and the epilimnetic temperature of the lake that he lost his glasses in the sediment and they were only found after ten minutes of utter coldness. This could have been the tragic Achit Nuur Mistake but it turned out slapstick comedy. And most of us came up from the water cleaner than before.

Mistake no5: Looking for Gandalf. (May 30)

Had we successfully found this wizard we might not have given him this mystifying alias, but we did not find him. He was looking after the snow leopards (or did they say lepers?) in the reserves of Western Mongolia and he was also supposed to be well up to date with the road status in the region and would thus be capable of offering us information that our GPS could not produce. We more or less depended on this man to realize most of our plans for the next few days. Therefore we spent another day on the road, or should we say off the road, in the semi-desert, directed towards Ulaangom – a small and lonely town by the shore of Lake Uvs Nuur.

Before getting there, however we passed a few stations, including a lunch stop at a mountain pass some **40 km north from Achit Nuur** (site 19). Only one or two kilometers after the lunch stop we had to stop again

to fix a punctured tire. In this area we saw an adult **Lammergeier**, **Eurasian Black Vulture**, 2 **Golden Eagles**, an **Upland Buzzard** on a nest, **Saker Falcon**, 2-3 territories of **Brown Accentors**, **White-winged Snowfinches**, around 5 **Mongolias Finches** and 1 pair of **Plain Mountain Finch**..

Passing the southern shore of **Lake Uureg Nuur** (site 20) we saw 17 **Greater Sand Plovers** and 2 **Pallas's Sandgrouses** next to the road.

Other sightings along the road included some 20 **Steppe Eagles**, **Upland Buzzard**, **Saker Falcon** and **Père David's Snowfinches**.

We made our camp outside the city of **Ulaangom** (site 21) with Lake Uvs Nuur visible in the horizon. The morning in the bush land where camels and sheep resided produced a male **Lesser Kestrel**, 2-3 **Greater Sand Plovers**, 2 **Gull-billed Terns**, at least 2 **Richard's Pipits** and 4 **Blyth's Pipits** flying over. One of the Blyth's Pipits landed on the ground. Further a **Dusky Warbler**, 4 male and a nesting female **Isabelline Shrikes** and a male **Yellow-breasted Bunting** were sighted.

But no Gandalf was present at the office and no one could tell when he would be back. Some employees at the town administration told us their opinion about the mountain roads and they were not optimistic. We decided to make an effort where the chances seemed best that the road would lead to some altitude although we were not convinced that we would reach our target 3 000 m.a.s.l.

Mistake no6: Snowballed in the Türgen Mountains. (May 31-June 1)

We climbed the small road up the valley westward from **Kharkhira village** (site 22). Slowly, very slowly, since the road consisted mostly of boulders and basically followed a mountain streambed.



Driving in Türgen

Not without difficulty the car ascended and along the way we saw i.a. 26 **Eurasian Black Vultures** (one flock), 3 **Golden Eagles**, 6 **Steppe Eagles** (including an adult bird), a male **Rose-colored Starling**, and 3-4 **Grey-necked Buntings**.

Late afternoon, reaching more than 2 000 meters altitude in the **Türgen Mountains** (site 23) we found at least 7 displaying **Blyth's Pipits**, **Plain Mountain Finch** (1 pair), 2 **Ortolan Buntings** and 3 **Grey-necked Buntings**. The scene was set for a beautiful walk the morning after as the car could not take us higher. But the walk did not turn out as well as we wished for.

Hard-core birding in the Türgen Mountains in June.



This was not our mistake; it was God's own mistake. We had actually managed to find and ride the road up the mountainside 2 260 m.a.s.l. and we climbed up to 3 000 meters without Gandalf's supervision, but we were rewarded with heavy snowfall and no birds. "It must be very beautiful here!" Fredrik cried once, and who can tell if he was right? It might be added that it was an unforgettable day. It might be added too that we observed a few birds during the day, most notably 2 **Pallas's Sandgrouses** and some 200 **Brandt's Mountain Finches**. At 2 p.m. we returned to the camp and started rolling down the valley.

Descending, the snow turned into rain and ceased and the valley was apparently holding some birds that had escaped the bad weather in the higher places, including a **Hoopoe**, a male **Taiga Flycatcher**, 2 male **Red-backed Shrikes**, 2 male **Brown Shrikes** and 2 **Isabelline Shrikes**.

Mistake no7: Cancelling the visit to the best lake in Western Mongolia. (June 1-3)

Having lost a lot of time and the blessing hand of Gandalf we did not dare to visit the anticipated hot spot Lake Ayrag Nuur, since we were still several hundred kilometers west from its position. Knowing what we knew about the road standard and about our luck we found it wiser to start moving westward in order to get back to Russia in time for our flight home. Thus we picked another lake from the map – Lake Khar Us Nuur. That meant that we had to go south from Kharkhira for several hours.

On the side of the road we saw an **Upland Buzzard** and around 150 **Demoiselle Cranes**. One of the absolute highlights of the journey was also waiting here, 14 kilometers north-northeast from Burgaasatayn-Örtöö (site 24) – a displaying male **Oriental Plover**.

The wind was blowing really hard when we reached the northwestern shore of **Khar Us Nuur**. While we were putting up the tent (site 25) we watched around 400 **Rose-colored Starlings** flying in to roost in the reeds.

We spent the whole day of June 2 by the lake and left in the morning on June 3. In the lake we found 11 **Horned Grebes**, around 40 **Black-necked Grebes**, 13 **Swan Geese** and good numbers of different kinds of geese and ducks (see species list). Raptors included **White-tailed Eagle**, **Imperial Eagle** and **Saker Falcon**. Around the lake we also found several species of waders, including 2 **Terek Sandpipers** and 2

Asian Dowitchers, and around 150 **Pacific Swifts**, around 30 **Mongolian Larks**, **Richard's Pipits**, **Blyth's Pipits**, **Citrine Wagtails** and a **Grasshopper Warbler**. In the hills to the north of the lake we found 3 **Siberian Rubythroats** (resting on migration), 1+2 **Desert Warblers** (1 singing) and many **Rock Sparrows**.

In the evening of June 2 Magnus arrived late for dinner in the tent and the reason was unusually productive birding on the western shore. Especially, 3 **Relict Gulls** landed for the night together with some 90 **Black-headed Gulls** in the south-western corner of the lake. Mikael and Fredrik rolled the dice and ran across the wetlands in the dusk and arrived just in time to get some decent views of the jewels before the **Common Snipes** dropped the curtains and started their concert.

In the morning 2 **Kozlov's Accentors** were found in the hills facing the northern side of the lake. This finding was a surprise to us since we knew of no previous records in this region of Mongolia.



Mats Waern discussing the importance of cleaned lenses.

Last days in Mongolia. (June 3-4)

We left Khar Us Nuur after breakfast and drove westward halting briefly **21 kilometres west-northwest from Namir** (site 26) in a rocky area where we found another 2-3 territories of **Kozlov's Accentors**, a male **Meadow Bunting** and a few other species.

