

## Birding Mongolia

An Ecotours Wildlife Holidays trip in June 2015

By Neil McMahon



*Siberian Rubythroat*

For some of us the journey to Mongolia commenced on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June as the participants from the UK began the long journey east with inter-connecting flights via Berlin and Moscow. Our two intrepid colleagues from the USA of course came the other way around and via Seoul!

The plan was for all of us to meet at the capital of Mongolia, the enigmatic city of Ulaanbaatar. And after the usual stories of missed flights, some bureaucracy and not just a little fatigue, on the morning of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June we found ourselves all gathered together at the UB City Hotel and all rather excited about what lay ahead. None of us had travelled to the poorly-visited country of Mongolia and it quickly became evident that we would be relying very heavily on our ground crew of Ugan and Unaar and the three drivers. Balazs of course has led tours to Mongolia on several occasions and Attila's research on the anticipated species proved invaluable right from the outset.

The twelve day ground excursion was very much vehicle-based, the three 4WD vehicles and drivers required to cope with our luggage, passengers, available optics and lunch-time picnics on a daily basis.



**Pacific Swift**

An early excursion around the edge of Ulaanbaatar hinted at the calibre of birds to come, notching up Red-billed Chough, Daurian Jackdaw, Black-eared Kite, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Eurasian Kestrel, Black Stork, Ruddy Shelduck, Azure Tit, Common Rosefinch, Long-tailed Rosefinch, White-crowned Pacific Swift, Penduline Tit and Hoopoe. Birds within the metropolis were dominated by Tree and House Sparrows and Pacific Swifts.

However the tour started properly on the Friday morning and after breakfast we ventured to our first venue which was an area to the east of the city next to the River Tuul.

Here we enjoyed our first views of Amur Falcon, the first of many confiding Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers of the trip plus more views of the sought-after Azure Tit and White-crowned Penduline Tit and Long-tailed Rosefinch. Other birds included a Booted Eagle on the city outskirts, fly-over Demoiselle Cranes, Goosander and Red-breasted Merganser and familiar corvids in the shape of Magpie, Carrion Crow and Raven. Other familiar riverine birds were Common Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover and Grey and White Wagtails.



**Azure-winged Magpie**

Next was a park-like area again next to the river but on the west side of the city. East Asian specialities showed themselves here in the shape of Thick-billed Warbler, Daurian Jackdaw, White-cheeked Starling and Azure-winged Magpie. Here also we saw the first of many Saker Falcons and heard both Eurasian and Oriental Cuckoo and glimpsed a Pallas's Leaf Warbler and better views of another Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler. Birds such as Black-eared Kite, Red-billed Chough, Ruddy Shelduck and Demoiselle Crane were to be soon relegated to regular almost every-day birds!

Super warm weather with a fresh breeze and an elevation of 1260 metres ensured we were able to shake off the travel fatigue for much of the day but that evening we were all tired and ready for bed after our evening restaurant meal.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June and we left the UB City Hotel on a warm, sunny day with minimal breeze. It was dry and very pleasant as we began our journey in a south-easterly direction. We came across a Genghis Khan Memorial and stopped to do a little touristy stuff! Sadly there were some captive raptors on display, although it was interesting to see how much bigger a Black Vulture was in comparison to a Golden Eagle!



**Black Vulture**



**Golden Eagle**

Attila was scurrying around checking out the singing larks, and was soon confidently picking out Asian and Greater Short-toed Larks and a little while later the very impressive Mongolian Larks.

We drove on and the huge vista permitted us to witness the large flocks of tending grazing animals stretching across these semi-arid plains, sheep in the main but also goats, horses and cattle. Our first main birding venue for the day was an area known as Gun Galuut, part of which is a nature reserve. Here shallow steppe lakes and wetlands kept us entertained for much of the day with stunning birds, the highlights including 13 White-naped Cranes, Swan Geese, Upland Buzzards, Stejnegeri's Scoters, Long-toed and Red-necked Stints and another Saker Falcon. The lakes supported wildfowl familiar to European birders and the dry steppe and grassy areas attracted Black Vulture, Steppe Eagle, Hobby

and Blyth's Pipit. The supporting cast was made up of Citrine and White Wagtails, Tree and Rock Sparrows, Northern and Isabelline Wheatears, Horned Larks and Sand Martins. Buildings attracted the orange-underside version of the Barn Swallow, some of the birds being particularly bright.

As we slowly moved around this oasis we added Amur Falcon, Hoopoe, Eastern Common and White-winged Black Terns, a few Mongolian Gulls and further waders in the shape of Kentish Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Black-tailed Godwit. A few hundred Demoiselle Cranes accompanied a single Common Crane and a single Eastern Marsh Harrier was the first of several on the trip, this part of the world acting as an area where Western and Eastern Marsh Harriers can be found together. A few pairs of Whooper Swan were breeding on the lakes, a couple of Bar-headed Geese flew over and both Shelduck and Ruddy Shelduck were also breeding. A couple of Black Storks, up to 30 Black-necked Grebes and some wild mammals which included Tolai Hare and Corsac Fox rounded off a fabulous day.



**Greenish Warbler**



**Black-faced Bunting**

After our overnight stay in our first Yurt Camp, a 7am rendezvous by the nearby river for some early morning wildlife watching provided us with further views of Tolai Hare and small furry items called Daurian Pica and Brandt's Vole. Riverside bushes attracted bird migrants such as Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, a single-barred Greenish Warbler, a Thick-billed Warbler and a singing Black-faced Bunting. The camp attracted plenty of the Isabelline Wheatears with their amazing repertoire of song mimicry including car horns, breeding Red-billed Chough and the super ginger/orange Barn Swallows. I mistook a couple of Twite for Eastern Linnet – doh!



