

# Armenia

July 1-11<sup>th</sup> 2019

*A bird count conducted by ArAves*



Author: Emil Lundahl  
E-mail: [emillundahl97@gmail.com](mailto:emillundahl97@gmail.com)



**FPWC**<sup>®</sup>  
Foundation for the  
Preservation of Wildlife  
and Cultural Assets

# Table of contents

<b>The project and it's background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Timing</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The weather</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Day by day</b>	<b>3</b>
The FPWC Eco Lodge in Urtsadzor	8
<b>List of species (following IOC taxonomy)</b>	<b>16</b>
Birds	16
Mammals	32



Preparing the very first transect at Vardahovit.

## **The project and it's background**

The Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural assets (FPWC) work for wildlife protection, environmental education and sustainable development in Armenia. In 2010 FPWC set up the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge (CWR), an area of 30 000 hectares spread over the country, to conserve the unique and endemic biodiversity of the region. This is where ArAves arranged this bird count in July of 2019 by conducting 32 transect in different ecological zones within the CWR. ArAves was founded by FPWC in 2017 to implement science-based conservation and to support conservation education.

## **Participants**

From ArAves and FPWC: Siranush Tumanyan (Director of ArAves and project leader), Gosha Zohrabyan (ArAves volunteer and project coordinator) and Hrachya Grigoryan (Deputy Director of the FPWC).

Volunteers for this project: Zuka Gurgenidze (Georgia), Emil Lundahl (Sweden) and Debby Reynolds (Great Britain).

## **Timing**

Personally, I had lowered my expectations due to the time of year but it turned out to be pretty good for seeing most species. In July the alpine birds have climbed as high as they get, but since we were able to reach those altitudes this was not a problem. The song activity was high in the mountains but low in the lowlands. All birds were in breeding state and we had a lot of fledged juveniles. Both begging juveniles and parents in search of food helped to see many birds. The downside of going in summer might be that the snowcocks stay seemingly quiet, a species we missed.



Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*, adult with a fresh juvenile.

## **The weather**

The weather was overall very good. No long-lasting daytime rain showers and no strong winds. The coldest temperatures we experienced in the mountains at 3 000 m.a.s.l. was 10 °C. The warmest around 30 °C. The heat at lower altitudes, usually around 26 °C mid-day, made us rest before the temperature dropped in the afternoon at around 5-6 pm.

## **Day by day**

July 1<sup>st</sup>

At 10:20, the plane touched down at the Yerevan airport, marking the beginning of this adventure. Gosha and Edgar, involved in ArAves, met Debby and me as we arrived and brought us to the Balcony Hotel. We had some rest and the nice lady who owned the place offered us apricots and cherries fresh from the garden. During the trip we would experience that the delicious apricots were always present.

We spent the afternoon exploring the city, with Gosha leading the way, telling us about Yerevan and the country in general. We then went to the ArAves and FPWC office where we met project leader Siranush and the fourth and final volunteer, Zuka, who had arrived the same day with taxi from Tbilisi. We went through the plan for the coming eight days of bird counts and later met up again at the Lavash restaurant for a nice first Armenian dinner.

July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Breakfast at 6 am and then a two hours drive east to Hermon where we would spend the night at Lucy tour Hotel. As we unpacked the cars, a **Bearded Vulture** circled low over the hotel! We got a good look at the bone breaker, a name that comes from their habit of dropping pieces of bones from the air in order to access the bone marrow.

After leaving the luggage at the hotel we continued to the village of Vardahovit where we met with the park ranger of this area, Vardan. Some of us went with him in his soviet jeep, which proved to be very useful in the coming terrain! We then started up the mountains where we would do the first transects. The number of birds seen from the car was surprisingly high with lots of **Common Rosefinches**, **Red-backed Shrikes**, **wheatears** and also a very likely Radde's Accentor perched on a rock next to the track. It was therefore hard to sit still, not only because of the bumpy ride!



From left: Siranush, Zuka, Gosha and Debby.