Along the road we noticed i.a. a nesting **Golden Eagle**, and some 20 **Isabelline Shrikes** including 2 possible **Isabelline × Red-backed Shrike** (at site 27). We passed a **river connecting Achit Nuur with the Khovd river** (site 28) south from the lake, and by the river crossing we observed **Black Stork**, **Barred Warbler**, 25 **Mongolian Finches**, **Long-tailed Rosefinch** and a **Grey-necked Bunting**.

We headed towards Tsaaganuur passing Lake Achit Nuur and the same valley and gorge that we passed on May 29. In the mountain pass by the *Salix* shrubbery (site 16, cf. May 29) plenty of migrating warblers were feeding, including around 40 **Hume's Leaf Warblers**, **Greenish Warblers**, a probable **Arctic Warbler**, a **Radde's Warbler** and a **Dusky Warbler**. In the same place we also found 2 **Brown Accentors**, a **Siberian Rubythroat**, a female **Taiga Flycatcher**, 4 **Mongolian Finches** and a male **Black-faced Bunting**.

In late afternoon we reached the northern side of **Lake Tsaaganuur** (site 15) where we put up the camp and executed some birdwatching before dinner. Sightings included 4 **Terek Sandpipers**, a female **Red-headed Bunting** and several **Common Reed Buntings**. Birdwatching continued in the morning and added a **Booted Warbler** and in the steep hillsides facing the north side of the lake around 10 **White-winged Snowfinches** and up to 10 **Brown Accentors** were found.

Staying slightly too long by the lake was our next silly mistake. We were not the first in line at the border and as a result we had to spend slightly more than 9 hours by the customs and lost another day of birdwatching. By the time we arrived to our camping site (*3 km northwest from Belyy Bom* (site 8) by the Chuya river) a **European Scops Owl** was eagerly calling.

June 5.

The morning in Belyy Bom produced a few observations of **Pine Bunting** (around 5 individuals).

Having failed most of the anticipated mountain species in Mongolia we were eager to explore the Russian mountains that were familiar to our guides. We followed a muddy track into the *Shavla Wildlife Refuge* but even the UAZ could not take us up the hills so we were forced to return and birdwatching in the valley (site 29). Providence gave us a **Swinhoe's Snipe**, **Oriental Cuckoo**, a **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, 2 **Black-throated Accentors**, probably 2 singing **Scaly Thrushes** and around 5 **Blyth's Reed Warblers**.



Breeding habitats for Oriental Turtle Doves and Black-throated Accentors.

The afternoon was spent at a lower mountain top near a radar station where the wind was blowing really hard. A male **Hen Harrier** flushed a **Willow Ptarmigan**, and another **Swinhoe's Snipe** was encountered in the undergrowth.

We camped in a pass (site 30) a few hundred metres below the radar station just below the tree line. Among the observations a female **Hen Harrier**, around 3 **Oriental Turtle Doves**, around 3 **Black-throated Accentors**, around 5 **Siberian Rubythroats**, a male **Eversmann's Redstart** and another singing **Scaly Thrush** may be mentioned. We also found footprints of bear.

June 6.

Early morning birds were explored from the road below the camp site, and it was a cold and extremely beautiful morning concert with some 4 **Scaly Thrushes** whistling, around 10 **Red-flanked Bluetails**, 5 **Siberian Rubythroats** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler**. But we never once saw anything of these mysterious scaly thrushes. 2 pairs of **Oriental Turtle Doves**, 3 **Three-toed Woodpeckers** and around 5 **Siberian Tits** were also observed. A big animal rumbled in the thicket close to the road.

We spent most of the day in the car heading north-west. Notable observations from the backseat and during short stops included a few **Oriental Turtle Doves**.

The camp site for the night was a field in a valley on the east side of the road some *10 kilometres north of the Seminskiy pass* (site 31). The dominating bird at this site was **Dark-throated Thrush** numbering some 50 adult individuals and many chicks. Other observations included 3 **Common Buzzards** and 4 pairs of **Common Stonechat**.

The final mistake: Going home. (7-8 june)

Cold early morning by the camp gave us a new **Swinhoe's Snipe**, a calling **Ural Owl**, **Siberian Rubythroats** and **Black-throated Thrushes** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler**.

We headed north towards Barnaul, had lunch in Gorno-Altai and took two rooms at the airport hotel in Barnaul. Along the way we had i.a. a singing **Oriental Turtle Dove** and a male **Pine Bunting**, and by the airport a singing **Common Quail** and 3 singing **Eurasian Golden Orioles**.

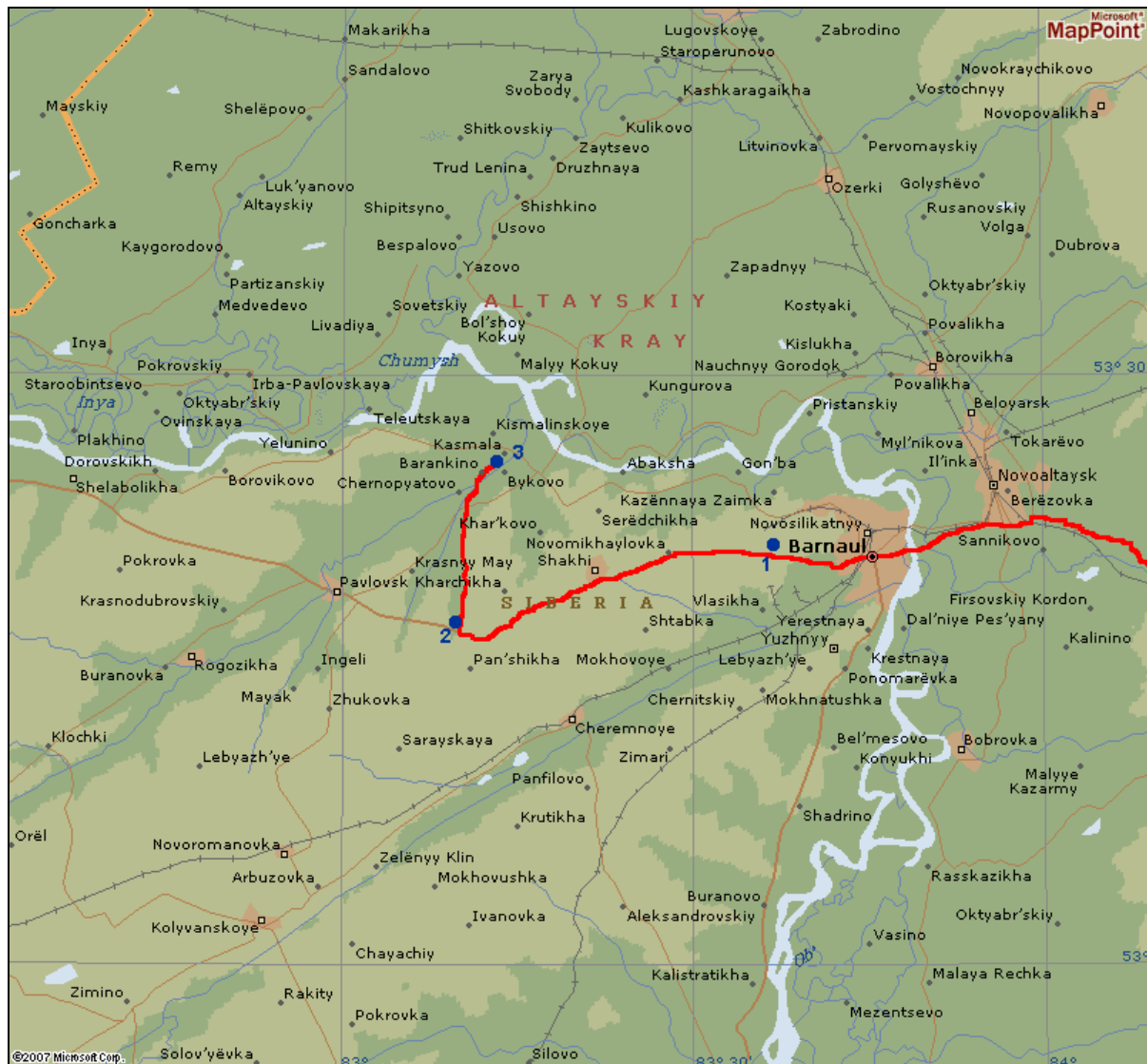
We finally got our two lost bags in the airport and were caught by a corporate official for not having registered after our entry into Russia. They promised us severe punishment but left us in fear during the night. Surprisingly no one awaited us at the airport in the morning for execution and we were safely transferred to our loved ones in Scandinavia. The only trouble was a few kilos extra weight in one of the long lost bags, caused by additional vodka bought in Gorno-Altai - rather expensive after all...

