



**Birding trip field notes from  
XINJIANG, CHINA  
2011 May 9-20<sup>th</sup>**

**N Taklamakan, E Tien Shan, Tacheng, SE Altai & Junggar Basin**

**by Peter Schmidt, prof. Ma Ming, Petter Haldén, Alexander Hellquist &  
Fredrik Friberg**

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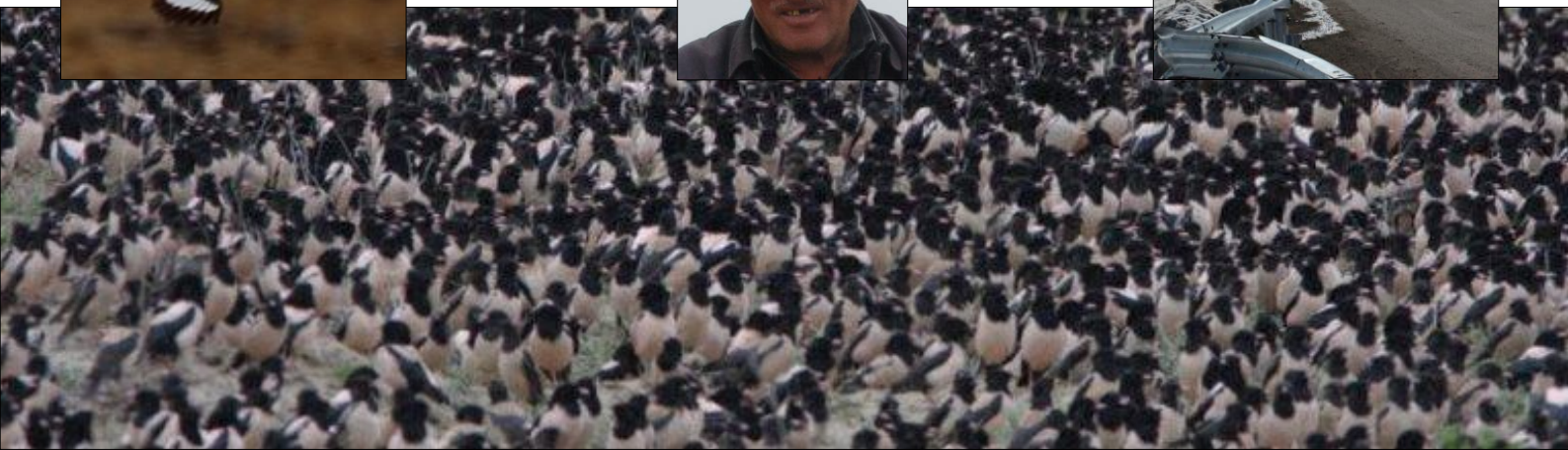
In May 2011, we (four Swedish birdwatchers) visited interesting bird sites in Xinjiang: Taklamakan, E Tien Shan, Tacheng, SE Altai & Junggar Basin. North Western China has many biotopes in a restricted area and has a lot to offer birdwatchers. For this trip, one of the aims was to study shrikes, particularly the variation within and between different forms of Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*.

Many thanks to professor MaMing of Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography who kindly agreed to arrange the trip and provided excellent guidance around Xinjiang.

**SUMMARY OF BIRDS**

One of the highlight was of course the Taklamakan endemic Biddulph's Ground Jay *Podoces biddulphi*. Some families of this charismatic bird were present between Jinlucun and Daxi Haizi Reservoir, Taklamakan desert.

From a European point of view, the trip gave insight into a number of interesting and spectacular Central and Eastern Asian species and races, i.e. Himalayan Snowcock *Tetraogallus himalayensis* (2 sites; 3 ind. in total), Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (1,1), Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (common at high mountains), Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* (3,4), Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemi lasius* (3,3), Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* (2, 6), Relict Gull *Ichthyaelus relictus*





Hume's Warbler  
*Phylloscopus humei* – a common migrant.

(1,7), Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* (1,2), White-winged Woodpecker *Dendrocopus leucopterus* (2,5), Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana* (3,7), Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* (1,3), Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis* (locally common), White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma* (1,2), Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* (2,6), Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* (3,15), Sykes's Warbler *Hippolais rama* (1,10), Chinese Hill Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis albosuperciliaris* (2, 6), Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis* (1,5), Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* (1, 6), Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus eversmanni* (2,3), Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus coeruleocephala* (1,2), Güldenstädt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* (2,6), Turkestan Tit *Parus bokharensis* (2,4) Saxaul Sparrow *Passer ammodendri* (common at semi-deserts), Asian Rosy Finch *Leucosticte arctoa* (2,6) Red-mantled Rosefinch *Carpodacus rhodochlamys* (1,5-10), White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*, (1, common), Mongolian Finch *Rhodopechys mongolicus* (2,2) Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii* (fairly common), Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza Buchanan* (5-7), and Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps* (3,20).



Biddulph's Ground Jay *Podoces biddulphi*.

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1. Daily log with notes.
2. References
3. Bird records with notes.
4. Maps and a list with coordinates for all the major sites that we visited.

### 1. DAILY LOG

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** Stockholm flight to Urumqi via Moscow.  
**May 9<sup>th</sup>** Morning arrival Urumqi. Direct transport south to Taklamakan. Night in Korla.  
**May 10<sup>th</sup>** All day in northern parts of Taklamakan.  
**May 11<sup>th</sup>** Morning transport north to Tien Shan, all day high altitude Tien Shan.  
**May 12<sup>th</sup>** All day mountain plateau Tien Shan south of lake Sayram Hu.  
**May 13<sup>th</sup>** Tien Shan and lake Sayram Hu, evening transport to Lake Ebinur.  
**May 14<sup>th</sup>** All day Lake Ebinur, evening transport to Tacheng.  
**May 15<sup>th</sup>** Tacheng.  
**May 16<sup>th</sup>** Tacheng, evening transport to Lake Ulungur.  
**May 17<sup>th</sup>** Morning Lake Ulungur, remaining day transport to and birding in Altai.



Kalawu Tekele Lake, SE Altai, and the Mongolian border (see 4. site nr 36).

**May 18<sup>th</sup>** All day Altai.

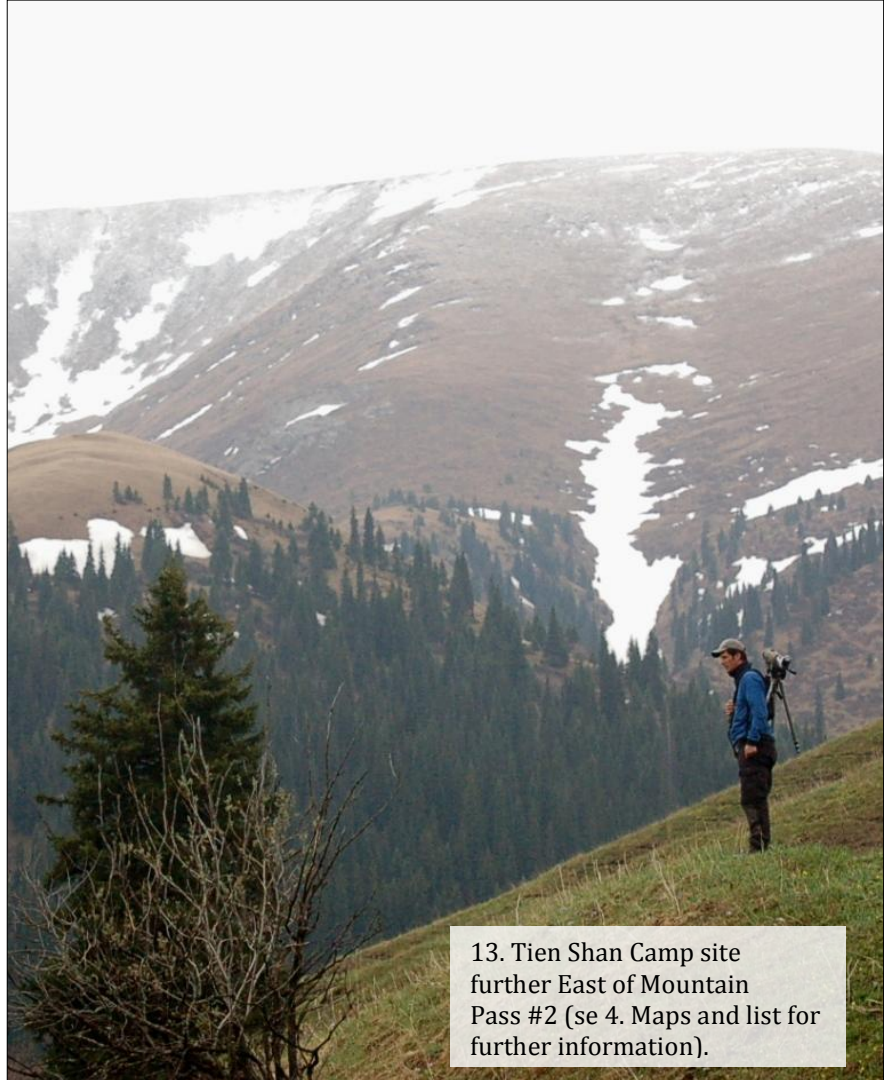
**May 19<sup>th</sup>** Morning Altai, most of the day transport south through Junggar basin to north of Ürumqi.

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** Morning semi-desert and reservoir near the Regiment 222. Evening flight back to Moscow.