At around 3 000 m.a.s.l. above sea level we finally stopped. Among the patches of snow there were lots of **Water Pipits** displaying, **Horned Larks**, **Skylarks** and **Twites**. These proved to be some of the most numerous species in higher parts of the mountains. Also several **Long-legged Buzzards** were seen and **Quail** was heard which were both common species up here. After the transect we had a nice lunch served on the hood of the jeep.



Twite *Linaria flavirostris brevirostris*

We descended for transects further down. At 2 700 m.a.s.l. we had some nice species in rocky but green terrain close to a small spring such as **Radde's Accentor**, **Asian Crimson-winged Finches**, **Red-fronted Serins** and a **European Dipper**. At lower altitudes other species took over such as **Red-backed Shrike** and **Whinchat**, and an **Ortolan Bunting** was seen. Back to Lucytour Hotel for a quick rest and then dinner, summarizing a memorable first day of counts!

July 3<sup>rd</sup>

Today's plan was similar to the one of yesterday. Before leaving the hotel, we realised there was a **Dipper's** nest right by the parking lot with calling chicks inside. The first stop was made by a small sheep farm at 2 500 m.a.s.l. where we drank from a spring with naturally carbonated water. A new and refreshing experience! This also turned out to be one of the highlights of the trip bird wise, with birds everywhere: 20 **rosefinches**, **twites**, **linnets**, **Whinchats**, **Northern Wheatears**, **Water Pipit**, **Tree Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, **Red-fronted Serin**, **Marsh Warblers**, two **Radde's Accentors** (carrying food for young), **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush**, two juvenile **Bluethroats** and four **Crimson-winged Finches**, one of which was even displaying in flight. After this fun start, we continued upwards but didn't get far until one of the cars got stuck due to the steep and very rocky "road". Therefore only the ranger's soviet jeep could continue. While struggling with the other car, two **Grey Partridges** were flushed.



Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*

A target species for today was the Caspian Snowcock which we unfortunately never managed to see or hear. Perhaps the date and late time in the day meant they just stayed quiet, since we visited several good-looking places for this species. At one of these sites though, Zuka managed to find us a **Syrian Brown Bear** walking along the opposite side of a gorge in its almost sand-coloured fur. Brief but exciting views of this great animal at 3 000 m.a.s.l.! At the other transect site at 3 500 m.a.s.l. we had even more **Crimson-winged Finches** (10-15 birds during the day) and great views over parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and Lake Sevan, the biggest lake in the Caucasus region, covering one sixth of Armenia's surface.

The last transect we did all together again at 2 200 m.a.s.l. This altitude meant a new set of species: **Black-headed Bunting**, **Rock Bunting**, **Common Whitethroat**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **White-throated Robin** and the only two **Alpine Swifts** seen during the trip.

We had dinner at a food court in Yeghegnadzor, where two busses with young soldiers decided to stop. They were on their way for half a year of training before serving at the border to Azerbaijan. The two countries are officially at war and apparently, guns are fired on a daily basis in the most sensitive parts of the border.

We then found the Hotel California in Yeghegnadzor and had a good night's rest. Although our heads were still bumping as if still in the jeep...

July 4<sup>th</sup>

Today we headed further south for the village of Gnishik, where FPWC owns a house which is for the moment being prepared as a guesthouse. We met up with the local ranger Norair and went with him and his daughter to the nearby Norovank Gorge to do transects. The elevation was around 2 000 m.a.s.l. and we drove through lush meadows with tall grass. Lots of **Quails** flushed in front of the car and also sang everywhere. We were handed sticks for walking and keeping away snakes, since both Armenian and Levant vipers are present, before initiating a beautiful hike through the gorge. We finally got good visual views of **Eastern Rock Nuthatch** which later showed to be a very common bird in any suitable habitat.



Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*

Armenian coffee and fruit back at the ranger's house prepared us for more transects. The next transect started with a **Bearded Vulture** overhead and our first proper views of **Bezoar goats**. A male with big horns was an impressive sight. A family of **Ring Ouzels** were seen among other more common species. After transect we had lunch at the ranger's house and tried homemade orange vodka before heading to Urtsadzor. At this point Siranush had to leave us to travel to the USA.