To conclude: This was a truly fantastic trip!



Early mornings...

Appendix 1 - Maps & coordinates for visited sites



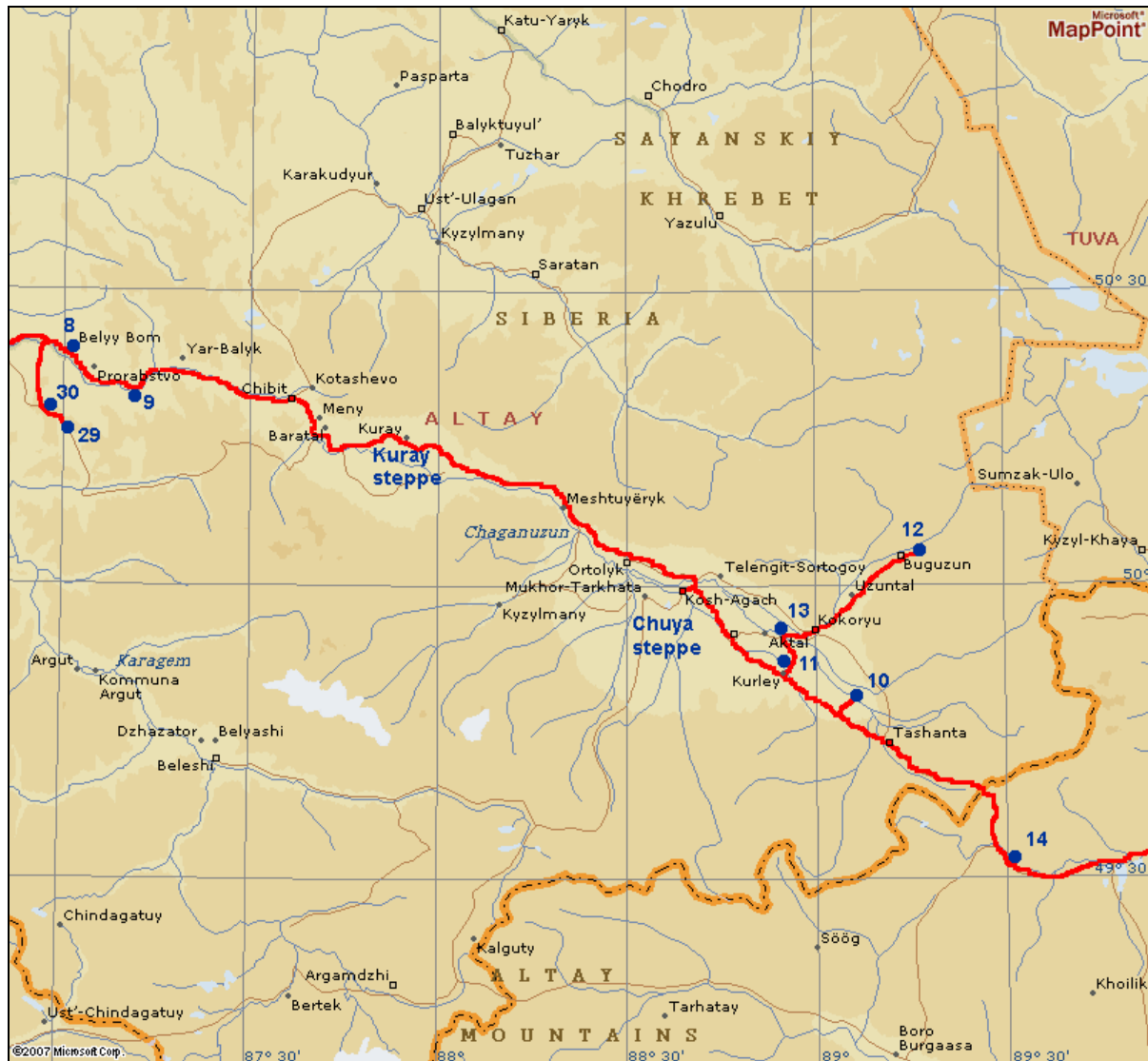
Site 1. Barnaul airport hotel. 53°21'37.10"N 83°32'54.90"E

Site 2. Small wetland E of Pavlovsk. 53°17'11.80"N 83°09'54.30"E

Site 3. Small valley NE of village Barankino. 53°25'39.70"N 83°13'23.30"E



- Site 4. Gorno Altaisk. Hotel at town square. 51°57'27.54"N 85°57'34.16"E
 Site 5. Road-side c. 5 km N of Seminsk Pass. 51°04'49.80"N 85°35'17.90"E
 Site 6. Pass at Chike Taman. 50°38'42.30"N 86°18'42.70"E
 Site 7. Small steppe-like area N of village Inya. 50°28'00.30"N 86°37'33.90"E
 Site 8. Bely Bom. 50°22'06.34"N 87°02'12.88"E
 Site 29. Valley in N parts of Shavla Wildlife Refuge. 50°15'31.60"N 87°00'38.60"E
 Site 30. Mountain pass at N Shavla Wildlife Refuge. 50°17'45.10"N 86°58'42.90"E
 Site 31. Valley E of the road, 10 km N of Seminsk pass. 51°06'14.10"N 85°36'57.90"E