**Isabelline Wheatear**



**Blyth's Pipit**

After breakfast we headed north along the river valley, birding along the way. Pere David's Snowfinch was a target species and we found a couple of pairs feeding young near an isolated Yurt. A couple of hours slow driving and birding along sandy tracks and we arrived at a valley dominated in willow scrub, poplars and hillside larch woodland with a birch understory. Here Blyth's and Olive-backed Pipits were common and the former's song-flight is very loud and continuous with a surprising array of additional calls.



**Common Treecreeper**

Leaf warblers here were made up of singing Dusky, Two-barred Greenish and Hume's and a brief exploration of the fabulous woodland yielded views of Hawfinch, Western Common Redstart, Common Treecreeper, Dark-sided Flycatcher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker and Willow Tit. All these species seemed to be apparent breeders in this habitat. Birds of the woodland edges included a Brown Shrike, several gorgeous singing Pine Buntings, Common Rosefinch and five species of corvid. Overhead and the raptors included Amur Falcon, Hobby, Steppe Eagle, Golden Eagle, Common (probably 'Japanese') Buzzard, Black Vulture, Black-eared Kite and Booted Eagle.

We enjoyed a super picnic lunch watching Steppe Eagles cavorting in the blue sky above us. The afternoon was spent slowly driving back the way we had come, birding all the way, and we stayed again at our comfortable Yurt camp situated in wonderful habitat.



**Dusky Warbler**

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June we awoke to yet another hot and sunny day with a pleasant breeze for much of it. Again an early morning wander along the river provided similar sightings to the day before, this time with a migrant Dusky Warbler as an addition

We returned to the steppe lakes and immediately found different species of migrant waders including Turnstone and a Red-necked Phalarope. The big surprise though was a Grey-tailed Tattler which represented a new species for every single person on the trip including guides. Black-headed Gull was a trip tick but didn't really provide the same sense of euphoria!

From about this point the buzzard situation became somewhat confusing for me as we began to see apparent Long-legged Buzzards. The difference between these and some of the Upland Buzzards were to my mind very minimal. Both birds are very large eagle-like buteos, and their jizz and hunting methods seemed identical, and the plumage traits were not always consistent. More studying required!

We then began travelling away from this area and back to Ulaanbaatar. En-route we espied a few Amur Falcons, Ravens and two migrating Crested Honey Buzzards which were to be our only ones all trip.

A lunch-time stop failed to locate the hoped-for Daurian Partridge but plenty of good birds which included Siberian Stonechat, Eastern Common Whitethroat and Siberian Lesser Whitethroat. A splendid male Siberian Rubythroat sang well from hillside scrub.



**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

Beyond Ulaanbaatar and our venue for the afternoon was Terelj National Park with its variety of rock formations, scattered woodland and upland plateaus. Here we saw a roadside Rock Thrush (or Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush if you prefer) and subsequently arrived at a small Yurt Camp where we walked to a small wooded gorge. Excellent birding here with good views of a pair of Lammergeier, Black Woodpecker, Pine Buntings, Willow Tit, Nuthatch, Eurasian Cuckoo and similar fare. The woodland concealed singing Two-barred Greenish and Hume's warblers and the more open areas attracted Grey and White Wagtails, singing Siberian Rubythroat and singing (but not seen) Chinese Bush Warblers.

In the late afternoon we arrived at our hotel for a couple of nights and immediately began exploring the park and woodland nearby. Daurian Redstart was found also straightaway and birds at the hotel included Hill Pigeon and Daurian Jackdaw. Birds within the woodland included Taiga Flycatcher, Great Spotted and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and both Willow and Marsh Tits.

Ecotours Wildlife Holidays donated wine and a Chinese-based meal was gratefully consumed that evening! After a comfortable night we started at about am again on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June and elected to revisit the gorge from the previous afternoon. A close Siberian Rubythroat in song was much-appreciated as was the distant but visual singing Red-throated Thrush. A couple of singing Godlewski's Buntings (similar to Rock Buntings) were new for many people and we watched a couple of apparent Japanese Buzzards and heard a Nutcracker.

We returned to the hotel for a 10am breakfast in our now familiar vehicles and at about 11am we again took to our four wheel drive capability to drive tracks to some larch forest at about 1800 – 1900 metres elevation. Here there were small numbers of Olive-backed Pipits and Pine Buntings and plenty more Blyth's Pipits. A couple of Red-flanked Bluetails could be heard singing but were extremely difficult to see. Other birds included an impossible- to- see singing Taiga Flycatcher, Steppe Eagle, Japanese Buzzard, Raven, Eurasian Jay and yet more Willow Tits. Lunch was taken at this beautiful location, again under blue skies and with warm sunshine.

In the afternoon we descended and drove through a river ford and birded riverside parkland and light woodland. A pair of gorgeous Daurian Redstart were feeding caterpillars to their nestlings and a pair of Marsh Tit was taking food in to a high altitude nest. We found a pair of Asian Brown Flycatcher, glimpsed a couple of singing Taiga Flycatchers and a high-up canopy-loving Pallas's Warbler and noted Great Tit and Great Spotted Woodpecker.