### *The FPWC Eco Lodge in Urtsadzor*

In Urtsadzor the FPCW runs a very nice eco lodge and this became our home for the coming six nights. Next to the lodge they also run the only bear rescue center in Armenia. At the moment there were eleven bears present. Several had been rescued from being held as illegal pets. Sitting out on the porch during nights, you would occasionally hear bears roaring which took some time getting used to!

Also staying at the Eco Lodge was Dave from Ireland, who it turned out is a good friend of my former biology teacher back in Sweden! The world is a small place. From the Eco Lodge we saw **Bezoar goats** daily, as did we **Bearded Vultures**. On the property, they also keep Bearded Vultures for breeding and one juvenile had been hatched here last year. The nights at the porch could be exciting with visits from **Persian jirds** and big **camel spiders**. In the darkness you would sometimes hear rocks falling, presumably from goats climbing the hillsides.



July 5<sup>th</sup>

The coming days we started one hour earlier due to the lower elevations and therefore higher temperatures in the day. Today's transect area was Vedi Gorge some 10 km west of Urtsadzor, a popular sight for visiting birders since it's a great place to see the semi-desert

species. There was a high number of birds with lots of juveniles moving about.

**Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Finsch's, Black-eared and Isabelline Wheatear, Eastern Rock Nuthatch, Menetries's, Eastern Orphean and Upcher's Warbler, Grey-necked Bunting, Trumpeter Finch** and two possible flyby Desert finches were seen during our 7 km transects through the gorge.



Armash Fish Ponds

After a hot (but not extremely hot) morning, we had a very welcomed Armenian lunch back at the Eco Lodge. In the afternoon we went to the perhaps most famous site for birdwatchers in the country: the Armash Fish Ponds. The area consists of a big number of man-made ponds with a good amount of reed with dirt tracks going between them. Plenty of birds were around with six species of **egrets** and **herons**, many **Whiskered Terns** and **Pygmy Cormorants** and quite some **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters**. Very enjoyable and completely different birding for us! The reeds were full of **Reed Warblers** and **Great Reed Warblers**. Also **Bearded** and **Penduline Tits** and two juvenile **Moustached Warblers**.

The weather was really warm and humid as we arrived but eventually turned cooler. As the sun was setting we did the last transect standing on the back of the truck while it slowly moved forward. This proved quite successful as we were now able to see over the high reeds! Highlights at Armash was a colony of 40 (including grown juveniles) **Collared Pratincoles**, five **White-tailed Lapwings** and a single female-type **White-headed Duck**. But the big show didn't start until late evening. Flock after flock of **Rosy Starlings** arrived and eventually gathered in their thousands. They then swooshed back and forth in beautiful formations against the red sky and left us speechless!



Rosy Starlings *Pastor roseus*

July 6<sup>th</sup>

In the morning a new ranger named Boris picked us up and brought us to Leopard or Hell's Canyon. With some help from a machete we managed to reach the bottom of the canyon with the car and from there we started the transect. This one turned out to be one of the toughest due to hard terrain with some light climbing involved. Lots of **rock nuthatches** everywhere and both species were seen. Also the first **Eastern Olivaceous Warblers**.



Leopard Canyon

We had a wonderful lunch at the ranger Boris' house in Tigranashen, situated in an area that is technically Azerbaijan judging by the map. But since this small patch of Azeri land has an equal Armenian patch located in Azerbaijan there's a silent agreement that these two break even. It was clear though that we were close to the border as Gosha heard a loud boom after lunch, likely from a high caliber weapon. This was suspected to be the reason for a small fire that soon emerged on a grassy hillside. Although other causes can't be ruled out. The afternoon transects were somewhat delayed since the ranger was obliged to keep an eye on the fire until it was put out. In the meantime, **Syrian Woodpecker** and **Golden Orioles** were seen in the garden.