- Site 9. Forest meadows S of Chuya river E of Belyy Bom 50°19'33.00"N 87°10'13.60"E
 Site 10. Camp site on the Chuya steppe NW of Tashanta. 49°44'42.30"N 89°10'18.00"E
 Site 11. NE of village Kurley, Chuya. 49°51'47.40"N 88°55'57.90"E
 Site 12. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya. 50°03'20.40"N 89°14'10.50"E
 Site 13. E of village Aktal, Chuya. 49°55'05.40"N 88°54'43.30"E
 Site 14. Small mountain lake W of village Tsgaannuur. 49°30'41.20"N 89°31'31.70"E



- Site 15. N shores of Lake Tsagaan Nuur. 49°30'59.20"N 89°47'15.30"E
 Site 16. Gorge E of village Tsagaannuur. 49°34'37.00"N 90° 1'53.60"E
 Site 17. Semi-desert plains NW of Achit Nuur. 49°34'48.80"N 90°13'12.20"E
 Site 18. SW Achit Nuur. 49°23'50.00"N 90°37'11.10"E
 Site 19. Mountain pass N of Achit Nuur. 49°57'18.80"N 90°31'39.00"E
 Site 20. S Uureg Nuur. 50°04'26.41"N 90°58'40.34"E
 Site 21. Camp site NE of Ulaangom. 50°01'26.50"N 92°11'36.10"E
 Site 22. River valley W of village Kharkhira. 49°44'02.10"N 91°44'01.80"E
 Site 23. Turn-point at Mt. Türgen (3000 m.a.s.l.). 49°41'14.20"N 91°31'23.10"E
 Site 24. Steppe site with displaying Oriental Plover. 49°35'34.60"N 92° 5'28.60"E
 Site 25. Camp site at Khar Us Nuur. 49° 8'51.20"N 91°49'38.00"E
 Site 26. Stony hillside W of the village Namir [or Önmögovi]. 49°10'46.00"N 91°27'51.70"E
 Site 27. E of Höhtolgoi. 49°13'33.03"N 91°04'49.49"E
 Site 28. N of Khovd river. 49°20'56.70"N 90°39'58.60"E

Appendix 2 – list of observations.

Species list

Subspecific identity within brackets “ [*subspecies*] “ are based on literature/breeding ranges only, and we spent no time confirming this in the field. Various sources were used for this purpose. The excellent website <http://www.globalwitcher.com/> provides basal taxonomical information in a suitable format and, hence, was commonly used by us. However we are not sure on which reference the web-site base its systematics (perhaps Lars Larsson’s, Birds of the World?).

Arctic Loon *Gavia arctica*

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. at nest at lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* [*cristatus*]

Russia: 2 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 25 pairs SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus* [*auritus*]

Russia: C. 4 breeding pairs at Kosh-Agach, Chuya 27/5.

Mongolia: 11 ind. (prob. breeding) Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* [*nigricollis*]

Mongolia: 40 ind. (prob. breeding) Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* [*sinensis*]

Mongolia: 30-40 pairs SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 10 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 20 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* [*cinerea*]

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 3 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 1 ind. N of Khovd river 3/6.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* [*alba* (/modesta?)]

Mongolia: 30 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* [*stellaris*]

Mongolia: 1 ind. heard SW Achit Nuur 29/5.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Russia: 1 ind. NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. N of Khovd river 3/6, 2 ind. above the gorge E of village Tsagaan Nuur 3/6, 2 ind. (perhaps the same?) lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Mongolia: 1 pair W of village Tsagaan Nuur 29/5, 1 pair SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 3-4 ind. S Uureg Nuur 30/5, 1 pair with 4 pulli Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 1 pair lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.



Swan Goose, Khar-Uus Nuur.

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*

Mongolia: 13 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser rubirostris*

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 29/5, >2 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

All individuals showed pinkish bills and a couple of the birds were also notably long-billed. Apart from this we were not struck by any immediate difference, separating it from nominate.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Mongolia: 7 ind. W of village Tsagaan Nuur 29/5, 2 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 4 ind. S Uureg Nuur 30/5, 52 ad. (incl. at least 7 pairs with pulli) Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Russia: In total >40 ind. Kuray and Chuya steppes 27-29/5, 5 ind. N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 1 breeding pair + 30 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. W of village Kharkhira (at 2260 m.a.s.l.) 31/5, 3 pairs with pulli + 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 2 pairs with pulli lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6. In addition, many (several tens) were seen along the roads.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Mongolia: 2 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 11 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Mongolia: 7 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, 20 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 30 Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Russia: 2+2 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 3 pairs SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca [crecca]*

Mongolia: 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 5 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos [platyrhynchos]*

Russia: 2 ind. Kuray steppe 27/5, 1 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 1 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 40 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Mongolia: 20 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Russia: 2+1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 50 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 6 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Russia: 1 pair NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Mongolia: 200 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 18 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 10 ind. N of Khovd river 3/6.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Mongolia: 200 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 230 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 150 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta deglandi stejnegeri*

Mongolia: 40 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Just as in the Lake Baikal area the characters against the North American taxon *deglandi* given by Garner, Lewington & Rosenberg in an id-paper in Birding World 2004, seemed to hold well.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula [clangula]*

Mongolia: 20 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 720 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Mongolia: 1 male + 1 female Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser [merganser]*

Russia: 1 male E of village Aktal, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. S Uureg Nuur 30/5.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*

Russia & Mongolia: Common and wide spread during the whole trip, both in lowlands and in the mountains (2300 m.a.s.l.). High concentrations were seen around the garbage dump N of Bijsk, Russia (prob. >200 ind.) 26/5 and at night-roosting at Ulaangom (c. 100 ind.) 30/5. In total perhaps 1000 ind. were seen.

We gave the birds well deserved attention, and the commonly known characters for *lineatus* were confirmed. In short most of the birds showed rather dark iris, pale streaking in the underbody (incl. fully adult birds), six deeply displayed fingers and a large and rather pure white window at the base of the primaries. A very few birds showed just a little (almost lack of) white though. There were some variation in ground colour but no bird was rufous like the confusing kites seen on migration in Israel (and rarely elsewhere in the Western Palearctic). Ageing *lineatus* were surprisingly difficult, compare to nominate.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Mongolia: 1 imm. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus [barbatus]*

Mongolia: 1 ad. at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5.

Eurasian Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

Russia: 1 ind. NW of village Inya 27/5, 1 subad. Kuray steppe 27/5, 12 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 28/5, 1 ind. Tashanta 29/5, 8 ind. in the valley, N Shavla 5/6, 3 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 1+1 ind. at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. Ulaangom 30/5, c. 30 ind. in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 31/5-1/6, 10 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* [*fulvus*]

Mongolia: 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6.

The observation was rather brief, and we cannot rule out the possibility of a younger Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*. However, according to Axel Bräunlich, the latter is rare in NW Mongolia.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* [*cyaneus*]

Russia: 1 male + 1 female migrating N at the mountain top at N Shavla 6/6.

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* [*aeruginosus*]

Mongolia: 3 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

No signs of Eastern Marsh Harrier, *C. spilonotus*.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Russia: 1 3cy+ male NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* [*nisus/nisosimilis*]

Russia: 1+1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Russia: 2+1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 2 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 ind. N Shavla 5/6, 3 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6. Several good views of both migrating and displaying *vulpinus*. All individuals seemed to match the birds passing Middle East.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

Russia: 1 ind. W part of Kuray steppe 27/5, 1 ind. NW of Tashanta 27/5, 1 ind. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 5 ind. (incl. 1 breeding pair) mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. village Kharkhira 1/6. 2 ind. at the Russian border-post 4/6.

