

Birds in Western Siberia

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I. Introduction

During a soil-ecological excursion to Western Siberia and the Altai mountains some bird watching was taken out. Most excursions took place in the early mornings in the surroundings of our camp sites. In the first section, this report summarizes some information about the sites themselves and the most interesting birds recorded there. The second part contains a systematic list of all recorded bird species including brief comments on habitats, behaviour and migration. The appendix has a table with counts of all species at each site.

The report was drawn up by Nils Anthes (Muenster, Germany), Johannes Mayer (Stuttgart, Germany) and Holger Schielzeth (Muenster, Germany). Many thanks to the organisers from the TU Berlin (in particular Christian Sievert) as well as to the Russian Team (Pavel Barsukov and all the others).

II. Description of Sites

Plotnikovo / Tomsk (8-10/8/2000)

Southern taiga zone; edge of a small village, small stream with dense tall herbs and scrubs. High numbers of passerine migrants (e.g. *Acrocephalus* warblers, Whitethroats, Yellow Wagtails), at night strong wader migration, breeding site of Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and singing Arctic Warbler at Ixa riverside.

Wasjuganskoe (Bakchanskaja) / Tomsk (9/8/2000)

Southern taiga zone; part of the huge Wasjuganskoje bog complex; large areas of open bog land without trees, in-between small pine swamps and forests; at the edge birch and pine forests. Very few birds in the open bog, but Meadow pipits on its edge; lots of tits in the birch forests with Yellow-browed and Pallas's Leaf Warbler among them.

Tomsk / Tomsk (10/8/2000)

Old Siberian village.
Pacific Swift breeds at orthodox Church.

Tom flood plain / Tomsk (11/8/2000)

Rubble banks of Tom river; patches of dense willow scrub; pine forests on the first terrace. High numbers of roosting nocturnal migrants (e.g. Whitethroats, *Acrocephalus* warblers, Flycatchers).

Novi Pasielok / Novosibirsk (12-13/8/2000 and 2/9/2000)

Northern part of a big artificial lake in the wood steppe zone; sandy beaches with dense scrub vegetation.

In mid of August strong migration of passerines, in particular Greenish Warbler, Flycatchers, Wagtails, Tree Pipit, Swifts, Swallows, *Acrocephalus* warblers, Whitethroat, Common Redstart. In early September migration of Buntings, Lesser Whitethroats, Rubythroat and Great Black-headed Gull.

Chebula / Novosibirsk (14/8/2000)

Wood steppe zone; semi-open woodlands with dense tall herb vegetation on clearings; small lake with birch swamp.

Good numbers of Flycatchers, Chaffinches, Pine Buntings, Tree and Olive-backed Pipit, Pallas's Grashopper Warbler, Quail. Thick-billed Warbler and White-backed Woodpecker.

Lake Yurti / Novosibirsk (15-17/8/2000)

Artificial lake in medium-sized plain with steppe vegetation; low perception because of rain protection by Salair mountains; shores of lake Yurti with reed bed.

High numbers of Raptors (Pallid Harrier, Steppe Buzzard, Eagles) and Wagtails; some species of waders on the lake, but all in low numbers. Records of Blyth's Pipit, Pintail Snipe, Goldeneye, Little Crake. Lots of Baillon's Crakes and Paddyfield Warblers.

Salair / Novosibirsk (16/8/2000)

Medium-sized ridge of mountains with black taiga (aspen and fir forests); small stream with meadows and scrubs.

Hazel Grouse, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Siberian Jay.

River Ob near Barnaul / Altai district (18-19/8/2000)

Intensive agriculture in the (forest) steppe zone; 40 m high walls of loess, huge floodplain of river Ob. Few birds, diurnal migration of Wagtails and Pipits. Record of Arctic Warbler.

Ust-Seema / Altai district (20/8/2000)

Flood plain of the Katun river on the edge of the Altai mountains at about 350 meters a.s.l., Scrubs and meadows.

Many Flycatchers, *Acrocephalus* warblers, Lesser Whitethroats (but few Whitethroats).

Kimlar /Altai (21/8/00)

Mountain forest-steppe at 1150 m a.s.l.; Forests of *Larix sibirica* at northern slopes, rocky steppe vegetation with many herbs on southern slopes.

Records of Imperial Eagle, Yellowhammer, Water Pipit.

Cherga / Altai district (21/8/2000 and 30/8/2000)

Low altitude in Altai mountains (400 m a.s.l.), Forests of spruce, pine and birches; meadows on southern slopes, dense tall herb vegetation.

Strong migration of Tits, Wagtails, *Acrocephalus* warblers, Scarlet Rosefinch, some Leaf Warblers. Records of Imperial Eagle and Eastern Chiffchaff.

Seminsky Pass / Altai (22-24/8/2000)

Pass in the Altai mountains at 1800 m a.s.l., *Pinus (cembra) sibirica* forests with tall herbs and grass vegetation on clearings; fences on the edge of mountain streams, timberline of *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*; mountain tundra.

High numbers of Tits, Warblers and Redstarts. Black-throated Thrushes and Black-throated Accentor in *Pinus* forests. Records of Cinereous Vulture, Radde's Warbler, Pintail Snipe, Lanceolated Warbler, Rock Sparrow and Pine Grosbeak .

Aktash / Altai (25/8/2000 and 29/8/2000)

Mountain valley with taiga forests and mountain forest steppe vegetation, 1450 m a.s.l.; small stream with swampy forest on the edge.

High numbers of (nocturnal) migrants (e.g. Leaf Warblers, Pipits, Tits, Flycatchers, Rubythroat). Records of Red-flanked Bluetail, Godlewski's Bunting, Solitary Snipe and Rufous-backed Redstart.

Chagan-Usum / Altai (26-28/8/2000)

Dry plain at high altitude in Altai mountains (1700 m a.s.l.); sparse semi-desert and desert steppe vegetation; many rocky slopes; Trees and scrubs along banks of the Chuja river.