Male Daurian Redstart

That evening's logistics were altogether different. We said good-bye to our drivers and ground crew as they began the long road journey to the Gobi Desert, our next venue and new habitat. Tour participants enjoyed the luxury of another night at the hotel knowing that their journey the following day would be by way of an internal flight. Some of us took a brief stroll out that evening and saw distant Roe Deer on a hillside and views of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Common Sandpiper. Balazs commandeered a local man's prized horse for a short canter along the river bank!

The discovery of a table tennis table at the hotel brought out the competitive spirit in our two Hungarian guides and Uugan, and they finally called it a draw at Midnight!

The by now regular early morning walk on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June was productive as the woodland alongside our hotel provided views of Lesser Spotted, Great Spotted and Grey-headed Woodpecker, a pair of Asian Brown Flycatcher, a pair of Taiga Flycatcher trying to take over the nest hole just excavated by the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Long-tailed, Willow and Marsh Tits plus now familiar birds such as Daurian Jackdaw, Daurian Redstart, Common Rosefinch, Nuthatch, Olive-backed Pipit, White Wagtail etc. A Yellow-browed Warbler was a new addition to the trip-list.



**Black Woodpecker**

After breakfast we again went back to the gorge area of the previous two days, this time in a hire mini coach that would also convey us to the airport later. Roadside stops en-route provided views of Dusky Warbler, Hume's Warbler, Booted Eagle, Japanese Buzzard and we heard both Eurasian and Oriental Cuckoo.

At the gorge the resident pair of Lammergeier cruised overhead, we heard the Nutcracker again and enjoyed stunning views of a drumming male Black Woodpecker. A male Grey-headed Woodpecker showed briefly too.

We reluctantly then left the Terelj National Park and drove back to Ulaanbaatar to catch our internal flight to the Gobi. A lunch-time stop at a restaurant en-route was very pleasant, particularly as an Azure Tit showed well in a bush outside!



**Daurian (Isabelline) Shrike**

The domestic flight with Aero Mongolia to Dalanzadgad took less than 90 minutes and our drivers and vehicles were waiting for us after completing a long night drive of about 500 miles. We then drove for about 40 minutes across a flat, dry and stony Gobi Desert, seeing our first flying Pallas's Sandgrouse as we did so. Another Yurt camp was to be our welcoming abode, and we were met by the resident couple of pairs of Daurian (Isabelline) Shrikes on arrival! Other birds seemed scarce in this very sparse habitat but the bushes and structures hosted Collared Dove, Eurasian Kestrel and of course Tree Sparrows!

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June and a very full day indeed! Wall to wall sunshine again and deep blue skies. An early morning wander around the camp was sufficient to see Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Thick-billed Warbler, more fly-by Pallas's Sandgrouse and Crested Lark.

After breakfast we headed out towards a couple of plantation/agricultural areas, hoping for some late migrants of interest. En-route though a show-stopper in the form of a pair of absolutely beautiful Oriental Plovers, a world rare species but a speciality of this arid area, stopped us in our tracks. For me certainly one of the most attractive waders of the world, mostly associated with the structure, fast flight and amazing ability to cover large distances quickly on those long legs. After recovering from this we then encountered a migrant trip of 7 Greater Sandpipers in the desert.

We finally arrive at the first plantation and a female Chaffinch was the highlight! A Tolai Hare showed nicely.



**Daurian Jackdaw**



**Tolai Hare**

The second tended area on the outskirts of Dalanzadgad was much more productive. Here we quickly located two Daurian Starlings, not an assured species for the trip. An Oriental Turtle Dove was also located but by the time we boarded our vehicle we established there were three of these associating with the local Collared Doves. A couple of 'locustella' warblers were flushed up but not identified and other migrants included a Barred Warbler, a Garden Warbler and a Hoopoe.



**White-winged Snowfinch**

Then began a long drive to the Yolimam Valley in the Altai Mountains. On entering the valley small furry creatures became obvious as did the prolific and very tame White-winged Snowfinches. An Argali Sheep (or should that be an Argali Ram!) was seen scaling an arid peak.

At the car park we watched our first Koslov's (Mongolian) Accentors and Brown Accentors whilst our drivers and Unaar again developed a superb midday meal. Habituated Snowfinches and Isabelline Wheatears pecked at our food and we were entranced by Red-cheeked Ground Squirrels,



Pallas's Picas, Mongolian Jirds and Alashu Suisliks as they chased each other around the slopes close to our banquet.

Feeling very full after the splendid lunch of soup, bread, meat etc. we spent the afternoon wandering up and down the Yolimam Valley which at the far end still had hard-packed snow.

**Argali Sheep**

Birds here included a rather distant pair of Wallcreepers, another pair of Lammergeier, a few Himalayan Griffon and Eurasian Griffon Vultures, a Saker Falcon, a Golden Eagle, Eurasian Kestrels and our first Black Redstarts of the trip which were of the orange-bellied race. Quality small birds included more of the Brown Accentors, a single Alpine Accentor, a few Godlewski's Buntings, a single unexpected Little Bunting and all-to-brief views of Beautiful Rosefinch. The support team included Pacific Swift, Crag Martin, Eastern Whitethroat and Rock Sparrow.



**Lammergeier**

Siberian Ibex appeared on the crags way above and small animals squeaked all around and barely moved out of our way at almost every step. A superb place!

A steady drive back to our Yurt camp in the Gobi was then called for with us not arriving back until 9pm. An enforced stop was necessary when we came across a female Pallas's Sandgrouse and her single chick.