Before reaching the next transect, Boris took us to a small gorge where he knew there were **Red-tailed Wheatears**. Soon enough we had brief views of an adult bird! Also juvenile **White-throated Robins** and a singing **European Nightjar**, which was a surprise under the baking afternoon sun. As we later once more descended into the Leopard Canyon, we were surprised by three very juvenile **Red-tailed Wheatears**. It turned out there was another brood of three wheatears further along, as well as one adult male. We decided to do a transect here and had a nice walk along the track down the canyon. **Grey-necked Bunting**, **Tawny Pipit**, **Golden Eagle** and more **Eastern Olivaceous Warblers** were added to the count before we finished and returned to Eco Lodge.



Displaying male Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia*

July 7<sup>th</sup>

Khosrov Forest State Reserve was our destination today. This is one of the oldest national parks in Armenia and is, under normal circumstances, off limits for visitors. We visited adjacent areas of the park owned by FPWC.

A **Chukar** with small chicks crossed the road before we reached a forested area where we did the first transect. Here we had several **Syrian Woodpeckers** and some other new species for the trip. Finally we also saw raptors in the air, mostly just singles but several different species: **Honey Buzzard**, **Cinereous Vulture**, **Booted** and **Imperial Eagle**. On the hillsides there were still signs of the big fires which lasted during several days back in 2017. During another transect we had brief views of a female **Semi-collared Flycatcher**.

After lunch and a rest we went to some mountains near the Eco Lodge. Two very young **Golden Eagles** showed off and we soon found the used nest up on the cliffs. A new species was **Red-billed Chough** as four birds came to visit nests in hollows in the mountain. Also for the count were 18 **Chukars**. This species was really plentiful in the surroundings of the Eco Lodge which we thought was a good sign there isn't much illegal hunting going on.



1 cy Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, in front of the nest where it was hatched.

July 8<sup>th</sup>

After a long drive on a very bumpy road we reached our starting point: a 2 280 m.a.s.l. peak in the Danak mountains. For once, it rained while driving but it stopped just in time for us to leave the car behind. From here, we had excellent views of a group of Bezoar goats at close range, almost in eye-level. The ranger Tigran also told us that a Caucasian Leopard was caught on a camera trap last year, patrolling one of closest peaks. We had a nice transect with quite a few **Tawny Pipits**, **Ortolan Buntings** and **Ring Ouzels** to mention just some of the species present. One more transect further down the mountains and back for lunch. We visited the bears at the rescue center before going to Dashtakar Gorge, which is very close to the east of Vedi Gorge. Vedi is the only known site for Desert Finch, which was discovered here in 2016, and we had hopes of finding this species also at Dashtakar.

We had quite nice birding with somewhat similar species as Vedi. Although no Desert Finch nor Pale Rock Sparrow, so far. But, just as hope started to leave us and the sun was setting, a small bird came flying and landed by the small stream in front of us. A male **Desert Finch!** It had one single gulp of water before taking off and disappearing just as soon as it had turned up. A true highlight of the trip!



Male Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

July 9<sup>th</sup>

This was our last full day and the last day with counts. In the morning we went to another part of the Khosrov reserve and did transects with similar birds as previously, highlight being a flushed **Nightjar**.

We had delicious traditional dolma for lunch and in the afternoon went to a fortress nearby. A rain shower made us stay in the car but as we got out we were met by a nice family of **White-throated Robins**, including an adult male. The fortress itself held **Rufous-tailed** and **Blue Rock Thrush**. Our final transect into a gorge was very enjoyable and among other nice observations we had a flock of no less than 50 **Chukars**.



Male White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*

July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

We allowed ourselves a sleepin before packing our last belongings, saying goodbye to the Eco Lodge and the local people, before driving back to Yerevan and the airport. Here we said our goodbyes to Debby. Zuka took a taxi back to Tbilisi and myself had one more night in Yerevan and then flying home on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Gosha and Hrachya made sure we all departed nicely.

We are all very happy about this trip and would like to thank ArAves and FPWC for flawless logistics!



All 32 transects done! From left: Emil, Hrachya, Debby, Zuka and Gosha.