Many (nocturnal) migrants along the river (e.g. Tits, Leaf Warblers, Rubythroat, Flycatchers, Lesser Whitethroats, Ortolan Buntings). Many Wheatears and Raptors in the semi-desert. Records of Azure Tit, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Shore Lark, Red-flanked Bluetail.

Aktur Glacier / Altai (28/8/00)

Glacier at about 1600 m a.s.l.; mountain forests dominated by *Pinus*.
Record of Red-backed Redstart.

Lake Utkul / Altai district (31/8/00)

Medium-sized lake in the southern part of the forest-steppe zone; surroundings dominated by large, grassy pastures, but small aspen and birch stands and reedbeds, as well as dense scrubs bordering the lake in some parts.

Record of Pallas's Fish Eagle and Whooper Swan, otherwise very few birds.

Chumish / Novosibirsk (1/9/00)

Sandy banks of river Chumish; dense willow scrubs; mixed forests on the terraces.

Record of Osprey, Azure Tit, Nightjar and Wood Warbler; good numbers of Buntings and Warblers.

III. Systematic List of Birds

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Haubentaucher

The birds seen on Lake Yurti might represent a post-breeding flock of the local population as breeding should be possible in the reed-beds surrounding the lake.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* Ohrentaucher

Single juveniles were recorded at lake Yurti in mid of August and on a small lake at Chagan-Usum in the end of the month. But as the first-year birds were already independent, breeding status at these sites remains speculative. Autumn migration of this species with a more northern distribution than its congeners begins in late August and early dispersal of young birds seems not unlikely. Nevertheless ERNST (1992) reported Slavonian Grebe as breeding bird at higher altitude in the Altai.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Kormoran

With increasing range and a growing population of this adaptive species in Russia, one bird in Chagan Usum was surprising but not totally out of the blue. ERNST (2000) recorded Great Cormorant as a rare breeder in the south-eastern Altai up to 2300 m a.s.l. Birds belong to ssp. *sinensis*, who's range reaches from western Europe to the Asian Pacific coast.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Graureiher

Obvious migration took place with 27 migrating birds in two locations. These movements belonged either to the juvenile dispersal or to the leaving of the breeding grounds which should be usual in the cold climate of the West-Siberian basin.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Schwarzstorch

As this species leaves its breeding grounds from beginning of August through September most of the birds were seen migrating in southern directions. The record of one bird migrating southwards in the Altai Mountains at an altitude of 1450 meter a.s.l. seems to be remarkable, even if the species is a scarce breeder in the Altai (ERNST 1996). Three adults and one juvenile which could belong to the local population in the wet forests at the edges of the Ob were resting on a mudflat in the river.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Rostgans

This species is not as much dependent on access to open water as other *Anatinae*. According to SNOW & PERRINS (1998) they even breed in steppe or semi-deserts in altitudes up to 5000 meters a.s.l. with only small pools accessible. This fits to our observation of three birds at an altitude of about 1700 m a.s.l. on the river Tschuja crossing the Tschuja-steppe with an extremely continental climate.

European Wigeon *Anas penelope* Pfeifente

The West-Siberian population of Wigeons winter in the Caspian and Black Sea as well as in the Mediterranean. Breeding is known in the Chuja steppe (ERNST 1996). Despite of this, the flock of 24 birds at Chagan-Usum might have been a moulting flock which usually gather in August. But true autumn migration takes place from September onwards.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* Krickente

Records of this duck concentrate on the area north of the Altai mountains. Most probably the records refer to breeding birds as this species is a common breeder in the visited area.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Stockente

The Mallard was the most common duck with records mainly north of the Altai mountain range. The only observation in the southern area of our tour was a flock of ten on the Tschuja river near Chagan-Usum.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Spießente

Pintails breed from the northern Tundra south to the steppe (SNOW & PERRINS 1998) areas, so all records could refer either to breeding birds or to migrants.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* Knäkente

Garganeys breed mainly in temperate climates with some overspill north into boreal fringes (SNOW & PERRINS 1998) so all records could refer either to breeding birds or to migrants.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Löffelente

As Shovelers leave their breeding grounds in September and October the birds observed on the lake Yurti should be local breeders at the lake.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* Moorente

The Ferruginous Duck prefers shallow water with rich submerging and floating vegetation. Migration from northern breeding grounds begins in September peaking in October so the bird observed was most probably a breeding bird.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Reiherente

As SNOW & PERRINS (1998) state that the species is mainly a lowland species and migration does not start before September the birds observed at Chagan-Usum at 1700 m. a.s.l. could be overwintering non-breeders, even if Tufted Duck is known to breed in the region (ERNST 1996).

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* Schellente

One juvenile at Chagan-Usum indicates breeding in the trees surrounding the river but five birds on lake Yurti are surely migrants, as the habitat does not suit the species for breeding.

Smew *Mergus albellus* Zwergsäger

One Smew in Chagan-Usum in the Chuja Steppe was an unexpected record. The autumn departure of the breeding grounds takes place in September and October. Together with the fact that the location doesn't suit the species for breeding, the bird might have been a failed breeder or overwintering bird. ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't record this species on his trips to the Altai, which were carried out in spring/early summer.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* Gänsesäger

Unexpected as the female Smew, we recorded one Goosander in Chagan-Usum. But the species is known to breed in the region (ERNST 1996), which was confirmed by a whole family in a mountainous river near Cherga.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* Wespenbussard

This species was only recorded in the wood-covered areas of the Taiga and the Wood-Steppe, so most birds should belong to the local breeding populations. Eight Birds were migrating in a loose flock together with Black Storks and one Oriental Honey Buzzard

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Schopfwespenbussard

The Siberian birds belonging to the ssp *orientalis* leave their breeding-grounds between September and October to winter in South-East Asia. As they breed from the Tropics in the south up to the Taiga in the North at altitudes up to 1800 m a.s.l. the birds seen in the Salair Black Taiga are probable breeding birds. The single bird in the northern forest steppe was migrating in a loose flock with Western Honey Buzzards and Black Storks.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Schwarzmilan