**Pallas's Sandgrouse Chick**



**Pallas's Sandgrouse**

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June and the early morning migrant count of the Yurt camp amounted to probably the same individual Thick-billed Warbler and Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler as the day before plus a Richard's Pipit. After breakfast we loaded the wagons and said good-bye to this particular camp and we headed off deeper in to the Gobi Desert. We quickly found another Oriental Plover or two and spent quite some time watching one individual.



**Oriental Plover**



**Oriental Plover**

A black lump sitting in the desert turned out to be an exhausted Cormorant. We picked it up but it sadly died later, hundreds of miles from any suitable water.

Motoring along, the desert landscape changed numerous times – sometimes just the stony chive-grass type areas, other areas with moderate grass growth and other sections with low sandy dunes and ravines.

We stopped for lunch in rather wind-swept conditions, with the warm area funnelling around us. Again we were treated to impossibly-nice soup made there and then and some excellent freshly baked flat bread amongst plenty of other food. A wander nearby in one of the ravines caused a Eurasian Eagle Owl to fly out but unfortunately it couldn't be located again. Distant herds of Goitred and Mongolian Gazelles kept the mammal list looking healthy.

Post lunch we stopped to admire close views of Pallas's Sandgrouse, only to have a Macqueen's Bustard suddenly walk out from the low vegetation and perform what we considered to be a distraction display. We decided that if she did have young nearby it would be best for us to move on so we didn't linger.



**Henderson's Groundjay sunbathing**

We were treated with some amazing scenic views and stopped several times to take it all in. Big birds in the sky included four more Lammergeiers, three Black Vultures and both Himalayan and Eurasian Griffon Vultures. Other raptors included a couple more Sakers and apparent Long-legged and Upland Buzzards. Another star bird of the trip, and the only one we saw, was a single Henderson's (Mongolian) Ground Jay. A striking bird both visually and audibly, it was also an impossibly fast runner over open ground and took some keeping up with! However we did manage to keep with it and in due course it settled down and we watched in sun-bathing in a small gully.

Other birds included plenty of Ravens, a super male Pied Wheatear and five or so Desert Wheatears and we eventually arrived at our second Gobi Yurt Camp. A short excursion after dark using Balazs's unique method of tracking them down saw us corner and examine two super Kangaroo-like jerboas. They keyed out as a Siberian Jerboa with the smaller one apparently a Mongolian Five-toed or Northern Three-toed Jerboa.

The Mongolian Yurt Camps are well-organised and the Yurts spacious and comfortable. Most of the camps have a separate larger Yurt for meals and out-buildings for toilets, showers etc. The majority are isolated and to a point the wildlife is drawn to them as there is cover and frequently some vegetation.

The morning of Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June brought forth a singing Desert Wheatear strutting his stuff from the roof of the restaurant and after breakfast we sauntered down to a nearby river and the Khongorum El Sand Dunes. A full summer plumage Chinese Pond Heron was not anticipated but a pair of confiding Asian (Eastern) Desert Warblers and a family party of Southern Grey Shrikes were.

We then drove a short distance to the nearby unique Saxaul Forest dune system sandwiched between the river and the stony desert. An active Upland Buzzard contained a couple of well-grown youngsters but the hoped-for Saxaul Sparrows nesting in the buzzard's nest were not to be seen. After some toil wandering around this area, Attila managed a couple of flight views of the sparrows so it was a case of pinning them down. Birds of the 'forest' included Isabelline and Southern Grey Shrikes, a couple of migrant Oriental Reed Warblers (pretty much identical with Great Reed Warbler), Desert Wheatears and a few Desert Warblers. Typically we then find that the Saxaul Sparrows were nesting in metal barrier holes close to where we were parked!

A single Mongolian Finch flew past us calling, a Booted Eagle sparred with the Uplands and some smart stripy lizards were identified as Goby Racers. Quite a number of Great Gerbils were active in the dunes, these surprisingly large rodents being particularly noisy.

In the afternoon we went searching for more ground-jays in windy conditions with no success, so instead spent time watching a group of Lesser Kestrels, feral pigeons and a pair of Little Owls all around some abandoned buildings.



Long-eared Hedgehog

A Long-eared Hedgehog was seen well by the group after the manager of the Yurt Camp caught it and then released it coming to its regular evening treats.

The morning of Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June saw us depart from our second Gobi Yurt Camp and early morning excursion yielded Desert Wheatears including independent juveniles, Asian Lesser Short-toed Larks, Ruddy Shelduck, and Pallas's Sandgrouse and calling Demoiselle Cranes. A Eurasian Nightjar was heard churring at dawn. A vivid red sunrise was special as the light hit the dunes and distant rock slopes of the Altai Mountains. A Siberian Jerboa was trapped overnight, provided some treats and released unharmed.

A very slow and grindy drive over stone-packed desert, initially with a mountain range to our left represented a different route from the Gobi than the way we had entered. One vehicle found a 'trip' of Mongolian Plover (one of which was colour-ringed) but inexplicably the radios malfunctioned and the find was not enjoyed by the other two car-loads. Other stops provided some variety with better views of Mongolian Finch, a male Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Green Sandpiper, Pied Wheatear, Golden Eagle and Black Vulture.

A craggy ravine held Crag Martin, Black Redstart, Brown and Koslov's Accentors, White-winged Snowfinches and Godlewski's Buntings and the region provided further views of Chukar, Lammergeier, Steppe Eagle, Saker Falcon and Isabelline Shrikes.