Highly reminiscent of Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, but looked heavier with thicker body and broader arms. In several individuals the hand was somewhat shorter/narrower (though not created by active primary moult) which gave a rather funny-looking wing. In addition the birds are almost pure grey and white, lacking the rufous tones of Long-legged, and the upper hand had a large and pure white primary patch.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* [*orientalis* (*nipalensis*?)]

Russia: 1 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 2 ind. in the valley N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 1 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, c. 20 ind. at the mountains N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. Ulaangom 30/5, 6 ind. in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 31/5, 3 ind. (at least 2 ad.) Khar us Nuur 2-3/6, 2 ind. at the border-post towards Russia 4/6.

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

Russia: 1 3cy W of Belyy Bom 27/5, 2 ad E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 pair (ad+ older subad) with nest W part of Kuray steppe 27/5, 1 young subad in the valley N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 1 ad. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* [*chrysaetos/kamtschatica*]

Russia: 2 ad N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 2 ind. at the mountains N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 3 ind. in river valley W of village Kharkhira 31/5, 1 ad with nest E of Höhtolgoy 3/6.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Russia: C. 20 ind. along the road Seminsk-Kuray 27/5 (e.g. c. 10 ind. at village Inya).

Mongolia: 1 male NE of Ulaangom 31/5.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* [*tinnunculus*]

Russia: 3 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 3 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 3 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Merlin *Falco columbarius pallidus/aesalon* (*insignis*?)

Russia: 1 male Chuya 27/5, 1 female NE of village Buguzun 28/5, 1 female E of village Aktal, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6.

The male in the Chuya-steppe 27/5 was a beautiful pale *pallidus*, but we are not so sure concerning the other two individuals, which both looked more like European birds (or is it possible to find *insignis* in this area?).

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo subbuteo*

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* [*cherrug* (*milvipes*?)]

Mongolia: 1+1 ind. in the mountains N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. SW of Uureg Nuur 30/5, >1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* [*peregrinus/babylonicus*]

Russia: 1 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 27/5.

Mongolia: 1 ad. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6.

Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus [brevirostris]*

Russia: 1 at the mountain top N Shavla 5/6.

Eurasian Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix [viridanus/tschusii/mongolicus]*

Russia: 1 female E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Russia: Several ind. heard E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. heard at Barnaul airport 8/6.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

Russia & Mongolia: The first 2 ind. were noted at village Inya 27/5, and from this point commonly seen along the roads during the whole trip. Largest concentration was c. 150 ind. S of village Kharkhira 1/6. A breeding pair was noted at Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6. In total perhaps 300 ind. were noted.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Mongolia: 2+1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

Russia: 3 ind. heard E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. heard NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Little Crake *Porzana parva*

Mongolia: 1 male heard SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra [atra]*

Russia: 1 ind. Kosh-Agach, Chuya 27/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 5 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Mongolia: 3 pair with nests + 15 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Russia: Several ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 35 ind. incl. several breeding pairs Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius [curonicus]*

Mongolia: 2 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, c. 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, c. 10 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6, 1 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 2-3/6.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus [alexandrinus]*

Mongolia: C. 10 breeding pairs Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii leschenaultii*

Mongolia: 19 ind. S of Uureg Nuur 30/5, 2-3 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 1 female N of the village Burgaasatayn-Örtöö 1/6, 4 disp. males + 20 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*

Mongolia: 1 disp. male 14 km N of village Burgaasatayn-Örtöö 1/6.

Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala*

Russia: 1+1 ind. flushed in the valley N Shavla 5/6. 1 ind. flushed N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

All three were only seen flushed, and showed general characters for either *megala* or *stenura*. All of them seemed to be heavier and darker than the Pintails' we have seen in other places in Asia. Separating *megala* and *stenura* is really hard and consequently the identification is not 100%.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago [gallinago]*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 5 disp. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

Mongolia: 2+9 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 3/6.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa/melanuroides*



Greater Sandplover, Khar-Us Nuur.

Mongolia: 3 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata [orientalis]*

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Mongolia: 8+1 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus [ussuriensis]*

Russia: 2 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. incl. breeding pairs Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 pair + 1 Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Mongolia: 2 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6, 4 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3/6.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5.

Mongolia: 2 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Mongolia: 13 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 9 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Mongolia: 20 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 15 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

Mongolia: 2 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Mongolia: 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina [alpina (/sachalina?)]*

Mongolia: 3 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6.

Common Gull *Larus canus [heinei]*

Russia: 4 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Vega Gull *Larus vegae mongolicus*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 3 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: Several ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 5 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 50 ind. S of village Kharkhira 1/6, 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 15 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Mongolia: 35 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Russia: 20 breeding pairs Kosh-Agach, Chuya 27/5.

Mongolia: 50 breeding pairs SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 90 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Relict Gull *Larus relictus*

Mongolia: 3 ind. (1 3cy + 2 3cy+) Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica [nilotica]*

Mongolia: 5 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo hirundo/longipennis(/minussensis/tibetana?)*

Russia: 3 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 25 ind. Chuya steppe 27/5, 4 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 50 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 20 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6, 1 breeding pair + 3 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.



Black-headed Gull and Relict Gull, Khar -Us Nuur

Most terns looked most like hirundo but in the same we also saw a few terns with an eastern look (overall dark and almost allblack bill) plus some intergrades apparently. To sum up – a tricky soup.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Russia: 3+1 E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 30 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 3 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger niger*

Russia: 4+2 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrhaptes paradoxus*

Mongolia: 2 ind. S Uureg Nuur 30/5, 2+8 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 2 ind. Mt. Türgen (at 2600 m.a.s.l.) 1/6, 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6.

Feral Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Russia & Mongolia: Common in larger towns and villages.

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris turkestanica/rupestris*

Russia: 2 ind. in N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6, 1 ind. Namir 3/6.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis orientalis/meena*

Russia: 4 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 3 ind. at the mountain pass in N Shavla 5-6/6, 1 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 7/6. In addition some single ind. were seen briefly along the roads.

We expected to find *orientalis* near Barnaul and *meena* in the mountains, but we couldn't find any difference in plumage between the doves in Shavla (altitude 2000 m) and the doves in the lowland around Barnaul. They looked most like *orientalis* but we can not exclude *meena*. Recordings from the birds in Shavla will be analyzed. More research is needed and the Altai region is very interesting in a streptopelia-perspective- that's for sure.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus [canorus]*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, several ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 2 ind. (one red morf) E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, several ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: Common in the mountains W of village Kharkhira 31/5, 1 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 1 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus horsfieldi*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 ind. at the mountain pass in N Shavla 5/6, 1 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Scops Owl *Otus scops [pulchellus]*

Russia: 1 displaying male NW of Belyy Bom 4/6.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis [uralensis/yenisseensis]*

Russia: 1 displaying male N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

Common Swift *Apus apus apus (/pekinensis?)*

Russia: 10 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 10 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 400 ind. migr NW at Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

We gave the swifts at Khar-Us Nuur a lot of attention and interestingly the opinion about the colour of the birds differed. Some of us thought that the birds were a little bit paler brown like *pekinensis* while others voted for *apus*. Well, this fact just shows how difficult it is.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus [pacificus]*

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 150 ind. migr NW at Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops [saturata]*

Russia: 1 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: 2 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. W of village Kharkhira 1/6, several ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Russia: 1 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 female E of Barnaul 26/5.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla [torquilla]*

Russia: 2-3 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos [leucotos]*



Some Common and Pacific Swifts are quite pale.