The Black Kite is the most common raptor in Western Siberia. Observations range from the Taiga up to the mountains. The highest numbers occurred in the southern range of the Black Taiga and the steppe area around Lake Yurti.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Bindenseeadler

Only one adult was seen on Lake Utkul south of Barnaul. The species reaches the western edge of its distribution in the area.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* Mönchsgeier

Two observations from the alpine regions of the Altai, where this species is a rare breeder. One bird was searching for a carcass at the Seminskii Pass 1700 a.s.l. and the other bird was seen circling above the Tschike-Taman Pass at about 1200 m a.s.l.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Rohrweihe

This species was only seen at Lake Yurti with its surrounding reed-beds which are a suitable breeding habitat for Marsh Harriers.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* Kornweihe

Hen Harrier was the most common of the four *Circus*-species in the region, but the records were concentrated in the area north of the Altai (5 records) with just 2 observations at the Seminskii Pass. As the Hen Harrier is the most northerly distributed species of the Harriers and the birds of the northern populations leave their breeding grounds in September, most birds are thought belong to the local breeding populations.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Steppenweihe

The Pallid Harrier is a widespread breeder in the dry grasslands and steppes north of the Altai mountain range (MACKINNON & PHILLIPS 2000). We had exceptionally good views of males, females and juveniles in the surroundings of the Lake Yurti. The Pallid Harrier shows a marked decline in Russia, which is mainly based on habitat destruction by agriculture. The birds leave the area in September.

Montague's Harrier *Circus pygargus* Wiesenweihe

With just two observations, this species was much scarcer than we expected. Both birds were seen in open landscape in the vicinity to water. Breeding should occur in these areas.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* Habicht

Goshawks were just recorded in the Taiga range of the excursion. In contrast to our expectations we failed to see the species in the Altai, where it is a widespread but not very abundant breeder (ERNST 1992).

Northern Sparrow Hawk *Accipiter nisus* Sperber

Sparrow Hawks were recorded at most of the locations visited. With increasing altitude the number of observations decreased, but the number of individuals seen at locations increased. So we observed three birds at the Seminsky Pass and five birds in Chagan-Usum. In the low lying areas we mostly recorded single individuals. It is also possible that the higher numbers are due to the first peak in migration in late August and early September (FORSMAN 1999)

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus* Falkenbussard

The Steppe Buzzard is a common and widespread breeder in the West-Siberian basin, so the high number of observations is not surprising. The record of about 115 migrating on the 1.9. indicates strong passage through the wood-steppe area. This record fits into the migration picture described by

FORSMAN (1999) who states: "Autumn migration fairly early, [...] starting during Aug[ust] and peaking in first half of Sep[tember]."

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* Adlerbussard

We could detect at least three birds soaring above the arid semi-desert area of Chagan-Usum on the 26.8. FORSMAN (1999) describes areas like this as the most suitable breeding habitat. Migration peaks in late October, so it is most likely that these birds were breeding birds. Surprisingly ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't record Long-legged Buzzards.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* Schelladler

The Greater Spotted Eagle is a breeder of forests bordering wetlands, so the observation of one bird circling close to the river Ob is not surprising as this habitat should suit the species well for breeding.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* Steppenadler

The Steppe Eagle is a rapidly declining species and if it is not possible to stop that trend it will surely face extinction soon. So we were very lucky to see a total of eight individuals. One in the steppe area of the Lake Yurti and 1+6 in the semi-desert areas of the Altai. The species might breed in both habitats as it prefers treeless steppe, plains and foothills (FORSMAN 1999).

Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* Kaiseradler

We had four observations of this species, one near Lake Yurti and three in the Altai mountains. The family of two adults and one juvenile strongly indicates breeding near the village Cherga. Our observation of 2-3 individuals at the Seminsky Pass at 1700 m a.s.l. does not fit to FORSMAN (1999) saying: "...is not attracted to higher mountains and precipitous cliffs like Golden Eagle" but this could be due to our birds being migrants. Most remarkably ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't report Imperial Eagle from the Altai.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* Steinadler

The Golden Eagle is a widespread breeder in the higher regions of the Altai mountains, so the two observations of Golden Eagles in this area are not surprising. There is a differentiation from the Imperial Eagle by habitat as the Golden Eagle prefers higher mountains and precipitous cliffs whereas the Imperial Eagle breeds in semi-open terrain and mountainous areas at moderate altitude. ERNST & HERING (2000) and ERNST (1992) only noted Golden Eagle on their trips to several parts of the Altai, but no Imperial Eagle at all! According to them, highest densities of Golden Eagles are found in the south-east of the Altai.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* Zwergadler

The high proportion of dark morph birds is very obvious. FORSMAN (1999) states an increasing percentage of dark birds when going from West to East. Possibly the ratio between light and dark morph birds is shifting from West to East. One pair remained resident for four days at Aktash at 1140 m a.s.l.. The intense courtship behaviour of the pair strongly indicates breeding in the area. ERNST & HERING (2000) report that Booted Eagle is a very rare breeder in the Altai. Up to date there are only 3-4 confirmed breeding records!

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Fischadler

One bird was hunting at the river Chumish close to the City Talmenka. The species is said to leave its northern breeding grounds in August, so this bird should have been a migrant.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Rötelfalke

This species is globally threatened, as breeding numbers declined up to 95% in some areas. In Russia a considerable fragmentation of its breeding range has been recorded since the 1970s. The main passage takes place between late August and late September (SNOW & PERRINS 1998). We saw Lesser Kestrels

in the Altai mountains in high numbers. Outside this area, no Lesser Kestrels were observed, probably because of the lack of suitable breeding habitats in high cliffs. Surprisingly ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST and HERING (2000) didn't report Lesser Kestrel from the Altai.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Turmfalke

Kestrels were seen in almost all habitats and altitudes during the excursion.