A lunch-time stop at an isolated plantation and cultivated area provided views of a resplendent vagrant Black-naped Oriole and further mammal sightings during the day included Siberian Ibex and Goitred Gazelle.



We drove on to Dalanzadgad and stayed overnight in a hotel. Again our ground crew began their long nocturnal drive back to the capital city.

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June represented our last morning in and around the stunning Gobi. An early morning walk in the city park provided views of plenty of Tree Sparrows feeding fledged young, a single Isabelline Shrike and a Siberian Chiffchaff.

We had time to revisit the plantation/agricultural area which had been so productive on the 18<sup>th</sup> and exciting migrants on this occasion were made up of a Hawfinch, a Grey-headed Lapwing and two Barred Warblers, one of which was song-fighting. A stunning vagrant Slaty-backed Flycatcher represents the first record for Mongolia. Other birds included a Brown Shrike and a Hoopoe.

It was then time to take our domestic flight back to Ulaanbaatar and there it was we met our crew and were reunited with our beloved 4WDs! A two hour drive found us at another Yurt camp near to the entrance of Khustain National Park, our last main venue.



**Tarbagan Marmot**

We visited the national park that evening, with many Tarbagan Marmots on show, Przewalski's Wild Horses, Red Deer, Tolai Hare and a Grey Wolf all being espied. The dry hills and plains were good for birds too, the bushes and scrub-covered slopes providing cover for Siberian Lesser Whitethroat, Pied Wheatear, Meadow Bunting and Daurian Partridge. Raptors included both Golden and Steppe Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Black-eared Kite, Saker, Eurasian Kestrel, Amur Falcon and Black Vulture. On our drive home at dusk, Siberian Jerboas and fox cubs were seen at the side of the track.

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June and our last full day in Mongolia. We were keen to pack as much in as possible on our last day so after an early breakfast we drove for about 50 minutes to a wetland area surrounded by dry tussock grassland. Larks were here in profusion with four species singing around us in a stiff and cool breeze. It was a grey and cloudy day and the first time on the trip when we donned cold weather gear.



**Demoiselle Crane**

A dwindling lake attracted common waterfowl, Eurasian Spoonbill and both Western and Eastern Marsh Harriers, plus yet another Saker Falcon. Our main quarry however was the elusive Pallas's Reed Bunting and after a bit of a wander we located at least two males which gave themselves up for good views. Citrine Wagtail and Richard's Pipit joined other passerines buzzing the quartering harriers, and then it was off on a journey to a more extensive steppe lake. En-route Upland Buzzards and Black-eared Kites showed regularly, a pair of Demoiselle Cranes was spotted with two young and a couple of animal carcasses attracted Black Vultures and Ravens.

It was full-on birding when we arrived at the roadside lake with a multitude of species on view. Stunning summer plumage Slavonian Grebes swam amongst rafts of wildfowl which included Garganey, a Red-crested Pochard and even a fine drake Falcated Duck. Careful checking of a small reed-bed revealed plenty of singing Oriental Reed Warblers, a few Paddyfield Warblers, Bearded Tits, Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers and a Baillon's Crake which proved to be a new world bird for Balazs!

Waders were well-represented with good numbers of Green and Wood Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, a Pacific Golden Plover, Curlew and plenty of Avocets and Black-winged Stilts. The local gulls did not include the hoped-for Relict Gull but other good birds kept on coming with a splendid fly-past of White-naped Cranes, a Common Crane, a neck-collared

Whooper Swan, more Spoonbills and Western and Eastern Marsh Harriers, a good number of 'Thumbergi' Yellow Wagtails, Richard's Pipits and of course many larks.



**White-naped Cranes**

With reluctance we left this area at about 3.30pm with a view to finishing our day scanning the stunning landscape of Khustain National Park and hopefully fulfil our quest for Grey Wolf. Despite plenty of effort though, a single animal at long range which may have been a wolf was the only sighting. The plentiful Tarbagan Marmots, showy Golden and Steppe Eagles and repeats of Daurian Partridge, Lesser Kestrels and more Przewalski's Horses and Red Deer concluded a fantastic day to an amazing trip.



**Golden Eagle**

## Mongolia trip list - 12-24 June 2015

Species marked in bold were only seen during the 4 day extension to Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur and Khangai Mountains.

### BIRDS (IOC)

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indica* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

#### **Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus* 1 on small lake near Arvaikheer**

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* common

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Falcatid Duck *Anas falcata* 1 at Bayaan Nuur

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Tuul River, Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Garganey *Anas guerguedula* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

#### **Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* Orog Nuur**

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

White-winged (Stejneger's) Scoter *Melanitta deglandi stejnegeri* Gun Galuut

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* Gun Galuut, Orog Nuur

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* Tuul River, Khangai Mts.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* Tuul River

Chukar *Alectoris chukar* 1 in Gobi Altai, 12 near Bogd

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauuricae* Khustai NP

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Gun Galuut, Orog Nuur

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Gun Galuut, Orog Nuur

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* 4 at Bayaan Nuur

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* 3 at Gun Galuut, 1+2 in Khangai Mts.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* 6 at Lun wetland, many at Orog Nuur

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* 1 at Khongoryn Els

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

**Great Egret *Egretta alba* Only at Orog Nuur**

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* 1 injured bird in Gobi Desert, many at Orog Nuur and Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* Seen on 8 days: 2 at Terelj, several in Gobi Altai, 2 at Ikh Bogd Uul, 3 in Khangai Mts.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* 2 migrating birds thermalling above the Eastern Highway

Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* Gobi Altai, Khangai Mts.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* Gobi Altai

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* Common, seen on 12 days at most sites

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* 1 at Tuul River, 1 at Gun Galuut, 1 at Terelj, 1 at Khongoryn Els

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* Commonly seen at various steppe and desert sites

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* 2 in forest north of Gun Galuut, 1 at Yolin Am, 1 in Gobi Altai, 3 at Khustai, 3 in Khangai Mts.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* 1 only at Terelj

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* several at *Lun wetland*, Bayaan Nuur and Orog Nuur

Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* 2 females at Gun Galuut, females and a male at Bayaan Nuur

Black(-eared) Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus* Common, seen almost every day

**Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* 1 immature at Boon Tsagaan Nuur**

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius* Common, seen almost every day

Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicas* 1 in forest north of Gun Galuut, 2 at Terelj  
Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* 1 at Gun Galuut, 1 in the Gobi, 1 at Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueeni* 1 in the Gobi along the road to Khongoryn Els  
Brown-cheeked Rail *Rallus indicus* 1 showing well at Bayaan Nuur  
Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* 1 seen at Bayaan Nuur  
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* 2 at Bayaan Nuur, 4 at Orog Nuur  
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Only at Bayaan Nuur and Orog Nuur  
White-naped Crane *Grus vipio* Exceptional numbers this year with 13 and 15 at Gun Galuut, 2 at Bayaan Nuur and 3 at Orog Nuur  
Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo* Common, seen almost every day  
Common Crane *Grus grus* 1 at Gun Galuut, 1 at Bayaan Nuur and 3 at Orog Nuur  
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* 1 at a plantation in Dalandzadgad  
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* 2 at Bayaan Nuur  
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Common, seen most days at lakes and rivers  
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Gun Galuut, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus schaeferi* 6 on the way from Khongoryn Els to Dalandzadgad  
Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* 7 in the Gobi, an incredible flock of 500+ birds resting at Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, 20 at Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* 5 birds around Dalandzadgad, 5 on the way to Khongoryn Els, 3 near Bogd  
Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* 2 at Bayaan Nuur  
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Gun Galuut (*limosa*), Bayaan Nuur (*melanuroides*)  
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, heard at Orog Nuur  
Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* 5 at Bayaan Nuur, 6 at Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur  
Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus ussuriensis* The commonest Tringa, seen at most wetlands  
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* 1 at Bayaan Nuur, 1 at small lake near Arvaikheer

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* 1 at a plantation in the Gobi, several at Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* 1 adult at Gun Galuut

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 2 at the Tuul River, 1 and 2 at the river at Terelj

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 1 bird in breeding plumage at Gun Galuut

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* 2 birds in breeding plumage at Gun Galuut

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* 2 birds in breeding plumage at Gun Galuut

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 1+2 birds in breeding plumage at Gun Galuut

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* 1 bird in breeding plumage at Gun Galuut

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* 1 at Gun Galuut, many at Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

**Relict Gull *Ichthyaetus relictus* 6 adults at Boon Tsagaan Nuur**

**Pallas's Gull *Ichthyaetus ichthyetus* 5 adults and 1 immature at Boon Tsagaan Nuur**

Vega (Mongolian) Gull *Larus vegae mongolicus* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* 6 at Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, 20 at Boon Tsagaan Nuur**

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* 1 at small lake near Arvaikheer**

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo ussuriensis* Tuul River, Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* 1 at Gun Galuut, 1 at small lake near Arvaikheer

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Gun Galuut, Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* 1 at Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur, 2 at Orog Nuur**

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrhaptes paradoxus* Common in the Gobi, also at Orog and Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Common feral bird in towns, also some wild looking birds at Khongoryn Els (*nigricans*)

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris* Seen in Terelj and 4 at Khongoryn Els

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis orientalis* 3 birds at a plantation in Dalandzadgad

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Common in towns and villages in the Gobi

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturates* Only heard in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Seen or heard at Tuul River, in forest north of Gun Galuut, Terelj, Hustai, Khangai Mts.

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo* 1 in a wadi in the Gobi on the way to Khongoryn Els (only seen by Neil McMahon)

Little Owl *Athene noctua plumipes* 2 at Khongoryn Els, 1+2 at Orog Nuur

European Nightjar *Vaprimulgus europaeus* 1 seen only by Neil M. at Khongoryn Els

Common Swift *Apus apus pekinensis* 2 at Bayaan Nuur, several at small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* Very common, seen on most days

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops saturata* Common, seen on many days

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor kamtschatkensis* A pair seen below our hotel in Terelj

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* 1 male in forest north of Gun Galuut (seen only by Attila Steiner)

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major brevirostris* Seen in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* 1 very showy bird seen well in Terelj

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus jessoensis* 2 birds seen below our hotel in Terelj

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* 16 birds in a colony at Khongoryn Els, 6 birds at Hustai NP

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Fairly common, seen many days

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* Seen in small numbers at Tuul River, Gun Galuut, Terelj, Hustai

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* 2+2 at Gun Galuut, 1 at Terelj

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug milvipes* Seen on 11 days with wonderful close views of perched or hunting birds

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* 1 in forest north of Gun Galuut (*cristatus*), 1 at plantation in Dalandzadgad (*lucionensis*)

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* Commonly seen in the Gobi and around Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius pallidirostris* A family seen at Khongoryn Els and 3 around Boon Tsagaan Nuur