**May 21<sup>st</sup>** Flight back to Stockholm.

We traveled with Aeroflot from Stockholm to Moscow and with China Southern Airlines from Moscow to Ürumqi return journey.

In China, we were transported by private cars provided by our host, prof. Ma Ming. The roads in Xinjiang are mostly excellent, but at some areas and bird sites crosscountry capabilities are required. Accommodation was sometimes in tents, sometimes at hotels. Compared to Scandinavia, the climate is more varied. During a day you could experience everything between deserts, snowy mountains, and humid forests. The nights and mornings were sometimes cold (close



13. Tien Shan Camp site further East of Mountain Pass #2 (se 4. Maps and list for further information).



Map (in Swedish, by Magnus Ullman) with dates.



**Yellow Wagtails** *Motacilla flava*. Left to right: 1) Male at Chaiwopu Lake; 2) Male *tschutschensis* (?) probably breeding at Altai; 3) Male "*feldegg/melanogrisea*" Tasheng, 25km South of Qoqek (Wetlands); 4) and female together with male *feldegg* Tasheng, 25km South of Qoqek (Wetlands). Despite rather extensive breeding gaps, it should be possible to find at least four different *M. flava* taxa in Xinjiang and adjacent areas - *beema*, *tschutschensis*, *feldegg* and *leucocephalus* (Alström & Mild, 2003). The Yellow Wagtails were actually found to be rather common and widespread around Ebinur, in Tacheng, along Ulungur lake, in wetlands of the Altai and along the easternmost parts of Tien Shan near Urumqi, and most birds were thought to be on breeding territory. We were probably too late for any migration peak and at this stage in May most birds are likely to have already passed through Xinjiang (e.g. we did not see any *leucocephalus* which should be passing by regularly on the way to Mongolia). We found several males which did not fit particularly well into any of the above mentioned taxa (pic 1). These birds, with variable calls but often like *feldegg*, were superficially similar to *macronyx* (a taxon which however is only found several 1000 km further east). Like with the *isabellinus*-shrikes these birds need to be analysed more thoroughly, but a working hypothesis would be that these birds represented intermediates between *feldegg* and *tschutschensis*.

to 0 °C at some places). From Sweden, Chinese visas are easily obtained and the cost was around €70 per person. The transit at Moscow requires transit visa (2011). For this, we used Spectrum ([www.spectrum.se](http://www.spectrum.se)).

Almost all food is excellent, and it is not hard to find roadside bars and restaurants.

Photos from the trip: [http://www.pbase.com/luscinia/xinjiang\\_2011&page=all](http://www.pbase.com/luscinia/xinjiang_2011&page=all) .

Photos without photographer mentioned are from the Swedish participants; photos with photographer mentioned is prof. Ma Ming.

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**Birding in Tian Shan** (photo: Ma Ming). From the left: Alexander Hellquist, Peter Schmidt, prof. Ma Ming, Fredrik Friberg, and Petter Haldén.



### **3. BIRD RECORDS WITH NOTES**

**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***  
6 Ili River, Tien Shan.

**Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***  
2 birds Sayram Hu lake, Tien Shan.

**Greylag Goose *Anser anser***  
Recorded in small numbers a handful of times along e.g. Ili River Tien Shan, Ebinur lake, wetlands 25km S Qoqek, Ulungur lake and the Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais.

**Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea***  
Fairly common and widespread throughout from the desert to mountains up to 3000m. Mostly as single pairs.

**Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***  
4-6 in Ebinur shrimp ponds, 6 Kazakh border freshwater lakes (SW Tacheng) and one bird in an artificial pond on the way south through the Junggar Basin.

**Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope***  
Recorded in small numbers in most wetlands and lakes visited.

**Gadwall *Anas strepera***  
Rather common and recorded with sometimes up to 40 birds in most suitable wetlands and lakes visited.

**Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca***  
Sparse but widespread with a total of 10-15 birds recorded at Ili River Tien Shan, Ebinur lake, wetlands 25km S Qoqek, Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais and the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***  
Recorded in small numbers in most wetlands and lakes visited.

**Northern Pintail *Anas acuta***

Some 50 birds in total recorded in small numbers in most wetlands and lakes visited.

**Garganey *Anas querquedula***  
Fairly common and widespread in most wetlands and lakes visited. Notably numerous at Ili River with over 30 males seen.

**Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata***  
Rather common and recorded with sometimes up to 30 birds in most wetlands and lakes visited.

**Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina***  
Common and widespread in wetlands and lakes. Particularly high numbers at the Ili River, Tien Shan, with more than 130 individuals seen. A large majority were males indicating that females had already started incubating.

**Common Pochard *Aythya ferina***  
10 Kazakh border freshwater lakes, 10 Ulungur lake and 20+ Kalawu Tekele lake.

**Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***  
2 + 1 Ili River Tien Shan, 1 Ebinur shrimp ponds and 2 Ulungur lake.

**Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***  
4 Kazakh border freshwater lakes, 3-10 daily Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais.

**Goosander *Mergus merganser***  
1 seen along a mountain river in Tien Shan and 2 pairs in similar habitat near the Altai camp at 1500-2000m.

**Himalayan Snowcock *Tetraogallus himalayensis***  
In Tien Shan 1 heard at the Mountain Pass #1 at 3000m and later the same day at Mountain Pass #2 at 3200m 2 calling birds could be scoped at far distance as they walked slowly



Ruddy Shelducks *Tadorna ferruginea*

along a partly snow covered rocky slope.

**Chukar *Alectoris chukar***

Recorded 3-4 times along the way in the eastern part of Tien Shan on May 11th, 1 N Tokkuztara, a few in the mountains S Sayram Hu lake and 4-5 in the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake.

**Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

3 + 5 heard on subsequent dates in the wetlands S Qoqek in Tacheng, 1 calling at the Kalawu Tekele lake and one bird at a stop on the way south along the Junggar Basin.

**Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

Several seen and heard at the Laoqiala orchard south of Korla and fairly common around Ebinur lake.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Recorded at most suitable wetlands visited with up to 10 birds, including breeding birds.

**Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***

1 at the Kalawu Tekele lake was the only record.

**Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***

4-5 birds at the reservoir south of Regiment 222 near Urumqi the last day.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Some 5 birds at the Kala reservoir in Taklamakan, 15 near Korla and 4-5 Ebinur lake.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Small numbers noted at most wetlands. Not as frequent as the next species.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Regularly seen in suitable wetlands, but by no means numerous.

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

One seen flying at a distance along Ili River in Tien Shan, a pair seen in the reeds at close range at the Ebinur shrimp ponds and another bird heard in the second set of Ebinur shrimp ponds.

**Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

1 flying over the reeds Ili river in Tien Shan and 1 heard Ebinur.



Black kite *Milvus migrans*, fits fairly well with *lineatus*.

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

10-12 birds in total noted almost daily. Highest count was 5 resting birds one of the days at the Kalawu Tekele lake, Altai. White Stork of race *asiaticus* is no longer breeding in Xinjiang.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Common and widespread, recorded daily up to 3000m in the mountains. Not certain which taxon is supposed to appear here, but appearance of these birds would fit fairly well with *lineatus*.

**Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus***

1 adult bird seen at a telephone post along the road by the Kala reservoir south of Korla.

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

An adult bird on the ground N Tuanchang Reservoir eating on a prey with a Greater Spotted Eagle.

**Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus***

1 + 2 along the mountain plateau on May 11<sup>th</sup> and another on May 13<sup>th</sup> in Tien Shan.

**Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis***

Seen daily during the three days in Tien Shan with up to 20 birds on May 11<sup>th</sup>. No *Gyps* recorded in the Altai. Eurasian Griffon should also be a possibility in Xinjiang.

**Eurasian Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus***

2 soaring over Mountain Pass #1 in Tien Shan was the only record.

**Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus***

A single bird seen along the road in the lowlands before the Altai mountains and

presumably a pair seen together one evening at Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai.

**Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

A female Ebinur lake and a female 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border.

**Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus***

A female seen along the road in the morning short after leaving the camp site in the Tien Shan mountains.

**Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus***

A male, possibly on migration, was seen from the car shortly after the dry river bed stop SW Hoboksar. An adult male and a second year



female held territory in the reeds out in the Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai and were seen on three consecutive dates. An interesting finding as there are few, if any, previous breeding attempts recorded in China.

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***

A female and short after an adult male 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border. Possibly the same male was seen a few hours later in the nearby wetlands.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

Totally 8 sightings of single birds spread out over the trip.

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

1 + 1 in lower altitudes in Tien Shan were the only ones identified during the trip.

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

A total of at least 9 birds identified, mostly in the lowlands but also noted in e.g. Altai. Particularly darker birds difficult to separate from the next species based on reliable characters.

**Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius***

Easily confused with the previous species, and far from all individuals were studied very well. At least 3 identified in the Altai area, based on jizz/appearance (broad wings etc.).

**Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga***

1 subadult bird on the ground together with a White-tailed Fish Eagle N Tuanchang Reservoir, Tacheng.

**Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis***

1 subadult Tien Shan, and 1 subadult Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai.

**Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca***

1 adult together with a young Golden Eagle at the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake. Possibly the same bird seen a little later the same afternoon soaring over the hills.

**Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos***

Some 8-10 birds during the days in Tien Shan. 2 at the first mountain pass, 1-2 at the second mountain pass, 1 at the camp site and 4-5 birds at the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake.

**Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus***

In total 8 birds, 1 light phase near Korla, 1 dark phase at the Laoqiala orchard, Taklamakan. 1 light phase Ebinur, 1 Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai, 3 Altai camp site and 1 dark phase by the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni***

A colony with 4-5 birds seen N Tokkuztara in Tien Shan was the only confirmed sighting. Probably overlooked on a few occasions along the highways.

**Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Common and widespread and seen daily.

**Merlin *Falco columbarius***



A pair near the Tien Shan camp site, 2 thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake and 1 in the Altai.

**Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

2 at the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake, 1 at the Rook colony west of Ulungur lake and 1 at the Kalawu Tekele lake.

**Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo***

4 migrating in Tien Shan at 2500m S lake Sayram Hu, 200 + 110 by Ebinur lake, 120+ Tacheng, 8 just before arriving in the Altai and 150-200 seen daily by the Kalawu Tekele lake on three consecutive dates.

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

1 heard at night at the Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai.

**Corn Crake *Crex crex***

1 flushed at the wetlands 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border, Tacheng.

**Eurasian Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana***

1 heard at night at the Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

1 at wetlands near Korla, 1 Ebinur shrimp ponds, 1 + 1 Ulungur lake and 4-5 in the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

4-5 Ili River Tien Shan, a few Ulungur lake, 4-5 Kalawu Tekele lake and 1 at the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

1 pair N Tuanchang Reservoir (Tacheng) and 1 pair at the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedicnemus***

1 heard calling after dark in the desert camp N Regiment 222 and 2 flushed the last day near the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Common and widespread in small numbers. Also near water in rather dry semi-desert e.g. in Taklamakan.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

9 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 1 near Korla and 25 Ebinur lake.

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

8 + 2 in the wetlands 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border.

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Fairly common and widespread in suitable habitat.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

1 adult seen the last day by the reservoir near Regiment 222. Uncommon migrant in Xinjiang.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Common and widespread. Suitable habitat anywhere near some water, even in very dry areas.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

2 at the Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi and rather common at Ili River Tien Shan, around Ebinur lake, Junggar Basin sewer ponds and around the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii***

6 in breeding plumage at the mud flats in Ebinur lake.

**Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola***

1 displaying at dusk at the Tien Shan camp site.

**Pintail/Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago stenura/megala***

1 + 1 Kalawu Tekele lake and 1 at the reservoir near Regiment 222 of this difficult-to-separate pair.

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

2-3 N Tuanchang Reservoir, 1 Kazakh border hillside and Ulungur lake. Also a few *Gallinago sp.* flushed.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

2 seen on three consecutive dates May 17-19<sup>th</sup> Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

1 Ili River Tien Shan and 1 Sazi lake.

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

5 + 1 Ili River Tien Shan, 2 Ebinur lake, 3 Sazi lake, 3 bergdamm, 2 Ulungur lake and 1 + 1 Altai lake.

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

1 Sazi lake at 1950m and 3 Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai.

**Common Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Common and widespread, also in rather dry areas. Highest number with more than 300 at Sazi lake. Newly hatched juveniles recorded on a few occasions.

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***

1 at the wetlands 25km S Qoqek was the only certain record.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

25+ Ili River Tien Shan, 2-4 Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

1 Kala reservoir Taklamakan, 3 Ulungur lake and 1 Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

3 at the Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

**Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii***

Very common and widespread outside the montane areas.

**Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta***

At least 5 Junggar Basin sewer ponds and 1 bird by the reservoir near Regiment 222. Uncommon migrant in Xinjiang.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

1 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi and 4 Ebinur shrimp ponds.

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans***

1 2cy Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 2 Ili river, 15 Sayram Hu lake (known breeding site), 15-20 individuals daily including seemingly breeding birds Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai. Without going into details, especially the 2cy birds were of typical *cachinnans* appearance. Adult



Relict Gulls *Ichthyiaetus relictus*

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

3 at the wetlands 25km S Qoqek and 30+ Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

**Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus***

A group with 17 birds seen feeding and flying around the last day at the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Widespread and fairly common along most streams and wetlands, including very dry areas.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

birds were definitely not *barabensis* and from our photos most likely *mongolicus* can be ruled out also.

**Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyiaetus***

1 2cy Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 15 Ebinur lake, 12-15 Tuanchang Reservoir, one 2cy Ulungur lake and three 2cy at the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus***

Recorded in small numbers at most wetlands, reservoirs and lakes visited. Around 50 birds Lake Ulungur was the highest count.

**Relict Gull *Ichthyaetus relictus***

7 adult birds on the mudflats on the south side of Lake Ebinur. A known breeding site for this species since a couple of years.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

1 Junggar Basin sewer ponds, and 1 by the reservoir S Regiment 222. 6 probables Lake Ebinur disappeared before there was time for a closer look, when we focused on the Relict Gulls.

**White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus***

5 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 50+ Ili River, 100+ around Ebinur shrimp ponds, 20 Sazi lake, common in wetlands around Tacheng, at least 1200 Ulungur lake in the morning, 300+170 migrating Kalawu Tekele lake on two dates and 2 Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

25+ around Ebinur shrimp ponds and 3 Ulungur lake.

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

1 mudflats Ebinur lake and 7 at the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

1 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 25 Kala reservoir Taklamakan, 5-6 around Tacheng, 2-3 Ulungur lake, 2 Kalawu Tekele lake and 10+ at the reservoir S Regiment 222. Variation in the bill colour between individuals, those with extensive black resembling *longipennis* and those looking similar to European birds.

**Little Tern *Sterna albifrons***

1 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 2 pairs Kala reservoir Taklamakan, common around Ebinur lake, 1 Ulungur lake and 2 at the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus***

Poor views of two birds along the road Junggar Basin.

**Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis***

2 in the wetland 25km S Qoqek near Kazakh border.

**Rock Pigeon *Columba livia***

Common in urban areas.

**Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris***

Fairly common at higher altitudes in Tien Shan.

**Stock Pigeon *Columba oenas***

2 in the forest S Regiment 31 Taklamakan. This would otherwise be good habitat also for Yellow-eyed Pigeon, *C. eversmanni*.

**Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

1 N Tokkuztara was the only record.

**European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

2 + 1 near Emin, 5-6 in the semi-desert N Regiment 222.

**Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis***

3 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, a few noted in the agricultural plain Tien Shan, fairly common with 25+ seen around Tacheng and 4-5 near Regiment 222.

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Common and widespread in the lowlands.

**Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis***

5-10 in Taklamakan, most seen around villages.

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Surprisingly common and widespread during the trip, seen and heard daily with sometimes many individuals.

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

One seen from the car in a village north of Ebinur lake.

**Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus***

2 seen hunting at dusk by Lake Kalawu Tekele in the Altai. Given the habitat, not unlikely that these were breeding birds.

**Eurasian Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus***

One flushed by the Ulungur river. Heard at dusk from the road by the Regiment 222 reservoir as well as from the tents at the desert camp site N Regiment 222.

**Common Swift *Apus apus pekinensis***

Fairly common in Taklamakan, otherwise fairly sparse but with more or less daily sightings.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

A total of 3 around Ebinur shrimp ponds, a pair N Tuanchang Reservoir, a pair by the river 25km S Qoqek and 1 by the Ulungur river.

**European Roller *Coracias garrulus***

Common with 50+ seen along the road in the agricultural lowland in Tien Shan and also common in suitable habitat in the Tacheng area.

**European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

4 migrating at high altitude (2200m) in Tien Shan S lake Sayram Hu, 1 Ebinur and 5-6 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border. The Bee-eaters arrive from Africa towards the end of May in Xinjiang so probably far from all had arrived at the time of our visit.



**Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

1 + 1 in Taklamakan, several along the road in the agricultural lowland in Tien Shan, fairly common around Tacheng and also noted in the semi-desert N Regiment 222.

**Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***

1 calling Tuanchang Reservoir, 1 calling in a village near hillside stop N Wushishui reservoir, at least 3 birds Altai camp site and 1 calling bird seen by the Ulungur river.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

1 probable in conifer forest at 2200m in Tien Shan S lake Sayram Hu

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

1 confiding pair in the forest S Regiment 31 Taklamakan. Also heard at the orchard just east of Laoqiala.

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra***

1 + 1 aerial display in the agricultural plains east of Zekti, Tien Shan.

**Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla***

About 10 birds near Kazakh border 25km S Qoqek was the only location where this species was found.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens***

1 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, a pair Kala dam (attending a nest with eggs), common around Ebinur, 1 Ulungur lake, 2-3 Junggar Basin sewer ponds and 2 by the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

1 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 1-2 Kazakhborder freshwater lakes, 4-6 at a stop in the Junggar Basin and common in the semi-desert N Regiment 222.

**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

5+ Sazi lake (1950m), common around Tacheng and in agricultural areas in the Altai. Also recorded by the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris***

Common at higher altitudes (>2500m) in Tien Shan and also noted at Sazi lake (1950m).

**Collared Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

25+ Ili River, several sightings around the Ebinur shrimp ponds, 1 Tuanchang Reservoir, 10+ by the river near Kazakh border 25km S Qoqek. Fair numbers by Ulungur lake and later Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai. Also recorded around the Junggar Basin sewer ponds.

**Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta***

2 identified on telephone wires by Kalawu Tekele lake alongside many *riparia*.

**Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris***

Noted along the road in rocky semi-desert between Turpan and Korla, 10+ at the first stop in Tien Shan (at 2350m), 4 Tuanchang Reservoir and also recorded a few times in the Altai.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Very common throughout the trip, except at the highest altitudes.

**Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

10+ at the Tien Shan camp site, recorded en route north of Ebinur and seen a few times in Tacheng including 50+ active nest by the river near Kazakh border 25km S Qoqek.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Race *personata* was fairly common and widespread, up to 2300m in Tien Shan. At least one or two birds had notably dark backs reminiscent of taxon *alboides*, but these birds could unfortunately not be documented well enough to say something certain. According to Alström & Mild there is a zone of hybridisation between *alboides/personata* in Kashmir and northern Pakistan which would not be extremely far south. Another bird showed signs of both *baicalensis* and *leucopsis*. One bird photographed in



White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus leucogaster*

Taklamakan recalled *alba* but could perhaps just have been a retarded 1st winter *personata*.

**Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola***

Fairly common and widespread recorded in the Taklamakan, up to 2300m in Tien Shan, in Tacheng, Junggar Basin and by the reservoir S Regiment 222 N Urumqi. None of the birds noted showed any obvious signs of taxon *calcarata*.

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Despite rather extensive breeding gaps, it should be possible to find at least four different *M. flava* taxa in Xinjiang and adjacent areas - *beema*, *tschutschensis*, *feldegg* and *leucocephalus* (Alström & Mild, 2003). The



Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus*

Yellow Wagtails were actually found to be rather common and widespread around Ebinur, in Tacheng, along Ulungur lake, in wetlands of the Altais and along the easternmost parts of Tien Shan near Urumqi, and most birds were thought to be on breeding territory. We were probably too late for any migration peak and at this stage in May most birds are likely to have already passed through Xinjiang (e.g. we did not see any *leucocephalus* which should be passing by regularly on the way to Mongolia). We found several males which did not fit particularly well into any of the above mentioned taxa. These birds, with variable calls but often like *feldegg*, were superficially similar to *macronyx* (a taxon which however is only found several 1000 km further east). Like with the *isabellinus*-shrikes these birds need to be analysed more thoroughly, but a working hypothesis would be that these birds represented intermediates between *feldegg* and *tschutschensis*.

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

Common in Tien Shan and the Altais, but also recorded a few times in suitable habitat at lower altitudes between Tacheng and the Altais.

**Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi***

2 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 2 Ebinur camp, 2-3 pairs Kalawu Tekele lake and also noted by the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris***

1 at the N Tuanchang Reservoir, fairly common in the cultivated steppe 25km S Qoqek, at least 2 pairs at the hillside N Wushishui reservoir and the Kazakh border hillside in N Tacheng and finally 1 along the road near breeding Rosy Starlings just before entering the Altais.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis***

Great Reed Warbler  
*Acrocephalus*  
*arundinaceus*



Fairly common in conifer forest in Tien Shan and in the Altai. Also recorded at the Kazakh border hillside in N Tacheng.

**Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni***

Common at altitudes above 2500m in Tien Shan.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***

A few in conifer forest in Tien Shan and in the Altai.

**White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus leucogaster***

Birds of the white-bellied race *leucogaster* recorded twice in Tien Shan, 1 at Kazakh border hillside in N Tacheng and 1 at the Altai camp site.

**Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

2-3 on the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake, Tien Shan.

**Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana***

3-4 at Mountain Pass #1 and one at Mountain Pass #2 in Tien Shan, both spots above 3000m.

**Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens***

Recorded once, a pair including a singing male at 2500m in Tien Shan.

**Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis***

10+ in open conifer at the Tien Shan camp, 2-3 in the mountains S lake Sayram Hu and 5-6 on the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake.

**Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis***

1 pair 25km S Qoqek, 1-2 singing at the Kazakh border hillside, at least 2 pairs near the Altai campsite and a female in the semi-desert on the way south through Junggar Basin.

**White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma***

First a brief sighting of one bird in the evening on May 11<sup>th</sup> and the next morning a duetting pair in conifer forest by the Tien Shan camp site. The status in the area is uncertain.

**Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis***

1 by the Tien Shan camp site and 4-6 birds around the Altai camp site.

**Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus***

Common in conifer forest in Tien Shan and several around the Altai camp site. Also recorded a few times in Tacheng and at the stop at the Bayan river.

**Blackbird *Turdus merula***

2 brief sightings in Tien Shan and several in Tacheng (including central Emin). The singing birds in Emin did not sound particularly different from European birds.

**Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia***

A singing bird at dawn one morning at the Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai.

**Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides***

At least 4 birds around the Ebinur shrimp ponds of which a few were seen surprisingly well singing out in the open from reeds. Also 1 singing at the Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai.

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola***

Noted in wetlands in Taklamakan including several at the Kala reservoir, 4-5 around the Ebinur shrimp ponds, 6-7 in the wetlands 25km S Qoqek Tacheng, several by Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altai, 2 by the Ulungur

river and finally 2 singing birds at the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum***

2 singing Tuanchang Reservoir and 2 in the wetlands 25km S Qoqek in Tacheng.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Noted with some 5 birds in wetlands around Taklamakan, common Ebinur shrimp ponds and, 1 Kalawu Tekele lake and 2-3 at the reservoir S Regiment 222. Would be taxon *zarudnyi* in Xinjiang. Neither appearance (the birds showed fresh plumage, long wing and no visible streaking of breast) nor song indicated closely related Oriental Reed Warbler, *A. orientalis*, which would otherwise be a theoretical confounder in Xinjiang.

**Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata***

1 singing at the hillside N Wushishui reservoir, 2-3 Kazakh border hillside, 10-15 in the steppe/agricultural area at the two stops 25km S Qoqek, 3 singing by Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai and 2 at the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Sykes's Warbler *Hippolais rama***

Some 10 birds holding territory on the salt plain by the southern shore of Ebinur lake.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis***

Common in conifer forest in the Altai. Typical *tristis* song & calls.

**Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus***

In Tien Shan 4-5 birds along a stream at 2500m and another 3-4 birds in the mountains S lake Sayram Hu lake. Also 1 singing on the Kazakh border hillside in Tacheng (1235m) and at least 1 singing bird at the Altai camp.

**Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei***

Widespread, but never numerous, in Tacheng and the Altai. Seen almost daily except for the first days in the Taklamakan. Most of the birds were probably on migration.

**Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides***

Surprisingly scarce, only two records; one singing at 2000m in Tien Shan and one by the river 25km S Qoqek.



Chinese Hill Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis albosuperciliaris*

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria***

1 singing male near the orchard in Taklamakan, 1 male Ebinur camp and one by the river 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border.

**Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

1 Tuanchang reservoir and one at the hillside N Wushishui reservoir were the only records.

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Widespread in small numbers in dryer habitats like the Taklamakan, around Tacheng, Ulungur lake and the semi-desert near Regiment 222.

Also noted with 2-3 birds Ebinur and in the Altai. No big efforts were made trying to sort the Lesser Whitethroates out although several forms/taxa should be a possibility here.

**Chinese Hill Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis albosuperciliaris***

1 seen briefly in the forest S Regiment 31 Taklamakan and 4-6 in the orchard near Laoqiala. Taxon *albosuperciliaris* has both distinct plumage differences and is isolated from the Eastern China populations/taxa.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

1 in conifer forest near the Altai camp site was the only sighting.

**Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos hafizi***

Common around Ebinur and during the days in Tacheng. Also noted in the semi-desert N Urumqi near Regiment 222.

**Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis***

At least 3 singing males and a female in thuja shrubbery in the slopes just N Sayram Hu lake, Tien Shan.

**Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica***

Fairly common in Tacheng May 15-16<sup>th</sup> and also 2-3 singing males around the Kalawu Tekele lake in Altai. Song not as varied as Scandinavian birds, but otherwise similar in plumage.



Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis* in thuja shrubbery in the slopes just north of Sayram Hu lake.





Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin  
*Cercotrichas galactotes*

**Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes***

At least 6 males in the desert N Regiment 222. This recently discovered population is quite a distance from the closest known birds west of Lake Balkhash in Kazakhstan.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides***

Common in Tien Shan from 2500m, also noted at the thuja slopes N Sayram Hu lake and near the camp site in Altai.

**Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

At least 3 singing males, of which two had company of females, in conifer forest around the Altai camp site.

**Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus evermanni***

2 different males around the Tien Shan camp site and another male close to the Altai camp.

**Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus coeruleocephala***

A pair around the Tien Shan camp site.

**Güldenstädt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus***

One pair + a male at Mountain Pass #1 and another male at Mountain Pass #2 in Tien Shan, both above 3000m.

**Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus maurus***

A male Ebinur lake, 10-15 birds around Tacheng and up to 30 daily in the Altai (of which many seemed to be migrating).

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

2 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, common in Tien Shan up to 2700m, fairly common Tacheng and again more common in the Altai.

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka***

1+2 along the road the first day between Turpan and Korla, 2-3 along the road N Ebinur, a pair Kazakh border hillside, fairly common in the Altai. A bird seen 25km S Qoqek with extensive white in the head may have been the form *vittata*.

**Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti***

3-4 along the road the first day between Turpan and Korla, 1 Taklamakan, 1 near lake Sazi, 1 by the Kazakh border hillside and some 10 birds along the road in the Junggar Basin.

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina***

Common at altitudes above 2000m in Tien Shan including the places visited near lake Sayram Hu, 3-4 lake Sazi, common on the steppe S of Qoqek near the Kazakh border, several along the road in the Altai and in the Junggar Basin.

**Bearded Reading *Panurus biarmicus***

2 Ebinur shrimp ponds and 1 at the reservoir S Regiment 222.

**Willow Tit *Parus montanus***

4-5 in the conifer forest around the camp site in Tien Shan, 1 in the forest S lake Sayram Hu and 5 around the Altai camp site.