Amur / Red-footed Falcon *Falco spec.* Rotfuß-/Amurfalke

On two occasions birds of this species group did not provide views good enough for a specific identification. But the birds might both have been Amur Falcons, as Red-footed Falcon is much scarcer in the excursion area. ERNST (1992) only mentions Red-footed Falcon as a breeder on the western and northwestern edges of the Altai up to 1300 m a.s.l. So far there are no confirmed breeding records from the central and eastern Altai. But, surprisingly, in none of the reports Amur Falcon is mentioned (ERNST 1992, 1996, ERNST & HERING 2000).

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* Amurfalke

One female Amur Falcon could specifically be identified. The bird was hunting in the Kuraj steppe, an arid semi-desert in the Altai.

Northern Hobby *Falco subbuteo* Baumfalke

Hobbies were recorded in almost every habitat except the arid regions without trees and water. Juvenile birds indicate breeding in the Wood-steppe as well as in the steppe area around Lake Yurti. As the species leaves its breeding grounds in August with migration peaking in September, it is surprising that we did not record any actively migrating birds.

Saker *Falco cherrug* Würgfalke

Three records of Saker in the arid semi-deserts in the Altai range. The birds in the Altai either belong to the nominate race *F. c. cherrug*, or to the central Asian subspecies *F. c. altaicus* which is considered to be an own species Altai Falcon *F. altaicus* by some authors. The variation is clinal from West to East, as birds become overall paler and the upperparts become increasingly barred (FORSMAN 1999). We just had good views from below so we can not decide which form we observed.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Wanderfalke

One record of an adult bird at lake Yurti. The species breeds rarely in the Altai region (ERNST 1992), but we don't know anything about the status in the western Siberian basin.

Hazel Grouse *Bonasa bonasia* Haselhuhn

Russian people told us that the Hazle Grouse was "very very common" in the woods of the Taiga, and we also had two observations in the wood-covered area of the Altai. One bird was heard displaying on the 25.8 in Aktash. Surprisingly, the species is only mentioned once in the reports of ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000).

Willow Grouse *Lagopus lagopus* Moorschneehuhn

Seven birds close to the path up the Mountain Sarlyk provided good and close views. They were well camouflaged between *Ericaceae*. As this species is not migratory at all, these birds were surely breeding birds of the area. We expected to see Rock Ptarmigan *L. mutus*, too, but did not succeed.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Wachtel

The Quail seems to be common in the open areas of the wood-steppe as indicated by six singing individuals around the lake Swetloe and four birds flushed in the area of Barnaul. Both areas were dry meadows covered with *Stipa* vegetation. One bird was seen at an altitude of 1700 m a.s.l. at the

Seminsky Pass. According to ERNST (1996), breeding in the Altai occurs up to an altitude of at least 2000 m a.s.l.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* Tüpfelralle

A bird in dense vegetation at the Edge of the river Ixa near the village Plotnikovo was a juvenile. But as dispersal starts in July/August the record doesn't indicate breeding in the area.

Little Crake *Porzana parva* Kleines Sumpfhuhn

One juvenile Little Crake was found in the reed-beds of lake Yurti. Little Crake is certainly quite rare in the region as breeding ranges lies quite a bit further west.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* Zwergsumpfhuhn

As the Baillon's Crake is a common breeder in south-western Siberia, the observation of two adults and three chicks is not surprising. The birds were seen in a reed-bed with small patches of open - not vegetation covered - water at the edge of Lake Yurti. This is unusual as this species prefers light-stemmed and light-foliaged vegetation contrary to reed-beds

Common Crane *Grus grus* Kranich

The Common Crane is a breeder in the bogs of the Taiga and the wood-steppe itself. Most probably, all the birds we saw were local breeders, as we just found them in pairs or families. Large-scale migration does not begin before September, so the birds probably strayed around their breeding sites.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo* Jungfernkranich

This species leaves its breeding grounds in the middle latitudes between the boreal and the arid zone of Siberia as early as beginning August to reach their winter quarters in India and Pakistan by early September. This species is known to migrate in high altitudes which are out of sight, so it is not surprising that we only saw this species in the Altai mountains. The birds seen at Aktash were actively migrating southwards. The other birds were resting on a short-grass meadow in a dry valley which does not serve as a suitable breeding habitat as they prefer open plains with access to water. This indicates that these birds were on migration, too.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Flußregenpfeifer

Two birds were seen on the gravelly banks of River Tom (near Tomsk) as well as on the shore of lake Yurti. Birds were probably on migration, as the species starts southward movements very early in the season.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Pazifischer Goldregenpfeifer

The breeding-area of this species is the dwarf shrub and lichen-moss tundra of Siberia eastwards across the Bering Strait to the western edge of Alaska. On migration, PGPs often stop on short-grass meadows (BYRKJEDAL & THOMPSON 1998). This coincides with our observation of an adult close to the Lake Yurti on the 17.8.. The median date of the autumn migration of the area visited is between the 10th and 15th September so our bird was an early one.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* Kiebitz

Lapwings were surprisingly scarce. Single birds and small groups of up to three birds were seen on three different sites within the taiga and the forest steppe zone as well as on steppe lake Yurti.

Sanderling *Calidrius alba* Sanderling

A single adult was feeding on the shore of Lake Yurti. See bird was certainly on autumn migration.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Zwergstrandläufer

Up to five juveniles were present at the steppe lake Yurti, with an additional two on a small mountain stream at Cherga.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* Temminckstrandläufer

Small parties were seen on small lakes or streams, with up to five at lake Yurti.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Alpenstrandläufer

One single juvenile was found at the shore of lake Yurti. This bird had a surprisingly long bill, indicating an east-siberian origin.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* Sumpfläufer

One juvenile was seen on in muddy reed-bed at lake Yurti.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Kampfläufer

Lake Yurti was the only place where we found roosting Ruffs. Up to three juveniles were seen in mid August.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Bekassine

Single birds were properly identified on a small stream in the taiga zone at Plotnikovo and on steppe lake Yurti respectively.