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* 1 bird in a plantation at Bayandalai on the way to Dalandzadgad, third record for Mongolia and first for the Gobi

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius brandti* 1 seen at Terelj

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus* 6 birds seen at Tuul River near Ulanbaatar

Common Magpie *Pica pica leucoptera* Fairly common, seen on most days

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni* 1 adult seen well on the way to Khongoryn Els, 3 adults and a young birds near Bogd

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* 1 heard only at Terelj

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Common, seen on most days

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus* Seen at Tuul River, Gun Galuut, Terelj and Khangai Mts.  
 Rook *Corvus frugilegus pastinator* Fairly common, seen at Tuul River, Terelj and Khangai Mts.  
 Carrion Crow *Corvus corone orientalis* Common, seen on most days outside the Gobi  
 Common Raven *Corvus corax kamtschaticus* Common, seen every day  
 Coal Tit *Parus ater* Heard only at Terelj  
 Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris brevirostris* 2 pairs seen in the riverside forest at Terelj  
 Willow Tit *Poecile montanus baicalensis* Heard at Tuul River, seen in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj  
 Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus yenisseeensis* Seen at Tuul River and one in front of our restaurant in Ulanbaatar  
 Great Tit *Parus major kapustini* Seen at Tuul River and Terelj  
 White-crowned Penduline Tit *Remiz coronatus* Good views of 2 birds at Tuul River near Ulanbaatar  
 Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus rusicus* Seen well at Bayaan Nuur  
 Eurasian Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis kiborti* Seen at Gun Galuut, Hustai and Bayaan Nuur  
 Crested Lark *Galerida cristata magna* Seen in plantations in the Gobi  
 Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris brandti* Very common, seen almost every day  
 Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cinerea longipennis* Fairly commonly seen at drier steppe and desert habitats  
 Mongolian Lark *Melanicorypha mongolica* Seen in good numbers at Gun Galuut, Hustai, Bayaan Nuur, Orog Nuur, Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
 Asian Short-toed Lark *Alaudala cheleensis* Fairly common in Gun Galuut, Gobi and Hustai  
 Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Seen at the Steppe Nomads camp in Gun Galuut  
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica tytleri* Seen in small numbers on 9 days  
 Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Seen in the Gobi Altai and Khangai Mts.  
 House Martin *Delichon urbicum lagopodum* Seen in Gun Galuut, Terelj, Gobi Altai, Bayaan Nuur and Khangai Mts.  
 Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* 2 birds in the riverside forest at Terelj  
 Common (Siberian) Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* 1 in Dalandzadgad park (seen only by Neil McMahon)  
 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Fairly common in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj  
 Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* 1 at Tuul River and 1 in Terelj  
 Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* 1 in the riverside forest at Terelj  
 Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* Fairly common in forest north of Gun Galuut, Terelj and Khangai Mts.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* 1 bird seen on 2 days by the river at the Steppe Nomads camp in Gun Galuut

Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Seen in forest north of Gun Galuut, Terelj and Khangai Mts.

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* 2 migrating birds at Khongoryn Els, many singing at Bayaan Nuur

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus Agricola* A few singing at Bayaan Nuur

Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* Heard or seen at Tuul River, in forest north of Gun Galuut and at Julchin Gobi I. camp

Chinese Bush-Warbler *Locustella tacsanowskia* 2 heard singing at Terelj

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* We had prolonged good views of several birds at Tuul River, Gun Galuut and at Julchin Gobi I. camp

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* 2 birds at the plantation in Dalandzadgad

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* 1 bird at the plantation in Dalandzadgad

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca blythi* Heard or seen at Terelj and Hustai

Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* Seen at Khongoryn Els and around Bogd

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis rubicola* Fairly common in forest north of Gun Galuut, Terelj and Yolin Am

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea asiatica* Seen in Terelj

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria nepalensis* 2 birds in flight and one giving prolonged scope views at Yolin Am

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris daurica* 1 bird showing well in forest north of Gun Galuut

White-cheeked Starling *Spodiopsar cineraceus* 2 birds feeding young in a nest at the Tuul River near Ulanbaatar

Daurian Starling *Agropsar sturninus* 2 juveniles in the plantation at Dalandzadgad

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* 1 seen in Ulanbaatar (only by Neil McMahan)

Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* 1 male singing at Terelj

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* 1 bird showing well in forest north of Gun Galuut

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris* 1+2 birds in riverside forest below our hotel in Terelj

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* 2 singing males showing well in Terelj

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* 1 singing male giving fleeting views high in the canopy in Terelj

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsoni* 1 adult male found by Dean Wilson in the plantation at Dalandzadgad, first record for Mongolia

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* 3 males singing high in the canopy of the riverside forest in Terelj

**Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* 1 male singing in treetops in Khangai Mts.**

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides* Several birds at Yolin Am and other gorges of the Gobi Altai, also heard in Khangai Mts.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 2 birds in forest north of Gun Galuut

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus* A pair showing well in the riverside forest in Terelj

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* 1 male in Terelj, 1 male in the Gobi Altai, several males in Khangai Mts.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* 1 male in Terelj, a pair at our camp site in Khangai Mts.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* A common breeding bird seen at most sites except in the Gobi Desert

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* Very common, seen almost every day

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti atrogularis* Seen daily in the Gobi, also 1 before Bayankhongor

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* A bird of rocky mountainsides in the Gobi Altai and Khangai Mts.