**Coal Tit *Parus ater***

A few in the conifer forests at the Tien Shan and Altai camp sites.



**Great Tit *Parus major***

Common near Emin town and also noted a few times elsewhere in Tacheng. 1 Bayan river, 1 at the dry river bed SW Hoboksar and 1 near the Altai camp.

**Turkestan Tit *Parus bokharensis***

2 Ebinur and 2 Ulungur river. In every aspect a colourless version of Great Tit.

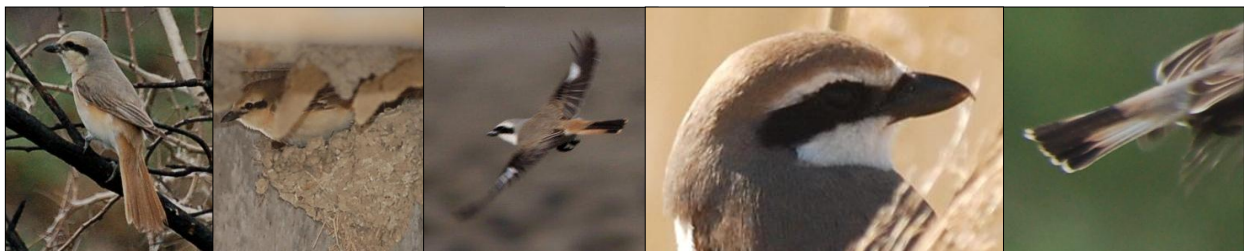
**Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus***

1 + 2 in willows in Tien Shan, 2 pairs N Tuanchang Reservoir, 1 by the Baylan river and later the same day another bird a little further east along a dry river bed SW Hoboksar at a short stop.

A male seen some 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border was the only pure *L. collurio* of the trip. Many hybrids with *L. isabellinus*, see discussion under this species.

**Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus***

Except for the days in Tien Shan, *L. isabellinus* were seen daily often with many individuals. The majority of the birds were considered to be breeding birds, rather than on migration, and a few nests were also found (e.g. 2 *arenarius*-nests with at least week-old young in Taklamakan, indicating early arrival). Since long it is well known that *L. collurio* is hybridising with *L. isabellinus* and in northern Xinjiang a complicated melting pot is very evident. In northern parts of Dzungaria hybrids were in fact dominating. More or less the complete range of plumages could be noted, from typical *L. isabellinus* of the three taxa *L. i. arenarius* (in Taklamakan), *L. i. phoenicuroides* and a few *L. i. isabellinus* to intermediate forms between mainly *L. isabellinus* x *L. collurio* (mostly with *L. i. phoenicuroides*) but also birds with an appearance between typical *isabellinus* and *phoenicuroides*. It remains to be further analysed, but these observations together with our previous experiences from the Russian and Mongolian Altai may suggest a slightly more eastern shift of the breeding areas for *L. i. phoenicuroides* at the expense of *L. i. isabellinus*.



**Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*.** From the left: 1) Breeding male *arenarius* in Taklamakan; 2) male *arenarius* in Taklamakan plundering Barn swallow nest 3) Hybride *L. isabellinus* x *L. collurio*, male, Altai; 4) *Phoenicuroides*, male, Ebinur; 5) Tail from a *L. isabellinus* x *L. collurio*.

**Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea asiaica***

1 at the Altai camp site was the only record.

**European Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus***

1 seen briefly at the wetlands 25km S Qoqek near the Kazakh border. White-crowned Penduline Tit *R. coronatus* would also be a possibility in Xinjiang.

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

**Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor pallidirostris***

1 near the Junggar Basin sewer ponds and later the same day another bird a bit further along the road at a shorter roadside stop.

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

1 pair in agricultural plains east of Zekti, Tien Shan, 1 pair N Ebinur, 2 + 2 along the road in

northern Tacheng, 1 pair near the river 25km S Qoqek, 1 Ulungur lake.

**Common Magpie *Pica pica***

1 + 1 Tien Shan camp site, 1 N Tokkuztara and 1 east of Bayan river at a short stop along a dry river bed.336



**Biddulph's Ground Jay *Podoces biddulphi***

South of Regemente 31 in the Taklamakan two family groups were found and between these stops another single bird was seen on a wire along the road. The young birds do not have any black in the throat.

**Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes***

Common and vocal in the forest near the campsite east of and below the Mountain Pass #2 in Tien Shan. Also recorded in the Spruce forest during the Tien Shan climb S Lake Sayram Hu.

**Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax***

A feeding flock on an alpine meadow at 2000m in eastern Tien Shan was the first record and then on seen regularly, mostly single birds, during the days in Tien Shan.

**Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula***

Along a fairly short stretch during the drive between Emin and Lake Ulungur several sightings of smaller flocks along the road.

**Eurasian Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Between Emin and Ulungur lake, a breeding colony with at least 80 nest were found along the road. This short stretch was the only place where Rooks and Jackdaws were seen.

**Oriental Crow *Corvus corone orientalis***

Fairly widespread but never numerous, most birds seen in Tien Shan at altitudes up to 3000m.

**Common Raven *Corvus corax***

1 Taklamakan, 3-4 Tien Shan, 1 Bayan river and 1 near Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais.

**Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus***

Impressive numbers with an estimated 50-



60000 birds in the agricultural plains east of Zetki, Tien Shan. 500 N Tuanchang Reservoir, 400 at the hillside N Wushishui reservoir, 2000 migrating 25km S Qoqek, 2 colonies of totally some 1000 birds breeding on rocky slopes along the the road side just before the Altai mountains. Small numbers also noted in Ebinur and Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris porphyrotus***

Common in Tacheng, several sightings around Kalawu Tekele lake in the Altais and also common in agricultural habitat around Regiment 222. This taxon lacks spots of the nominate and thus looks more like Spotless Starling, *S. unicolor*.

**Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis***

Fairly common along a short stretch between the agricultural plains east of Zetki and Sayram Hu lake. Apparently a rather recent addition to the Tien Shan avifauna.

**Saxaul Sparrow *Passer ammodendri***

Several sightings in the Taklamakan, but also seen around the Junggar Basin sewer ponds and in the desert N Regiment 222.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Fairly common throughout, more so around Ebinur, Tacheng and in the Altais.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Common and widespread.

**Rock Petronia *Petronia petronia***

Noted only once, 2 birds by Sazi lake (around the Rosy starling artificial nest constructions).

**White-winged Snowfinch**

***Montifringilla nivalis***

Fairly common at suitable altitudes near 3000m in Tien Shan.

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

5-6 birds in conifer forest around the Altai camp.

**Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla***

A pair in conifer forest near the Altai camp.

**Asian Rosy Finch *Leucosticte arctoa***

A small flock with 5 birds near Mountain Pass #1 at 3000m in Tien Shan.

**Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus***

5-6 in the Tien Shan mountains S Sayram Hu lake, fairly common around Tacheng, 10+ Altai camp and 3-4 singing Ulungur river.

**Red-mantled Rosefinch *Carpodacus rhodochlamys***

5-10 birds at the thuja slopes north of Sayram Hu lake. Kept to the thuja shrubbery, a bit elusive and difficult to get prolonged views.

**Fire-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus***

5-10 in the Tien Shan mountains S Sayram Hu lake.

**Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (*caniceps* ?)**

1 at the Tien Shan camp site, 2-3 in a village near Zetki, 2 + 2 + 2 around Tacheng, 6 near the Altai camp site and 2 in the village near Kalawu Tekele lake. Race uncertain, but probably



Saxaul Sparrow *Passer ammodendri*

*caniceps*, in any case one of the taxa with only red markings in the face.

**European Greenfinch *Carduelis chlorops***

Common around Tacheng and noted as far east as Ulungur lake. Also a recent coloniser of western Xinjiang.

**Twite *Carduelis flavirostris brevipes***

Fairly common at higher altitudes above 2500m in Tien Shan.

**Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina bella***

2 Chaiwopu Lake S Urumqi, 2 Sayram Hu lake, noted a few times in the mountains of northern Tacheng, common in the cultivated steppe 25km S Qoqek and fairly common in agricultural areas around the Altai mountains.

**White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carripes***

Fairly common in the conifer forest/shrubbery along the thuja slopes N of Sayram Hu lake.

**Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta***

2 by the road on the way south through the Junggar Basin and 4-5 birds in the desert N Regiment 222.

**Mongolian Finch *Rhodopechys mongolicus***

1 along the road S of Sazi lake in the dry mountains at 1250m and another at a short stop by the road on the way south through the Junggar Basin.

**Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos***

5-10 birds in the Tien Shan mountains just S of lake Sayram Hu. Song clearly different from Siberian birds.

**Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia***

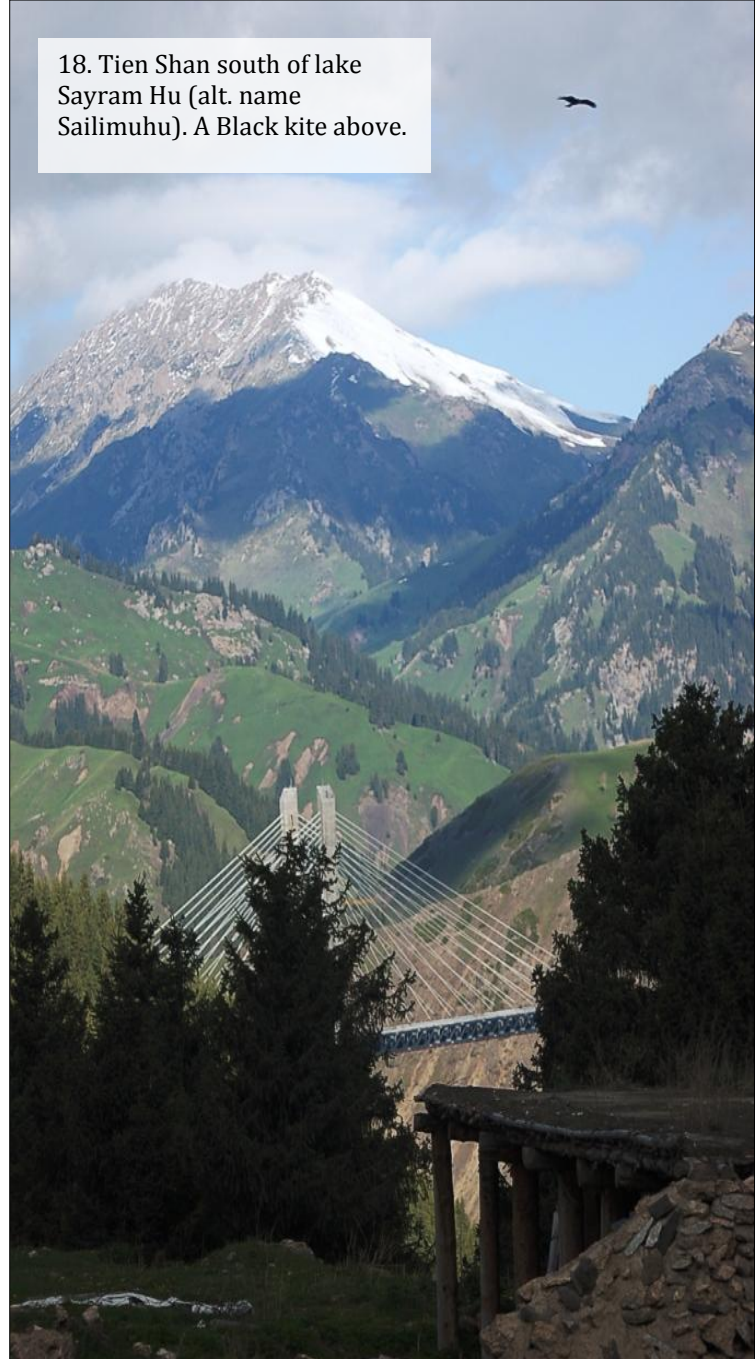
10+ at the hillside near Kazakh border in N Tacheng and fairly common around the Altai camp site in open rocky conifer forest. For birds seen in Tien Shan, see comment under *E. godlewski*.

**Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii***

Common below 2500m in Tien Shan. These birds were probably *E. godlewski*, but many appeared to show intermediate characters between *E. cia* and *E. godlewski*. Would be worth a more detailed study.

**Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani***

18. Tien Shan south of lake Sayram Hu (alt. name Sailimuhu). A Black kite above.



5-7 birds Kazakh border hillside in northern Tacheng. Most likely heard singing a few times along the road in the mountains S Sazi lake, but no time for a closer look.

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***

Appeared to be common in the agricultural habitat around Altai, e.g. 10+ singing males around Kalawu Tekele lake. Otherwise only noted on one occasion, 5-6 migrating birds on the evening May 15<sup>th</sup> in some fields NE Qoqek, Tacheng.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola***

1 briefly heard near the Ebinur camp site was the only record.

**Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps***

5-6 birds feeding with Ortolan Buntings in a field N Qoqek. 15+ noted S Qoqek in wetlands and river near Kazakh border on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Also noted a few times in the desert and around the reservoir near Regiment 222.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
4-5 birds Kala reservoir Taklamakan. Fairly thick-billed and pale birds, taxon uncertain.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*  
Noted a few times with totally 8-10 birds in the agricultural plains east of Zetki, Tien Shan.

## MAMMALS

**Siberian Ibex** *Capra sibirica*  
A few sightings in Tien Shan.

**Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris*  
Several in conifer forest Tien Shan.

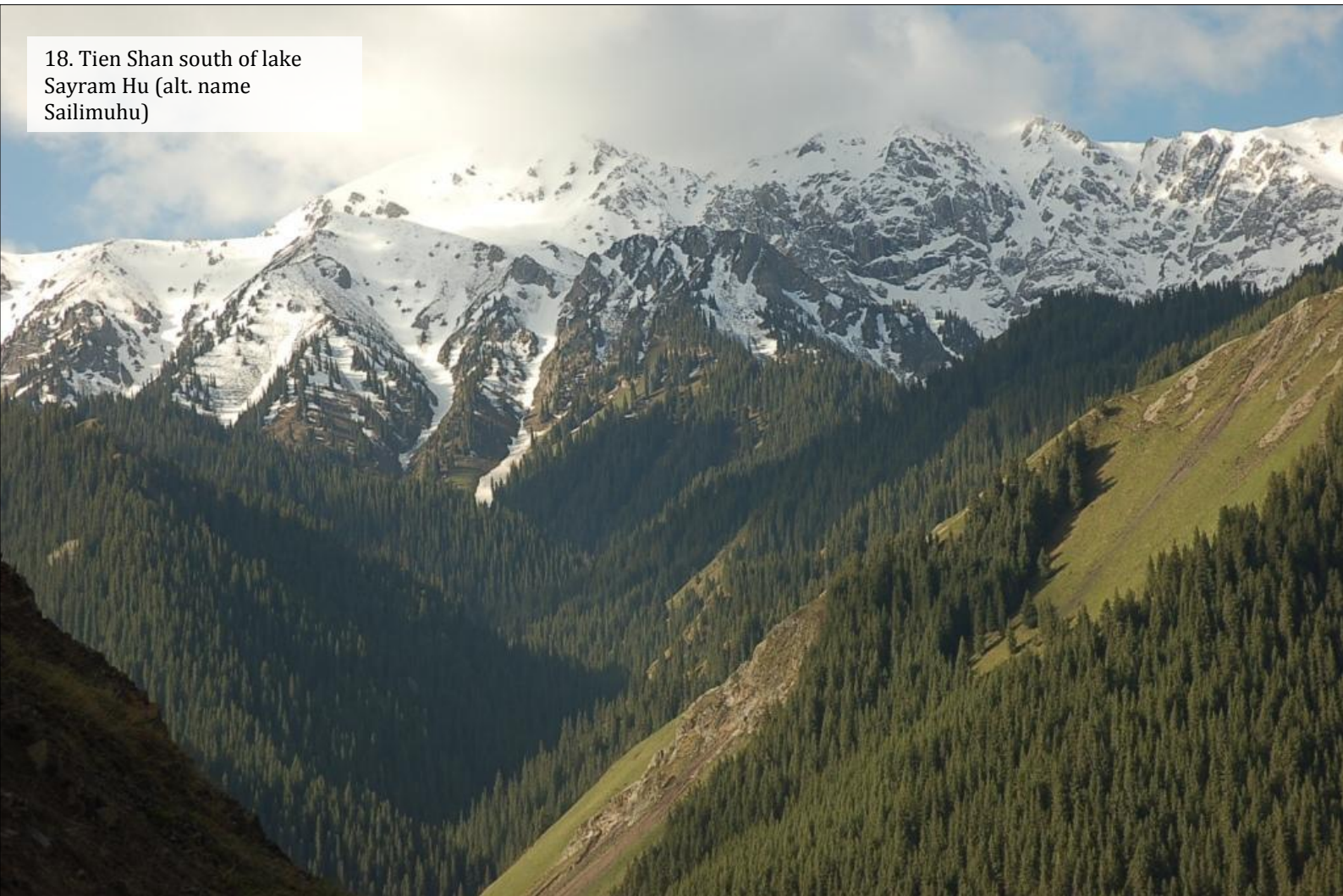
**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*  
1 in Tien Shan.

**Golden Marmot** *Marmota caudata*  
Common at higher altitudes in Tien Shan.

**Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus sp.*  
Common at higher altitudes Tien Shan.

**Goitered gazelle** *Gazella subgutturosa*  
3-4 individuals by Ebinur lake.

18. Tien Shan south of lake Sayram Hu (alt. name Sailimuhu)





#### 4. Places visited

(numbers refer to map)