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* Spießbekassine

Single birds were identified at lake Yurti in a muddy reed-bed and at Seminsky Pass at 1700 m a.s.l. in a mountain fence. We supposed the birds to be on migration. But ERNST (1992) reported Pintail Snipe as common breeder at higher altitude of the Altai. Additionally to the two specified records two unidentified snipes flew over at the Tom riverside. By call and underwing pattern Common Snipe could be ruled out, but distinction between Pintail and Wood Snipe *Gallinago megala* remained unclear. Even if Pintail is quite easily separated from Common, proper identification of *Gallinago*-Snipes is not easy.

Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria* Einsiedelbekassine

Solitary Snipe was found at small stream in Altai mountains between 1450 and 1700 m a.s.l. Since we haven't checked many more suitable habitats at this altitude, we suspect Solitary Snipe to be more widespread as was reported by ERNST (1992, 1996). He found the species just at a few sites above 2000 m.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Uferschnepfe

Three birds at lake Yurti were the only record on our trip.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Regenbrachvogel

Whimbrel and Curlew were two of the more regularly seen waders on our trip. Single birds and small parties were seen on various places in the taiga and forest steppe zone as well as on lake Yurti. Some good migration was going at night on 8. August, when several birds were heard at Plotnikovo.

Curlew *Numenius aquaticus* Großer Brachvogel

Parties of up to three were seen in the lowland (taiga, forest steppe and lake Yurti).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Dunkler Wasserläufer

Some night migration took on 8. August at Plotnikovo (taiga zone), where single birds were heard among several other waders. One roosting bird was present at lake Yurti in mid of August.

Redshank *Tringa totanus* Rotschenkel

As with Spotted Redshank single birds were heard at night at Plotnikovo on two were roosting at lake Yurti.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Teichwasserläufer

Lake Yurti surprised us with two birds flying around the lake. This (artificial) lake, lying in a dry plain with steppe, was probably the best place for waders on our trip. The muddy reedbeds and sandy shores hold 21 species of waders in total, but numbers were generally low.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Grünschenkel

Small numbers of Greenshanks were seen at three sites from lake Yurti up to Chagan-Usum. Birds were certainly on migration.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Waldwasserläufer

Green Sandpipers were seen at various places in all parts of our excursion area. Even if biggest numbers were recorded at Plotnikovo in the taiga zone, birds were found even more regular at higher altitude (up to 1800 m a.s.l.) of the Altai mountains.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Bruchwasserläufer

As Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpipers were seen in all parts of our trip. But in contrast to the former species it was less regular in the mountains. Most birds were on small streams and lakes in the taiga (with strong night migration on 8. August), but single birds were seen on 1700 m a.s.l., too.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Flußuferläufer

Birds were seen in all parts of the excursion area. Up to seven birds were present at Chagan-Usum. Birds were certainly on migration, but it is known to be a fairly common breeder in the Altai (ERNST 1992).

Phalarope spec. *Phalaropus spec.* Unbestimmte Wassertreter

One single bird was seen landing at a small pond at Chagan-Usum right in semi-desert surroundings. Unfortunately the bird stay just for one half of a minute, not enough to confirm specific identification.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* Fischmöwe

Great Black-headed Gull shows a patchy breeding distribution throughout the steppe zone of central Asia. Next breeding grounds are known in western China and Mongolia (ROBEL & BESCHOW 1994). During our trip we saw the first juvenile at Lake Yurti, a salty steppe lake, on 15./16.8. In early September we found reasonable numbers (mainly adults, but also immatures) at Ob artificial lake, while there were none (but higher numbers of other large *Larus*-Gulls) in mid August. That may indicate the begin of migration from the breeding grounds.

Little Gull *Larus minutus* Zwergmöwe

On our excursion we saw just one small flock of 3 juveniles on a lake in open countryside north of Lake Yurti. Despite visiting suitable lakes several times, the low number of observations indicates sparse passage through the excursion area in August. Little Gull is known to be a widespread and common breeder at shallow lakes and floodplains in the steppe, forest-steppe and taiga zone of Western Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* Lachmöwe

Small numbers were present at the steppe lake Yurti, but there were some more birds at Ob artificial Lake. The species was not present at most other lakes visited on the excursion, thus being less common than in central Europe. For Central Siberia Black-headed Gull is known to be widely distributed, but generally rare (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Mew Gull *Larus canus* Sturmmöwe

Mew Gull was one of the more regularly recorded species and certainly the most numerous gull. There were often some birds present at bigger rivers and lakes, but records were missing in the Altai region. Mew Gull is the most common breeding and migrating gull in central and western Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992), but ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) also didn't give any records from the Altai.

Mongolian Gull *Larus mongolicus* Mongolenmöwe

This form was the most common large *Larus*-Gulls. The birds showed a quite light coloration on the upperside, quite small body size and active wing moult in adults. It mostly resembled *L. cachinnans*, but also showed remarkable differences. Especially they were remarkably small, had a very small and slim bill, showed striking more black in the wing-tip and called differently. Following field characters they were supposed to belong to *L. mongolicus*, but we don't have any suitable reference for proper identification and especially separation from eastern forms of *cachinnans*. Despite the occurrence of the first seems to be a little bit more likely, we can't rule out the latter. ERNST (1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) also reported large Gulls from the Altai mountains belonging to *L. mongolicus*. But as dispersal might occur even in the summer month, specific identification remains unclear in the end. We recorded Gulls of that type on several occasions on lakes and streams in the lowland. Bigger flocks of up to 15 were roosting on Lake Yurti, while numbers elsewhere were a bit lower. A bigger proportion of the birds was in adult plumage, but there were several immatures (especially 1st years), too. Probably the birds were dispersing from their breeding grounds or referred to over-summering individuals.