Russia: 1 male E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 male NE of the village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus* [*tridactylus*]

Russia: 3 ind. at the mountain pass in N Shavla 6/6.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* [*martius*]

Russia: 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 ind. in the mountain pass in N Shavla 5/6.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* [*canus/jessoensis*]

Russia: 1 male in the valley in N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

Mongolia: C. 30 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens heinei* (/cheleensis/seebohmi?)

Mongolia: Common breeder SW Achit Nuur 30/5, common NE of Ulaangom 31/5, c. 40 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6. Additionally noted with several ind. along the roads.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis dulcivox/kiborti*

Russia: 20 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, common NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: Common SW Achit Nuur 30/5, common NE of Ulaangom 31/5, common Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6. Additionally noted with several ind. along the roads.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris brandti*

Russia & Mongolia: The first ind. were noted at W parts of the Kuray steppe 27/5, and from this point very common and wide spread during the whole trip, both in the steppes, deserts and in the mountains. Probably the most numerous species of all in these parts of Altai. In total perhaps 1500 ind. (very rough estimation!) were seen.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia riparia*

Russia: 30 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, common breeder in the Kuray and Chuya steppes 27-28/5.

Mongolia: Common Achit Nuur – Ulaangom 30/5, 30 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Russia: 3 ind. W Kuray steppe 27/5.

Mongolia: 10 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, 3 ind. in the mountains W of village Kharkhira 31/5.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica rustica* (/tyleri?)

Russia: 20 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, common Seminsk-Tashanta 27/5, several NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 1 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: Common SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 50 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Most individuals looked like European birds and did not seem to match the darker and more rufous birds seen further east in Siberia.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* [*urbicum/lagopodum*]

Russia: 1 ind. Chuya 27/5, some ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Russia: *M. a. alba*: Common in the Barnaul area 25-26/5, and several ind. seen along the road as far as village Inya 27/5.

M. a. personata: First ind. seen along the road after the pass at Chike Taman. After this point rather commonly seen in the Russian parts of Altai, especially in villages and along rivers. Fewer individuals were seen in pure steppe areas like Kuray and Chuya.

M. a. ocularis: 1 ind. (probably 2cy male) village Inya 27/5.

Mongolia: *M. a. personata*: Widely dispersed, but less common than in Russian Altai. Most individuals were seen in villages and more mountainous areas.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola citreola*

Russia: C. 10 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, several E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 1 ind. in the valley in N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 5 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, in total 40 males at village Tsagaannuur and lake Tsagan Nuur 29/5, 10 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, c. 20 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Most of the male Citrine Wagtails around Tsagaannuur showed intermediate characters (*citreola/calcarata*) such as very white greater coverts (in some almost all-white) and really dark grey mantle (not black though). According to Pipits & Wagtails (Alström et al 2003) it is approximately 1000 km to the nearest *calcarata*-population, which makes our observation highly notable. It is not necessarily a recent influence from *calcarata* that explains the appearance of our wagtails. Maybe it is a local phenomenon or an evolutionary rest. This is only speculations of course.



-To the left ? Oh, just some Horned Larks.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Russia: *M. f. thunbergi*: C. 30 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.
M. f. beema: C. 20 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, c. 10 ind. village Inya 27/5.
M. f. tschutschensis: 1 ind. village Inya 27/5.
Mongolia: *M. f. beema*: 3 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.
M. f. leucocephala: 1 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.
M. f. beema X leucocephala: 2 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* [*cinerea*]

Russia: 10 ind. along the road Seminsk-Tashanta 27/5, 3 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 1 ind. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5, 4 ind. N Shavla 5/6.
Mongolia: 3 ind. W of village Kharkhira 31/5-1/6, 2 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Russia: 1 ind. village Inya 27/5, 4 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Russia: 1 ind. NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5, 1 ind. NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 4-5 ind. in the valley N Shavla 5/6.
Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 10 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Mongolia: 3 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 7 territories at upper parts of the river valley W of village Kharkhira (2260 m.a.s.l.) 31/5 and 6 ind. on the way back to village Kharkhira 1/6, 8 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* [*trivialis*]

Russia & Mongolia: Common in all forest areas both in the Barnaul area and in Altai.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni*

Russia: 15-20 ind. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5, 10 ind. at the mountain top N Shavla 5/6.
Mongolia: 4 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, 10 ind. in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 1/6, 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2/6, 3 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* [*dahurica*]

Mongolia: 2 ind. in the gorge E of Tsagaannuur 29/5, 2-3 territories at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis* [*huttoni*]

Russia: 3 ind. at the mountain pass + 2 ind. in the valley in N Shavla 5-6/6.

Koslow's accentor *Prunella koslowi*

Mongolia: 1 pair Khar-Us Nuur 3/6, 2 pairs W of the village Namir [or Önmögovi] 3/6.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

Russia: 1 male Chike Taman 27/5, c. 5 males at the mountain pass N Shavla 5-6/6, 3 males N of Seminsk Pass 6-7/6.
Mongolia: 2 males + 1 female Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6, 1 male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica svecica/pallidogularis*

Russia: 2 males E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 4 males E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 8 males at mountain top N Shavla 5/6.
Mongolia: 1 male Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* [*cyanurus*]

Russia: 10 ind. below the mountain pass N Shavla 6/6.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides*

Russia: 1 pair Belyy Bom 27/5, 2 males and 1 female E of Belyy Bom 27/5,
Mongolia: 4 males (incl. 1 *cy paradoxus*-morph) Ulaangom 31/5, 6 males along the road W of village Kharkhira 31/5, 1 male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Eurasian Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Russia: 3 ind. the village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.
Mongolia: 1 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*



Yellow Wagtail. *f. beema X leucocephala*, SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Russia: 1 pair NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5, 1 singing male at mountain pass N Shavla 5/6.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Russia: 1 male E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus maurus*

Russia: In total c. 20 males and 10 females E of Pavlovsk and NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5, 10 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 male E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 15 pairs at the valley N Shavla 5/6, 3 pairs N of Seminsk Pass 6-7/6.

Mongolia: 1 pair Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe [oenanthe/libanotica]*

Russia: 2 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, common in low numbers NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: Common W of village Kharkhira 31/5-1/6, rather common Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Russia: Quite common in hilly and mountainous areas in Altai from the pass at Chike Taman and onwards 27/5. Less common in pure steppe areas like Kuray and Chuya. In total perhaps 30 ind.