#	Name	N	E	Alt	Date	Time of day	Description
1	Chaiwopu Lake	43.31.39	87.52.58	1088m	9 May	Lunch	First stop just south of Urumqi, Avocets and other waders, Wagtails, Lesser Short-toed Lark.
2	South of Regiment 31	40.49.20	87.01.52	843m	10 May	Morning	Open forest along the road south of Regiment 31, White-winged Woodpecker, Saxaul Sparrow, Chinese Babbler. First Ground-jays along road in scrub desert
3	Jinlucun, Taklamakan	40.44.09	87.20.06	855m	10 May	Morning	First Ground-jays along road in scrub desert
4	Daxi Haizi Reservoir, Taklamakan	40.41.37	87.25.51	851m	10 May	Morning	Last Ground-jays along road in scrub desert
5	Orchard east of Laoqiala village	40.55.29	86.49.28	866m	10 May	Lunch	Laoqiala orchard along the road, Chinese Babbler, Pheasants, Isabelline Shrikes.
6	Laoqiala village, Taklamakan	40.57.05	86.45.52	865m	10 May	Afternoon	Lunch break Day 2 in village along the road with Barred Warbler, Booted Eagle.
7	South end of Kala Reservoir, Taklamakan	40.58.03	86.45.17	857m	10 May	Afternoon	Big reservoir with adjacent wetlands, waterbirds, Paddyfield Warbler, Pallas's Fish-eagle, Lesser Short-toed Lark.
8	West of Bosten Lake, Taklamakan	42.11.36	86.29.04	1060m	10 May	Evening	Evening stop close to village Bayan with Great Reed Warbler, Wagtails, Doves etc.
9	Mountain valley in Tien Shan, close to village Chagan Nur	42.54.51	86.15.14	2370m	11 May	Lunch	First longer stop in Tien Shan, just after turn-off, along river, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Godlewski's Bunting, White-throated Dipper, Vultures, Brown Accentor, Twite.
10	Mountain Pass #1 (Peak 3242m acc. to map)	43.01.51	86.04.55	3124m	11 May	Afternoon	Just below Mountain Pass #1 at 3242 m.a.s.l. acc. to map with Gldenstdt's Redstart, Water Pipit, Snowfinches, Snowcock, Asian Rosy-finch etc.
11	Mountain Pass #2 (Peak 3141m acc. to map)	43.12.09	84.51.18	3072m	11 May	Afternoon	Mountain Pass #2 at 3221 m.a.s.l. acc. to map with Water Pipit, Snowfinches, Snowcock, Altai Accentor

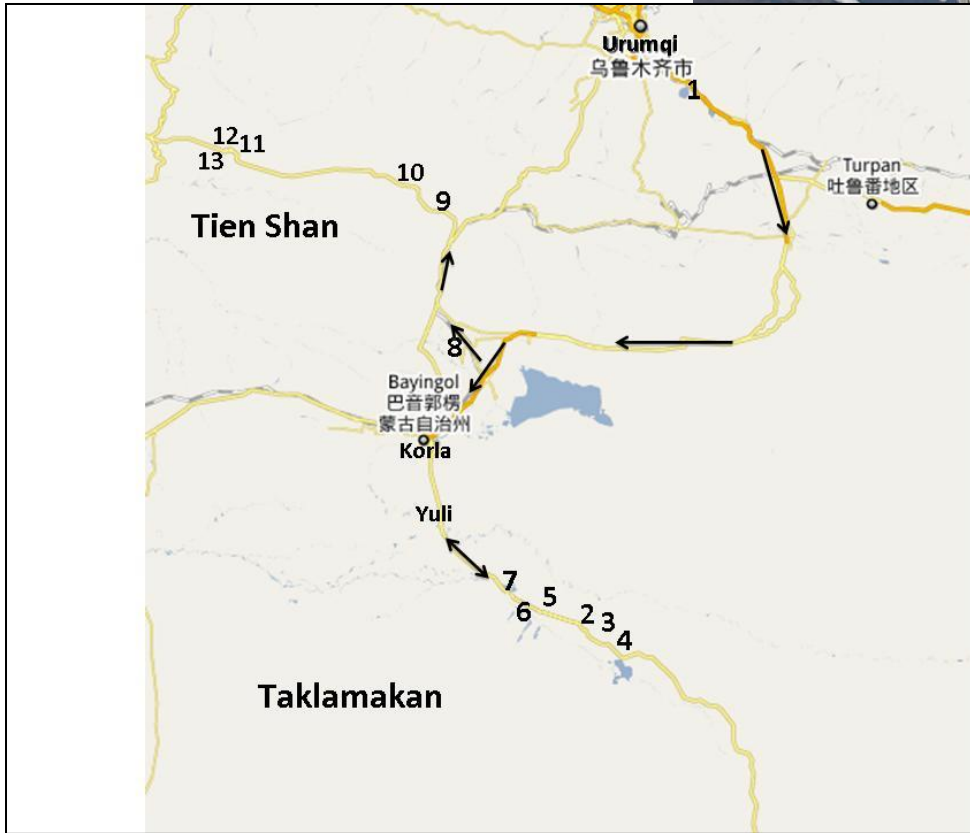




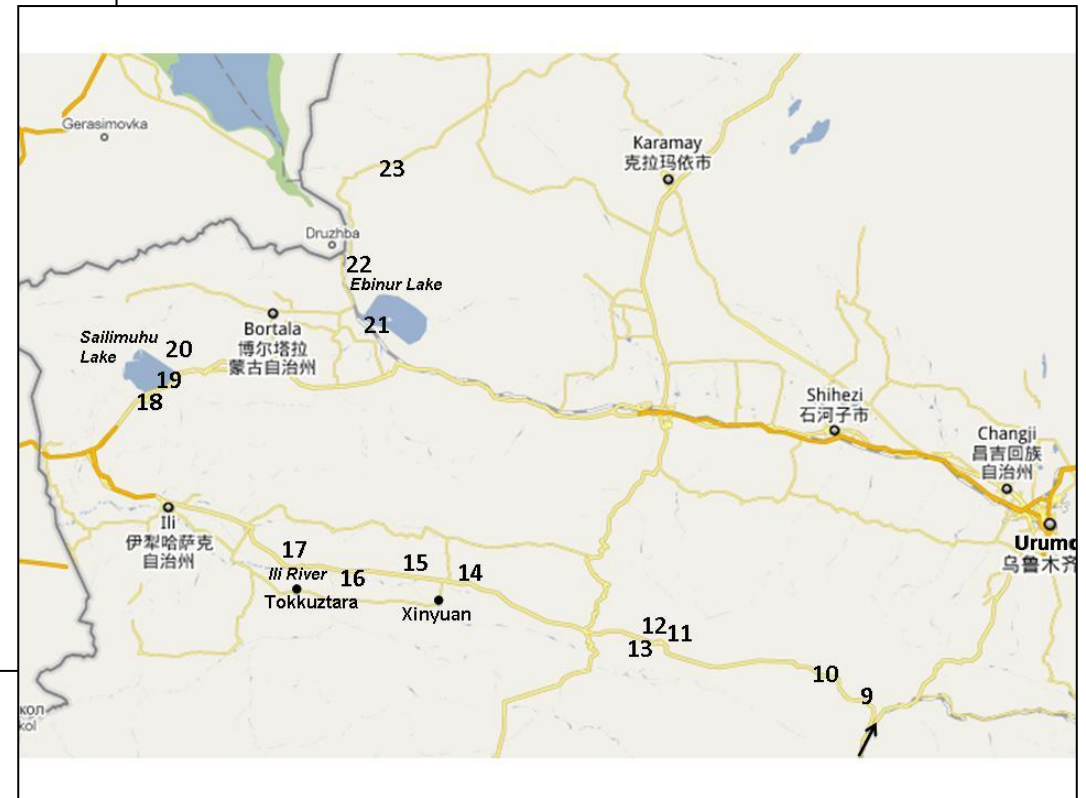
	<b>hillside</b>							Bunting where we walked a bit for 2 hrs.
28	<b>Fields NE Qoqek (Tacheng)</b>	46.50.29	83.11.36	764m	15 May	19.41		Evening stop by some agricultural fields with Ortolan and Red-headed Buntings
29	<b>25km South of village Qoqek, Tacheng (border/river)</b>	46.28.02	82.48.23	406m	16 May	9.26		Stop by a river just by the Kazakh border 25km S Qoqek, breeding House Martins in the bridge, Montague's Harrier, Short-toed Lark and many Shrike hybrids
30	<b>25km South of Qoqek (Wetlands)</b>	46.29.45	82.50.14	406m	16 May	10.52		25km S Qoqek - Nearby wetlands on the steppe with Pratincoles, Penduline Tits, Greylag Geese
31	<b>Rook colony along the way</b>	46.21.47	83.50.29	626m	16 May	15.16		Rook colony along the road between Emin and Ulungur lake, also Jackdaws
32	<b>Bayan River</b>	46.29.04	84.53.25	888m	16 May	16.51		Short stop along the road by Bayan river. Scarce Swallowtail, Grey Wagtail nest.
33	<b>Dry river SW Hoboksar</b>	46.43.16	85.41.19	1108m	16 May	18.41		Short stop by dry river bed where there was a lot of wind, Bluethroat, Shrike hybrids, Magpie.
34	<b>Ulungur lake Stop #1</b>	47.00.21	87.20.59	480m	17 May	8.27		First Gull morning stop by industry/quarry Ulungur lake
34	<b>Ulungur lake Stop #2</b>	47.00.48	87.18.18	490m	17 May	9.25		2 <sup>nd</sup> Gull morning stop Ulungur lake, Coots, <i>Chlidonias</i> , Gulls.
35	<b>Road side stop</b>	47.05.19	88.50.45	807m	17 May	12.07		Rocky slopes along the way with breeding Rosy Starlings.
36	<b>Kalawu Tekele Lake</b>	47.00.58	89.45.24	1365m	17 May	15.21		South side of Altai Kalawu Tekele Lake
	<b>Border control</b>	47.21.30	89.39.09	1375m	17 May	19.03		Border control further north on the way to Mongolia
37	<b>Altai Camp</b>	47.25.37	89.38.53	1431m	17 May	19.36		Conifer forest Camp site Altai where we turned back.
38	<b>Dead end Reservoir Altai</b>	47.02.38	89.55.42	1395m	18 May	18.05		Big reservoir in the mountains where tar road ended on the way to presumed good habitat for the Buchchat.
	<b>T-junction Kalawu Tekele Lake</b>	47.00.43	89.49.37	1335m	18 May	19.24		T-junction in the village when going around the Kalawu Tekele Lake towards the reservoir (with dead end road).
39	<b>Ulungur River (by road S324)</b>	46.20.21	89.32.16	809m	19 May	11.29		Nightjar place where road S324 crosses the Ulungur river (stop at east side), Rosefinch, Warblers, Turkestan Tit, Nightingales etc.
40	<b>Junggar Basin Sewer ponds</b>	44.54.08	88.59.55	543m	19 May	18.31		Sewer ponds with Long-toed Stint and Whiskered Tern and many Waders a bit west off the main road.
41	<b>Junggar Basin Desert stop</b>	44.26.49	88.49.15	530m	19 May	19.21		Shorter evening stop in the sand desert with Crested Lark, Rock Thrush, and Desert Finch
42	<b>Camp site North of Regiment 222</b>	44.26.23	87.50.34	428m	19 May	23.13		Last night Camp site in the semi-desert N Regiment 222, e.g. Crested Larks, Shrikes, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin.
43	<b>Turn-off Regiment 222 Reservoir</b>	44.14.58	87.53.32	445m	20 May	13.05		Turn-off down to the Reservoir S Regiment 222. Also near Thick-knee/Nightjar fields on opposite side of road.