Heuglin's / Steppe Gull *Larus heuglini* / *barabensis* Tundramöwe

Large and dark mantled Gulls showing features of the forms *heuglini* and *barabensis* were seen in small numbers on three different lakes in the lowland and fore-Altai. As we don't have good identification guides separation of the two forms remains unclear (RAUSTE 1999, PANOV & MONZIKOV 2000). Whereas *barabensis* breeds in the Western Siberian basin, *heuglini/taimyrensis* breeding in the Siberian tundra are supposed to migrate south along the large river systems (Irtysch, Ob, Yenisej) towards south and southeast Asia. In Central Siberia the latter breeds south to about 64°N, but dispersal from breeding grounds starts from the second half of July onwards, while autumn migration peaks in September/October (ROGACHEVA 1992). So the occurrence of both forms (early dismigrating *heuglini* or resident *barabensis*) is possible. Most of the birds were adults, but at least one juvenile was seen, too.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Flußseeschwalbe

Birds were present at several sites at Tom and Ob river and on Lake Yurti. There were even at least 5 birds at the Chuja river in the semi-desert at 1700 m a.s.l., too. Birds are breeding in the region (e.g. ERNST (1996), but certainly autumn migration has just set off in August. Migrants may refer to either ssp. *hirundo* or *minussensis* (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* Weißbart-Seeschwalbe

There are three *Chlidonias*-species to be expected in the region. But all of them leave breeding grounds very early. Therefore the only ones we saw were two first year Whiskered Terns on medium-sized lakes in open countryside (steppe). Whiskered has got the latest autumn migration period of the three *Chlidonias* species, therefore these records are not very surprising. It has a very patchy breeding distribution throughout the old world, with breeding grounds in Central Asia, too.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* Hohltaube

Stock Doves were present in the whole low-level excursion area, but missing in the Altai. Usually numbers were low, but very big flocks of up to 300 birds were seen around lake Yurti in almost treeless countryside with steppe vegetation. The excursion area is not far from the eastern limit of the species breeding range. But it has been strongly expanding eastwards in recent years with a dramatic increase of the breeding population in Central Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia f. domestica* Stadttaube

Like in Europe, Feral Pigeon occurs close to all kind of human settlements, towns and cities as well as at smaller villages. We didn't find any possible wild Rock Doves. Following ROGACHEVA 1992 wild Rock Dove *C. livia* breeds in the Sayan mountains in low abundance. Therefore occurrence in Altai wouldn't be unlikely.

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris* Klippentaube

Hill Pigeons were seen in medium-sized flocks in rocky areas of the Chuja steppe at about 1700 m a.s.l. Additionally there were three birds seen in a flock of Feral Doves close to the village Cherga at 400 m a.s.l. Hill Pigeon has a Central to South Asian distribution. It is currently expanding its range (ROGACHEVA 1992). Sometimes semi-domesticated forms are captured, which might explain the record at Cherga (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* Orientturteltaube

Specific identification of Turtle Doves wasn't easy at all. There were plenty of birds flying in the taiga and forest-steppe zones of the lowland. But obtaining proper views was much more difficult. Therefore many "Turtle Doves" remained unidentified. Nevertheless Rufous Turtle Dove is a very common breeder in the southern part of West and Central Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992), while the range of European Turtle Dove starts further west (but not far enough to be ignored). Therefore we suggest most *Streptopelia spec.* to be indeed *S. orientalis*. Birds were seen in the taiga mainly close to villages or openings, in the forest-steppe zone and in the steppe around lake Yurti. All records were below 500 m a.s.l., but a single juvenile was seen on a forest path in dense *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*-forest at 1700 m a.s.l. *S. o. orientalis* is known to breed in the taiga, while subspecies *meena* is known to settle in the forest-steppe and in mountain wood (SVENSSON et al.2000, ERNST & HERING 2000). The birds we saw basically showed whitish tail tips, suggesting *meena*. At least one single bird at Plotnikovo was thought to be a European Turtle Dove *S. turtur*.

Eurasian Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Kuckuck

Cuckoos were seen surprisingly regular in various parts of the excursion area. Most of them were single juveniles in open woodlands and wood steppe. As Cuckoo leaves the breeding grounds by August, most of them were for sure birds on autumn migration. We checked several individuals for the closely related Oriental Cuckoo *C. saturatus*, but couldn't detect any features characteristic for this species. Therefore we suggest that at least most, if not all of the Cuckoos seen on the excursion belonged to Common Cuckoo. Common Cuckoo and Oriental Cuckoo occur sympatric in Siberian woodlands. The latter is generally a bit rarer and more restricted to riverside forests (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* Sumpfohreule

Up to three birds were seen hunting on the edge of Lake Yurti on 15./16.8. The steppe plain seems to be a possible breeding site. The species is possibly the most common Owl in Central Siberia, inhabiting various kinds of open landscapes (ROGACHEVA 1992).

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* Ziegenmelker

Single individuals were seen in the southern taiga zone at Plotnikovo and in the Chumish valley near Barnaul. The first bird was once heard singing, too. We expect the clearings around the village to be suitable habitats for breeding. However a female flushed in *Salix*-scrub in the fertile plain of Chumish river, was certainly on migration.

Eurasian Swift *Apus apus* Mauersegler

Single birds and medium-sized flocks were noticed at several sites in the West Siberian basin during the first half of August. There was some good southwesterly migration going on at Ob artificial lake on 12.8. Beside these records a single bird was seen in the Altai at Cherga on 21.8. Eurasian Swift reaches its easternmost limit of range in the area of Yenisey/Krasnojarsk (ROGACHEVA 1992). In contrast to central Europe a high portion of Swifts is thought to breed in tree holes.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* Pazifiksegler

About 30 birds were seen during a visit of Tomsk, where it breeds in buildings. This is one of the most westerly breeding sites of this east palearctic bird. Elsewhere none were seen, despite of giving attention on Swifts. Pacific Swift replaces Eurasian Swift in Central and East Asia.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Eisvogel

Just two birds were seen. But probably it's more widespread in the area. Following ROGACHEVA (1992) Kingfisher is said to be remarkably less common at taiga streams than in the forest-steppe and steppe zone of Central Siberia.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Wiedehopf

Two birds were seen at a clearing in the southern taiga near Plotnikovo, another one flew by right at Tomsk town. More regular a few birds were seen in the desert-steppe along the river Chuja. Nevertheless Hoopoe was surprisingly rare on our trip. This was reported by ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) for the Altai, too.