## List of species (following IOC taxonomy)

### *Birds*

1. **Chukar Partridge** *Alectoris chukar*  
Common in rocky habitats at lower elevations. Several big family groups, two flocks with more than 50 individuals.
2. **Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix canescens*  
2 Vardahovit mountains on 3.7 and 6 Noravank Gorge, Gnishik on 4.7.
3. **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*  
Common in meadows and grasslands in elevated areas up to 3 000 m.a.s.l. At lower elevations there was no green grass.
4. **Garganey** *Spatula querquedula*  
3 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
5. **Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*  
3 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
6. **Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*  
6 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
7. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*  
6 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
8. **Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*  
3 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
9. **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*  
More than 50 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
10. **Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
15 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
11. **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*  
More than 20 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

12. **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*  
1 female coloured at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
13. **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*  
1 calling in the middle of the day Leopard Canyon on 6.7 and 1 flushed Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 9.7.
14. **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*  
2 Vardahovit mountains on 3.7.
15. **Common Swift** *Apus apus*  
Common, especially in Yerevan where we saw thousands in the evenings from the Balcony Hotel.
16. **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*  
Singles seen most days. One juvenile was seen being fed by a Black-eared Wheatear.
17. **Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia var. domestica*
18. **Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*  
Minimum 1 Dashtakar on 8.7.
19. **Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*  
Singles seen.
20. **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*  
1 Urtsadzor seen along the road several days and 1 close to Tapi fortress, Urtsadzor on 9.7.
21. **Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis*  
1 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
22. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
5 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7 and 1 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7.
23. **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*  
3-400 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
24. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
1 at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**25. Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

50 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**26. Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

15 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**27. Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

1 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**28. White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus*

5 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.



**29. Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

3-5 Dashtakar on 8.7.

**30. Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

4 spread over three days.

**31. Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

32. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*  
3 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
33. **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*  
Colony with around 40 birds at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7, including fledged juveniles.
34. **Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*  
30-50 birds seen at dusk at Armash Fish Ponds 5.7.
35. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*  
Many at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
36. **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
4 passing through Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
37. **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*  
Fairly common in lowlands.
38. **Pygmy Cormorant** *Microcarbo pygmaeus*  
Many at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
39. **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
2 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
40. **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*  
Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
41. **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
2 passed Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
42. **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*  
Several at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
43. **Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
44. **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*  
Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
45. **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
2 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**46. Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**47. Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**48. Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**49. Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus*

1 adult Lucytour Hotel, Hermon on 2.7, 1 adult Noravank Gorge, Gnishik on 4.7 and at least 1 adult and 1 younger bird seen in front of the Eco Lodge in Urtsadzor several days.



**50. Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*

1 adult Vedi Gorge on 5.7.

**51. Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus*

2 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7 and 1 on 9.7 and 2 perched near nest close to Tapi fortress, Urtsadzor on 9.7.

- 52. Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
2 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7.
- 53. Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*  
1 Danak mountains on 8.7, 1 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 9.7 and 1 Tapi fortress, Urtsadzor on 9.7.
- 54. Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*  
Highest count 4 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7. In total 7 birds seen.
- 55. Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*  
1 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7.
- 56. Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*  
6 birds in total. Seen in Vardahovit mountains, Leopard Canyon and Tapi fortress, Urtsadzor.
- 57. Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
1 Vardahovit mountains on 2.7.
- 58. Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
3 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
- 59. European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*  
1 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7.
- 60. Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*  
Fairly common at higher elevations. Juveniles seen at over 3 000 m.a.s.l. 1 dark morph at Danak mountains on 8.7.



Dark morph

**61. Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common at lower elevations.

**62. Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops*

1 Lucytour Hotel, Hermon on 2.7 and 1 Eco Lodge in Urtsadzor on 4.7 and 6.7. All of which were heard at night.

**63. Little Owl** *Athene noctua indigena*

1 on 4.7, 1 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7 and 2 close to Eco Lodge in Urtsadzor 6.7.

**64. Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

**65. European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*

4 seen in total.

**66. Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

1 Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**67. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*

Common at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.



**68. European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

**69. Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos syriacus*

Around 10 seen in total, most in Khosrov Forest State Reserve.

**70. Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

**71. Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

Common at mid-elevations.

**72. Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*

Fairly common at lower elevations.