Map 1. Northern Taklamakan



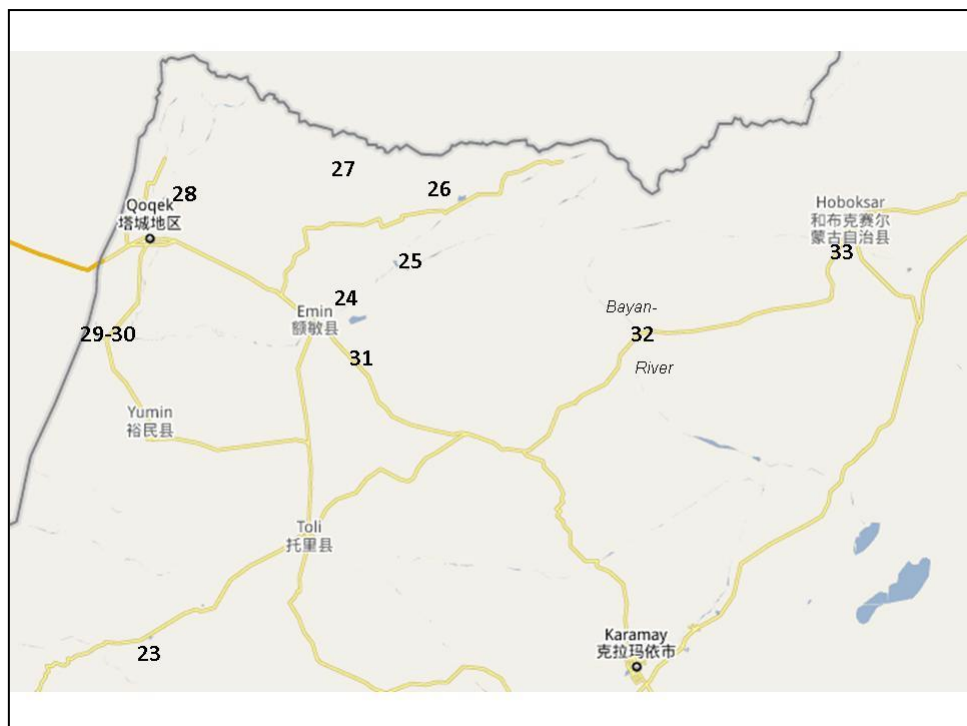
Map 2. E Tien Shan and Ebinur lake.



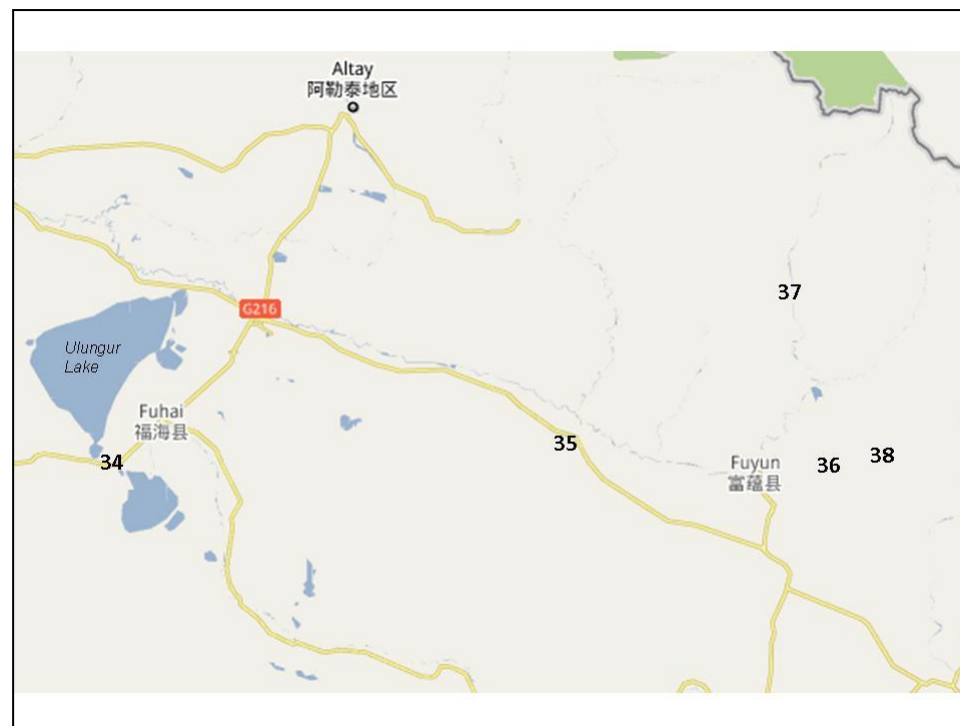
Nr 15. Fields on mountain plateau West of Zekti.



Map 3. Tacheng.

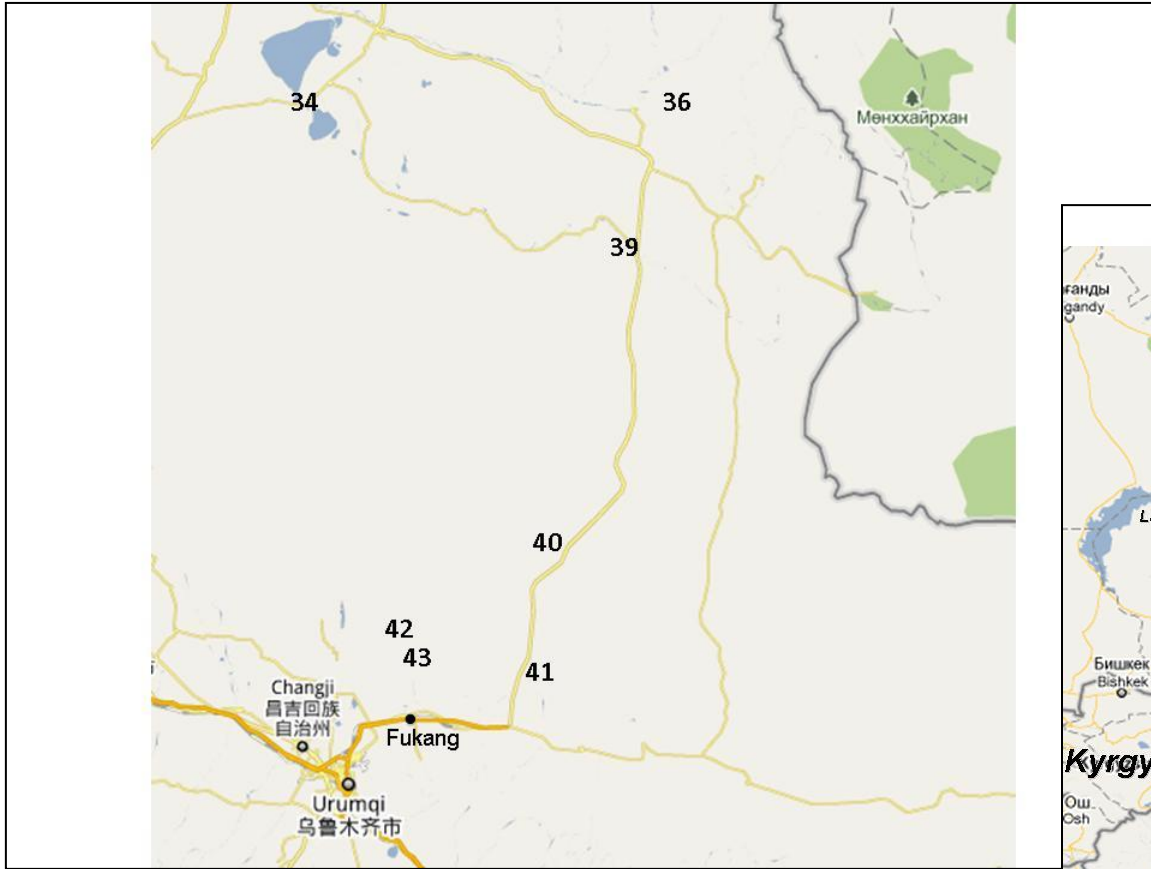


Map 4. Lake Ulungur & SE Altai.



Nr 34. Migrating *Chlidonias* at Ulungur lake Stop #2

Map 5. Junggar Basin



Map 6. Overview Xinjiang



Nr 40. Red hills at Junggar Basin Sewer ponds.