Northern Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* Wendehals

Single migrants were seen in bushy scrub and light woodland at four different sites in the lowland.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* Schwarzspecht

Odd birds were seen or heard calling in different places from the southern taiga up to the woods of the Altai mountains. Abundance is generally low but the species is very widespread in Siberia.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* Buntspecht

The species was regularly seen in all parts except for higher altitudes of the Altai (where the species is possibly partly replaced by Three-toed Woodpecker). All kind of woodlands are inhabited. The subspecies breeding in the area is the nominate *major*.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* Weißrückenspecht

Single females were seen in a swampy *Betula*-stock at lake Swetloe and at Ob artificial lake in soft-wood lakeside vegetation bordering *Pinus*-forest. The birds were of the nominate form *leucotos*. White-backed Woodpecker is a rare breeder in forest-steppe and southern taiga of Central Siberia where it prefers birch stands (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Picoides minor* Kleinspecht

Widespread. Seen at several places from the West Siberian basin up to the Altai mountains.

Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus* Dreizehenspecht

Having failed to find Three-toed Woodpecker in the taiga, we found quite a few in the *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*-woodlands at higher altitude in the Altai (1400-1800 m a.s.l.). This was possibly due to higher activity of the birds, but we suppose that the species was more numerous in the mountain forest than in lowland taiga. In contrast Great Spotted Woodpecker was widespread at lower altitude, but missing at higher levels. Possibly this was due to some competition between those two. Surprisingly ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't report Three-toed Woodpecker from the Altai.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* Kurzzehenlerche

Three birds flew over in the steppe near lake Yurti. Other closely related species (especially Hume's Short-toed Lark) which also occur can't be fully excluded. Birds of central Asia should probably belong to subspecies *atemisiana*, but geographical variation is clinal.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* Feldlerche

Surprisingly low numbers of larks in general were seen during our trip. Especially the steppe zone of the Western Siberian basin and the mountain steppes of the Altai didn't fulfil our expectations. Quite a few Skylarks were seen in the steppe plain around lake Yurti. Good views proved them to belong indeed to Eurasian Skylark and not to Lesser Skylark *A. gulgula*, which could be expected in the region, too. Skylarks of the Asian steppes are described as ssp. *dulcivox* (SVENSSON 1992).

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris* Ohrenlerche

A flock of about 35 birds was seen in the semi-desert of the Chuja steppe (1700 m a.s.l.). The birds belonged to the *flava*-group, probably *branti* (SVENSSON et al. 2000, ROGACHEVA 1992). Habitat differed remarkably from north European breeding grounds.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Uferschwalbe

Widespread in all of the excursion area, but numbers in the Altai were lower and birds there were probably on passage. Bigger concentrations were found at lake Yurti with up to 200 birds. Active southerly migration was noted a few times, too.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Rauchschwalbe

As Sand Martin, but numbers generally higher. Concentration of up to 1000 birds at lake Yurti.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica* Mehlschwalbe

Scarcest Martin/Swallow on the excursion, but nevertheless seen in several places. Numbers of up to 20 were counted at lake Yurti.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* Spornpieper

Not rare in the steppe plain around lake Yurti, including juvenile birds. Some birds seen in the semi-desert of the Chuja steppe, too. Following ROGACHEVA (1992) Richard's Pipit prefers moist locations. In contrast all records on our excursion were in dry areas with low, grassy (lake Yurti) or very sparse (Chuja steppe) vegetation. Autumn migration starts in August and it's not unusual that most birds left the breeding grounds in Central Siberia by the end of the month (ROGACHEVA 1992). ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) reported the species as a scarce breed in the Altai steppe regions.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* Steppenpieper

A single bird was seen at lake Yurti on 17.8. Breeding probably occurs in this region (ALSTRÖM & MILD 1997a). But the records might also refer to a migrant, as breeding grounds are left as early as End of July (ALSTRÖM & MILD 1997a). Single birds which flew past in the semi-desert of Chagan-Usum, gave calls like Blyth's Pipit, too. Unfortunately they didn't provide views good enough to exclude Richard's Pipit.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* Brachpieper

Small numbers were seen near Barnaul on agricultural fields and in the desert-steppe of Chagan-Usum. These were certainly birds on autumn migration as the species migrates very early in the season. In the region the occurrence of the form *kastschenkoi*, which slightly differs from European *campestris*, is most likely. Density of Tawny Pipit has increased in the 20th century due to agricultural activities (ROGACHEVA 1992),

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Waldpieper

Small numbers were seen at two sites, both swampy woods. At least four birds were present in a small *Betula*-swamp at lake Swetloe, and some birds in a swampy forest (*Abies*, *Picea*) along a small mountain stream at Aktash (1400 m a.s.l.). The sites seemed to be possible breeding habitats, but autumn migration certainly starts in July and is peaking in August. Olive-backed Pipit is fairly common in Central Siberia from northern taiga up to the tree line. Birds there are said to prefer dark-coniferous forest, but swampy woods, too (ROGACHEVA 1992). From the Altai it is reported to be rarer than Tree Pipit and more likely to be found within woodlands (ERNST 1992). The birds referred to subspecies *yunnanensis*, but breeding of *hodgsoni* is not unlikely in the Altai.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* Baumpieper

Widespread and numerous with strong migration going on in mid August (e.g. at least 50 on active migration on 13.8.). The species was missing in the dry steppe-plains of the Altai, but was not uncommon in mountain forests. Amazingly one bird without streaks on the back was seen at Plotnikovo.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* Wiesenpieper

Surprisingly rare, only seen on the open bog near Baktscharska (Wasjungankoje bog complex), where the species certainly breeds. The eastern limit of the species range is in the Ob river area (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* Bergpieper

Numerous and widespread in the Altai (about 800-1900 m a.s.l.), on woodland edges bordering mountain meadows and in mountain fences. Very common especially at Seminsky Pass. Birds were certainly still around breeding grounds as autumn migration begins in September. Birds referred to subspecies *blankistoni* (ALSTRÖM & MILD 1997b).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Schafstelze

Seen in all parts of the excursion area and belonging to different subspecies.