Mongolia: 2 males village Kharkhira 31/5, 3 ind. in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 1/6, 1 male W of village Namir [or Önmögovi] 3/6.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti [atrogularis]*

Mongolia: Rather common in mountains, deserts and semi-deserts. First ind. were seen just after village Tsagaannuur. In total perhaps 50 ind.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Russia & Mongolia: Common (some times very common) in steppes, deserts, semi-deserts and non-alpine mountains. In total perhaps 200 ind. were seen.



Pied Wheatear, Altai.

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

Mongolia: 4 males and 1 female W of village Kharkhira 31/5, 1 male village Kharkhira 1/6, 1 male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 2 males lake Tsagaan Nuur 4/6.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*

Russia: 2 males (one singing) at the pass at Chike Taman 27/5, 1 male below the mountain pass N Shavla 6/6, 50 ad and many recently fledged juv. N of Seminsk Pass 6-7/6.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Russia: 20 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 breeding pair N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

Common Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos [nataliae]*

Russia: 10 singing males below the mountain pass N Shavla 5/6, some N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus [viscivorus/bonapartei]*

Russia: 3 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, several ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 10 singing males below the mountain pass and in the valley N Shavla 5/6.

Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*

Russia: 1 singing W of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 singing E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 4 singing at the mountain pass and the valley N Shavla 5-6/6.

Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia [mongolica]*

Russia: 1 singing NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 1 Khar-Uus Nuur 2/6.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides [fusca]*

Mongolia: 1 singing SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 singing Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

Mongolia: 15 singing males SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Russia: Singing birds were commonly heard in the Barnaul area and in N Altai 25-27/5 and 5-7/6, but disappeared (with the favoured habitat) when closing the high steppes at Kuray and Chuya. Perhaps a total of 100 ind. were noted.

Mongolia: 1 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 1 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 4/6.



Dark-throated Thrush, North of the Seminsk Pass.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus [zarudnyi]*

Mongolia: 5 singing SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*

Russia: C. 20 singing males E of village Aktal, Chuya 28-29/5.

Mongolia: 1 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 4/6.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria [merzbacheri]*

Russia: 1 male NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 2 singing males E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*

Mongolia: 1 singing male + 1 pair Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis [rubicola/volgensis]*

Russia: 15 singing males E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 singing male E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 singing male in the valley N Shavla 5/6, 2 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca curruca/ halimodendri [telengitica]*

Russia: 5 singing males E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 2 ind. Barnaul airport 26/5, 1 singing male E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 1 singing male in the valley N Shavla 5/6, 1 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 3 singing males at the Rocky area S of the road, 21 km WNW of the village Namir [or Önmögovi] 3/6.

The birds in Mongolia were singing from exposed rocks, recalling a Rock Nuthatch. These birds didn't use the rattling trill in the song, only the muffled chatter.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Russia: Commonly (in some places very common) noted in forested areas (both coniferous, deciduous and gardens) in Barnaul area and in Altai. Several ind. seen at Chuya steppe were probably still on migration. In total perhaps 150 ind. noted.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Russia: 1 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Russia: 5 singing males in the valley N Shavla 5/6, 1 singing male Seminsk Pass 6/6, c. 10 singing males N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

Mongolia: 1 ind. NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 1 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Mongolia: 1 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Russia: 1 singing male below the mountain pass N Shavla 6/6, 1 singing male N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei humei*

Russia: Common or very common in the mountain forests of Altai. The first ones were noted 5 km's N of Seminsk Pass 27/5. Larger concentrations: 50 ind. (on migration) NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5, c. 100 (?) singing males in N Shavla 5-6/6, 40-50 singing males N of Seminsk Pass 6/6. In total perhaps 400 ind. was noted.

Mongolia: 4 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, 2 ind. at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 40 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

Mongolia: A *Phylloscopus* warbler seen briefly in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6 probably belonged to this species.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus*

Russia: Commonly (in some places very common) noted in forested areas both in Barnaul area and in Altai. Several ind. seen at Chuya steppe were probably still on migration. In total perhaps 300 ind. noted.

Mongolia: Some single ind. on migration were noted at several places, esp. where trees and bushes. Largest concentration was c. 20 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

European Goldcrest *Regulus regulus [regulus]*

Russia: 1 singing male N of Seminsk Pass 7/6.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata neumanni/mongola*

Russia: 1 ind. N of Seminsk 27/5, 2 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 5 ind. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5, 1 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Mongolia: 1 2cy male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 29/5.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*

Russia: 1 female NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 1 male in the river valley W village Kharkhira 1/6, 1 female in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Bearded Parrotbill *Panurus biarmicus [russicus]*

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Eurasian Long-tailed-Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*

Russia: N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Russia: 4 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, Common in N Shavla 5-6/6.

Siberian Tit *Poecile cincta [sayanus]*

Russia: 3+2 ind. below the mountain pass N Shavla 6/6.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater ater*

Russia: 1 singing male N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Great Tit *Parus major major*

Russia: 2 ind. at mountain pass N Shavla 6/6.

Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus [hyperrhiphaeus/tianschanicus/yenisseensis]*

Russia: 2 pairs (at least one breeding) 28/5 and 2 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

European Nuthatch *Sitta europaea asiatica*

Russia: 5+10 ind. N Shavla 5-6/6.

White-crowned Penduline-Tit *Remiz coronatus*

Russia: 5 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Russia: 7 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5 and 3 singing males at Barnaul airport 8/6.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Russia: 5 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 male E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, 1 pair in the valley N Shavla 5/6, 1 male Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 2 males in the river valley W of village Kharkhira, at 2000 m.a.s.l. 1/6.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*

Russia: 1 male SE of village Kurley, Chuya 27/5, 8 males and 6 females NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5, 2 males E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: 6 males and 2 females NW of Achit Nuur 29/5, 3 males with territories NE of Ulaangom 31/5, 2 ind. village Kharkhira 31/5, c. 10 ind. E of Höhtolgoi 3/6. Additionally some single ind. were seen along the roads in suitable habitat.

Hybrides **Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* X **Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*

Russia: 1 male NE of village Kurley, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: 1 male NW of Achit Nuur 29/5, 1 male (with *isabellinus* female and a nest with 6 eggs) NE of Ulaangom 31/5. Additionally 1 male W of village Namir [or Önmögovi] and 1 male E of Höhtolgoi 3/6 were probably hybrides, but only gave insufficient views.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus cristatus*

Mongolia: 1 male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6, 2 males in the river valley W of village Kharkhira, at 2000 m.a.s.l. 1/6.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* / **Southern Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis*

Russia: 1 ind. a couple of km SE of the border post at Tashanta 29/5.

We were not allowed to stop the car in the no-man's-land between Russia and Mongolia and sadly enough we couldn't study this one.

Common Magpie *Pica pica hemileucoptera/leucoptera*

Russia: Noted E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, many along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5, 7-8 ind. E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: Noted SW Achit Nuur 30/5.

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*

Mongolia: 7 ind. in the scrub area in the Semi-desert plains NW of Achit Nuur 29/5.



Mr. Henderson.