Saxaul Sparrow *Passer ammodendri* A small colony breeding in the saxaul forest at Khongoryn Els

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Seen frequently around habitations

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Very common, seen every day

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* Seen at Gun Galuut, Gobi Altai and Khangai Mts.

White-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis* Good numbers of this tame bird at Yolin Am and other sites in the Gobi Altai

Père David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana* Seen well at Gun Galuut, also in Hustai NP and around Tatsain Tsagaan Nuur

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris erythropygia* 1 at Yolin Am, several in the Khangai Mts.

**Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana* 1 male showing well in the Khangai Mts.**

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens daturica* Fairly common at Yolin Am and other sites in the Gobi Altai, also in the Khangai Mts.

Kozlov's Accentor *Prunella kozłowi* Several seen well at Yolin Am and other sites in the Gobi Altai

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava macronyx* Fairly common at Bayaan Nuur

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis taiwana* 2 birds in a small oasis south of the Gobi Altai

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Seen at Gun Galuut, Terelj, Bayaan Nuur, small lake near Arvaikheer, Orog Nuur, Khangai Mts.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Seen at Tuul River, Gun Galuut, Terelj, Yolin Am and Khangai Mts.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba baicalensis* Fairly common breeding bird at rivers and lakes, also 1 of the *amurensis* race at Dalandzadgad

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* 1 flying over Julchin Gobi I. camp, 1 at Bulgan, several at Bayaan Nuur

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* A fairly common bird seen at Gun Galuut, Terelj and Khangai Mts.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Seen in the coniferous forests of Terelj and Khangai Mts.

**Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni* Seen at higher elevations in the Khangai Mts.**

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* 1 lost female in a plantation at Dalandzadgad  
Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccorhraustes* 2 birds in forest north of Gun Galuut, 1 in a plantation at Dalandzadgad  
Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus* Seen at Khongoryn Els, in plantations south of the Gobi Altai and around Boon Tsagaan Nuur  
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus grebnitskii* Seen in forest north of Gun Galuut, Terelj and Khangai Mts.  
Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus* A pair seen at Yolin Am, 1 seen by Neil in a gorge of the Gobi Altai  
Long-tailed Rosefinch *Uragus sibiricus* 2 males at the Tuul River near Ulanbaatar  
Twite *Acanthis flavirostris altaica* 2 birds at Gun Galuut, several in the Khangai Mts.  
Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Seen on 2 days in Terelj  
Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephala* Singing males seen in good numbers in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj  
Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewski* Singing males seen in Terelj, at Yolin Am and in the Gobi Altai  
Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides* Several singing males in Hustai NP  
Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* 1 migrating bird at Yolin Am  
Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* 1 male and 1 female at Steppe Nomads campsite in Gun Galuut  
Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasi* 2 males at Lun wetlands, several males at small lake near Arvaikheer, 2 pairs in Khangai Mts.  
Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* Only seen at Bayaan Nuur

### **225 species**

### **MAMMALS**

Tarbagan Marmot *Marmota sibirica* Only seen in Hustai NP  
Alashan Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus alashanicus* Seen at Yolin Am  
Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus erythrogenys* Seen in the Gobi Desert and Gobi Altai  
Long-tailed Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus undulatus* Seen at Gun Galuut, Terelj, Hustai and Khangai Mts.  
Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus* Seen in forest north of Gun Galuut and Terelj  
Mongolian Five-toed Jerboa *Allactaga sibirica* Seen at Steppe Nomads camp in Gun Galuut and at Gobi Discovery camp at Khongoryn Els  
Northern Three-toed Jerboa *Dipus sagitta* Seen at Gobi Discovery camp at Khongoryn Els  
Northern Red-backed Vole *Clethrionomys rutilus* 1 seen in forest north of Gun Galuut  
Brandt's Vole *Lasiopodomys brandtii* Seen at Steppe Nomads camp in Gun Galuut and at small lake near Arvaikheer

Mongolian Gerbil *Meriones unguiculatus* Seen at Yolin Am and Hustai

Great Gerbil *Rhombomys opimus* Seen in the saxaul forest at Khongoryn Els

Daurian Pika *Ochotona dauurica* Seen at Steppe Nomads camp in Gun Galuut, Hustai and Khangai Mts.

Pallas's Pika *Ochotona pallasi* Seen in the Gobi Altai

**Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus* 1 in the Khangai Mts.**

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai* Seen at Gun Galuut, Yolin Am, Hustai and Orog Nuur

Long-eared Hedgehog *Hemiechinus auritus* 1 in Gobi Discovery camp at Khongoryn Els

Corsac Fox *Vulpes corsac* Seen at Gun Galuut and Hustai

**Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* 1 seen on the way near Arvaikheer**

Grey Wolf *Canis lupus* 1 seen in Hustai by Neil only

Przewalski's Horse *Equus ferus przewalskii* Good numbers in Hustai NP

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* Good numbers in Hustai NP

Siberian Roe Deer *Capreolus pygargus* 2 seen in Terelj

Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* Good numbers in the Gobi desert and below Ikh Bogd Uul

Mongolian Gazelle *Procapra gutturosa* Seen in the Gobi Desert on the way to Khongoryn Els

Siberian Ibex *Capra sibirica* Several seen well in the Gobi Altai at Yolin Am and other sites

Argali *Ovis ammon* 1 nice male in the Gobi Altai

**26 species**

## REPTILES

Gobi Racerunner *Eremias przewalskii* Seen in the saxaul forest at Khongoryn Els

Variiegated Toad-headed agama *Phrynocephalus versicolor* Common in the Gobi Desert