**73. Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator niloticus*

The most common shrike, found at lower elevations.

**74. Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

Common in wooded areas including gardens.

**75. Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius krynicki*

6 Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 7.7 and 9.7.



76. **Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica*
77. **Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax docilis*  
4 by nests close to Tapi fortress, Urtsadzor on 9.7.
78. **Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhonorax graculus*  
Seen in a distance at Danak mountains on 8.7.
79. **Western Jackdaw** *Coloeus monedula soemmerringii*
80. **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix sharpii*
81. **Northern Raven** *Corvus corax*
82. **Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*
83. **Great Tit** *Parus major*
84. **Eurasian Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*  
Heard in the reeds of Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.
85. **Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus*  
Heard at Armash Fish Ponds 5.7.
86. **Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*
87. **Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*  
Common at higher elevations.
88. **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*  
Common at lower elevations.



Fresh juvenile

**89. Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris penicillata*

Common at higher elevations.

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

1 flyby at Vedi Gorge 5.7.

**91. Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

**92. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

**93. Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

**94. Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

**95. Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

**96. Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus major*

**97. Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

**98. Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

30+ singing at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**99. Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

2 seen at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.



Fresh juvenile

**100. Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Heard at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**101. Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

**102. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Iduna pallida*

Fairly common in the lowlands.

**103. Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*

Fairly common in the lowlands.

**104. Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*

1 heard at dusk at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7.

**105. Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

**106. Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris*

Seen at Vedi Gorge on 5.7.

107. **Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*
108. **Menetries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea*  
1 at Vedi Gorge and 1 at Armash Fish Ponds, both on 5.7.
109. **Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*
110. **Western Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta neumayer*



111. **Eastern Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta tephronota*  
Especially common at Leopard Canyon on 6.7 with 35 counted.
112. **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus*  
Many thousands gathered in the evening at Armash Fish Ponds on 5.7. Not seen anywhere else during the trip.
113. **Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
114. **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus amicornum*
115. **Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula*
116. **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

117. **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes familiaris*  
6 at Vedi Gorge on 5.7 and 1 at Dashtakar on 8.7.
118. **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica magna*
119. **White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis*  
10-15 seen.
120. **Semicollared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata*  
1 at Khosrov Forest State Reserve on 9.7.
121. **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros ochruros*
122. **Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*
123. **Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*
124. **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*
125. **European Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*
126. **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*
127. **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*
128. **Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*
129. **Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii*



Fresh juvenile

130. **Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe chrysopygia*

1 adult in the vicinity of Leopard Canyon, two broods of 3 + 3 fledged juveniles + 1 adult male in Leopard Canyon on 6.7.



Fresh juvenile

131. **White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus caucasicus*
132. **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
133. **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*
134. **Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*
135. **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis*  
3 in Vardahovit mountains (1 at around 2 700 and 2 at around 2 400 m.a.s.l.)
136. **Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
137. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
138. **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
139. **Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*
140. **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*
141. **Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta coutellii*



142. **Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*
143. **Asian Crimson-winged Finch** *Rhodopechys sanguineus*  
Around 15 in Vardahovit mountains 2-3.7.
144. **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus*  
2 at Vedi Gorge on 5.7 and 1 at Dashtakar Gorge on 8.7.
145. **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
Common at mid-elevations.
146. **European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*
147. **Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta*  
1 male at Dashtakar Gorge on 8.7.
148. **Twite** *Linaria flavirostris brevirostris*
149. **Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina*
150. **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*
151. **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus*  
Fairly common.





152. **Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*
153. **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia*
154. **Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani*  
3 at Vedi Gorge on 5.7 and 1 at Leopard Canyon on 6.7.
155. **Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*
156. **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*



Male

### *Mammals*

1. **European Hare** *Lepus europaeus*
2. **Persian Jird** *Meriones persicus*  
1 which was keeping us company during nights at the Urtsadzor Eco Lodge.
3. **Syrian Brown Bear** *Ursus arctos syriacus*  
1 seen in Vardahovit mountains at 3 000 m.a.s.l., while scanning for snowcocks.

4. **Bezoar** *Capra aegagrus*

At least 30 seen at different locations.