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes macrorhynchos*

Russia: 1 ind. at the pass at Chike Taman 27/5, 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, several NW of Belyy Bom 4/6, c. 20 ind. at the mountain pass (and below) in N Shavla 5/6.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax [centralis]*

Russia: 2 pairs E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 10 ind. along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5, common E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5, common in Tashanta area 29/5 & 4/6, 2 ind. at the mountain top N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: Common at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, several W of village Kharkhira (at 1700-3000 m.a.s.l.) 31/5-1/6, common at lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula soemmerringii*

Russia: Wide spread but not very numerous from Barnaul area to the Chuya steppe.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

Mongolia: 1 ind. in a village c 20 km N of Achit Nuur 30/5.

Eurasian Rook *Corvus frugilegus [frugilegus]*

Russia: Several along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5, common from Bijsk to Barnaul 7/6.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Russia: *C. c. cornix*: common in Barnaul, and at E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, seen from Gorno Altaisk to Barnaul 7/6.

C. c. orientalis: Some ind. N Shavla 5/6, some N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: *C. c. orientalis*: C. 10 ind. village Kharkhira 31/5.

C. c. orientalis replaced *cornix* rather sharply close to Gorno Altaisk and, hence, no signs of intergrades between the two subspecies were seen.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

[*tibetanus/kamtschaticus*]

Russia: Some along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5 and at N Shavla 5-6/6

Mongolia: Common at mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5.

Rose-colored Starling *Pastor roseus*

Russia: 3 ind. village Inya 27/5.

Mongolia: 1 male in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 31/5, c. 400 ind. Khar-Uus Nuur 1-2/6.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris [poltaratskyi]*



Rosy Starling, Kharkhira

Russia: Common in Barnaul and E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, common along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5, c. 100 Bijsk 7/6.

Mongolia: At least 2 breeding pairs village Kharkhira 31/5.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus domesticus*

Russia: Common in Barnaul area and in villages along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5.

Mongolia: Common Achit Nuur 30/5, in Ulaangom 31/5 and Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus [montanus]*

Russia: Common in Barnaul area.

Mongolia: Common Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 ind. village Namir 3/6.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia [brevirostris]*

Russia: 10 ind. between village Buguzun and village Aktal, Chuya 28/5, 1 pair on the border between Russia and Mongolia 29/5.

Mongolia: Common along the road Tsagaannuur to Achit Nuur 29/5, many in the river valley W of village Kharkhira 31/5. Common in the hills by Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

White-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis [groum-grzimaili]*

Mongolia: 1 ind. W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, 10 ind. at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 male W of village Kharkhira (at 1850 m.a.s.l.) 31/5, 1 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Père David's Snowfinch *Montifringilla davidiana [potanini]*

Russia: 5 ind. NW of Tashanta 28/5, 17 ind. village Buguzun and village Aktal, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: Several along the road at the lake Tsagaan Nuur 29/5, common at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, c. 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

European Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs coelebs*

Russia: 5 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 1 singing male NW of Belyy Bom 4/6, 10 males N Shavla 5/6, 10 males N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Russia: 1 male at the mountain pass N Shavla 5/6, 1 male N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Mongolia: 3 ind. at the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 29/5.

Hodgson's Mountain-Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola [altaica]*

Mongolia: 1 pair at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 1 pair at foot of Mt. Türgen (at 2260 m.a.s.l.) 31/5.

Brandt's Mountain-Finch *Leucosticte brandti [margaritacea]*

Mongolia: Ca 200 ind. Mt. Türgen (at 2260-3000 m.a.s.l.) 1/6.



Males of Yellowhammer × Pine Bunting, NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* [*erythrinus/grebnitskii*]

Russia: 8 singing males E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, tens along the road Seminsk Pass to Kuray steppe 27/5, common (even in coniferous forest) N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolia: 1 pair 15 km WSW of village Kharkhira 31/5.

Long-tailed Rosefinch *Uragus sibiricus* [*sibiricus*]

Russia: 1 pair E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: 2 ind. E of Höhtolgoy 3/6.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* [*curvirostra/altaiensis*]

Russia: 20 ind. N Shavla 5/6.

Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

Mongolia: 10 ind. at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, 25 ind. N of Khovd river 3/6, 4 ind. in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* ssp.

Russia: *C. c. carduelis*: 10 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 2 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5,

C. c. subulata: 2 ind. N Shavla 5/6, 2 ind. N of Seminsk Pass 6/6.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Russia: 10 ind. E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5.

Mongolia: 1 pair W village Kharkhira 31/5, 1 pair Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* [*altaica*]

Russia: 3 ind. NE of village Buguzun, Chuya 28/5.

Mongolia: Common at the mountain pass N of Achit Nuur 30/5, common in the mountains W of village Kharkhira 31/5-1/6.

Common Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* [*pyrrhula/cinerea*]

Russia: Heard E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, heard N Shavla 5/6.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella* [*erythrogenys*]

Russia: 1 ind. E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 1 singing male NW of Belyy Bom 4/6, 1 singing male N of Seminsk Pass 6-7/6, 2 singing males S Gorno-Altai 7/6.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Russia: 2 singing males E of Pavlovsk, Barnaul 25/5, 5 singing males NW of Belyy Bom 4/6, 2 singing males S Gorno-Altai 7/6.

Hybrides **Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* X **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Russia: C. 10 males NE of village Barankino, Barnaul 25/5.

Siberian Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*

Mongolia: 1 male of the village Namir [or Önmögovi] 3/6.

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* [*neobscura*]

Mongolia: 10 males W of village Kharkhira (at 1700-2200 m.a.s.l.) 31/5, 1 male N of Khovd river 3/6, 1 male lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Russia: 3 males village Inya 27/5, 6 singing males E of Belyy Bom 27/5, 2 singing males NW of Belyy Bom 4/6.

Mongolia: 2 males W of village Kharkhira (at 2260 m.a.s.l.) 31/5, 2 ind. Khar-Us Nuur 2-3/6.

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* [*aureola*]

Russia: 1 singing male E of village Aktal, Chuya 29/5.

Mongolia: 1 singing male NE of Ulaangom 29/5.

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*



Interesting but complicated - Pallas's Bunting or Common Reed-Bunting? Tsagaan Nuur.

Mongolia: 1 female lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala spodocephala*

Mongolia: 1 male in the gorge E of village Tsagaannuur 3/6.

Pallas's Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*

Mongolia: 5 ind. SW Achit Nuur 30/5, C. 10 ind. lake Tsagaan Nuur 3-4/6.

Initially we had some problem in identifying Pallas's because of the fact that the Common Reed-Bunting is represented by *parvirostris* in this region. This taxon is not well known but is supposed to be more similar to Pallas's. When analyzing photos and after some correspondence with Urban Olsson we feel (rather) safe in calling them Pallas's.

Common Reed-Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Mongolia: 1 male W of village Tsagaannuur 29/5, 1 female Khar-Uus Nuur 2-3/6.



Micke in Russia. Photos from the trip can be found at: <http://picasaweb.google.com/mats.waern> and <http://picasaweb.google.com/stenura> .