In the West Siberian basin most birds resembled central European form *flava*, probably belonging to *plexa*, which is probably the breeding subspecies of the region. A single male at Plotnikovo showed characteristics of *thunbergi*, which occurs on passage from the north Siberian breeding grounds (ROGACHEVA 1992). In August there was obviously strong migration, e.g. at least 300 actively migrating south on 13.8. Roosting sites were various open places in the taiga (openings, riversides) and wood steppe zone.

Reaching the dry, salty steppe plain around the lake Yurti the composition of Wagtail flocks was completely different. The number of birds roosting in the grassy plain was much higher (flocks of 100-200 birds) than in the southern taiga. The calls of the birds were strikingly sharper, strongly resembling Citrine Wagtail. The majority of the birds showed paler head and probably belonged to the subspecies *beema*, whereas few birds showed characteristics of black-headed forms, probably *feldegg*.

In the Altai, we regularly recorded active migration (smaller numbers than in the lowland), but few birds roosting. Therefore getting good views was difficult. But calling birds still sounded quite sharp and probably there were still lots of *beema* among them.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Zitronenstelze

Recorded in all parts of the excursion, but numbers were very low in the taiga zone. Mainly birds flying past were seen there. Numbers were distinctly higher in open, grassy habitats with access to open water. E.g. the edges of lake Yurti and the Chuja-river near Chagan-Usun provided good numbers. Citrine Wagtails already leave the breeding grounds in August. Therefore we couldn't find any in the boglands of Baktscharka (Wasjuganskoja). On migration subspecies *citreola* as well as *werae* (which breed in the area) could be expected. But on our excursion, we didn't see any adult male to specify subspecific identity.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Gebirgsstelze

Found in the whole excursion area, with highest numbers at streams in the southern taiga around Plotnikovo. Almost all kind of streams and rivers were used for roosting. Grey Wagtails are widespread breeders in the area, too.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Bachstelze

Two distinctly different subspecies were recorded.

The form *dukhunensis* (at least male differ considerably from European *alba*) was found to be abundant in the West Siberian basins, the lowland steppes and at lower altitudes of the Altai (up to about 400 m a.s.l.). They were recorded around streams and villages in the southern taiga, at various open places of the forest-steppe zone and very numerous in steppe-vegetation around lake Yurti. The similar subspecies *baicalensis* is reported to reach the Altai region, too (ERNST 1992, 1996).

The (sub)species *personata* replaced *dukhunensis* at higher altitudes of the Altai (1400-1800 m a.s.l.). It differs remarkably in adults as well as in juvenile plumage. Birds were numerous on mountain meadows and fences as well as along streams in the steppe plains. ERNST (1992, 1996) mentioned the occurrence of hybrids with *dukhunensis* in the lower parts of the Altai.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* Fahlbraunelle

A single bird was seen foraging on a stony slope in the semi-desert near Beltir (Altai, about 1700 m a.s.l.) with hardly any vegetation. It was first thought to be a Radde's Accentor (which doesn't occur in the area), until proper literature was concerned. Brown Accentor is a quite rare inhabitant of subalpine and alpine altitudes in Altai and Sayan (ROGACHEVA 1992), while most of its range lies further south in Mongolian and Chinese Mountains.

Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis* Schwarzkehlbraunelle

Black-throated Accentor was found to be not uncommon in mountain *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*-stands, where it certainly breeds. Most records were not far from the upper forest line (1500-1700 m a.s.l.), but still in dense woods. A single Accentor heard calling at river Chuja near Chagan-Usum, possibly belonged to this species, too. But as habitat was very different there and calls of other Accentors sound similar, identification remains unclear.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* Rotkehlchen

Robin is a European species, but there is some eastward expansion of its range in the southern taiga zone in Siberia. Vagrants occasionally even reach Central Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992). On our excursion we found two birds beside a small stream in the southern taiga at Plotnikovo.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* Sprosser

We found a single Thrush Nightingale in dense deciduous scrub at Ob artificial lake. Following its behaviour, we suppose it to be a bird on migration. The record was not far from the eastern limit of the species range, which is in the south-west corner of central Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Blaukehlchen

Bluethroat was found to be a quite abundant migrant in all of the excursion area. Probably the higher numbers in the mountains close to timberline where due to progression towards the peak of autumn migration in late August. Birds were seen in all kinds of scrub and bushland, especially in *Salix*-stands bordering streams. Just very few adult males were seen, providing the possibility of subspecific identification. Those showed white spots. Occurrence of the ssp. *pallidogularis* (Volga to upper Ob river), *saturator* respectively *altaica* (northern part of Altai and Northwest Mongolia), *kobdensis* respectively *kashgariensis* (west Mongolia, southern part of Altai) and (as a migrant) *svecica* seems to be possible.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* Blauschwanz

Birds were found at two different sites. Up to three female type individuals in a wet mountain forest of *Betula*, *Picea* and *Pinus* trees beside a small stream of water. ERNST (1992) reported singing birds in the same region, thus breeding seems likely. But for sure, migration already started in August as was shown by another female type bird in an open *Populus* stand within the semi-desert of the Chuja steppe.

Evermann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* Sprosserrotschwanz

A single male was recorded at Aktash in mountain forest-steppe zone beside a steep rock face. ERNST (1996) reported the species from the same region. Not far from Actur glacier a male was identified out of a small loose group of Redstarts in a fairly dense mountain *Pinus*-forest. Usually breeding sites of this species are situated a bit higher up at or above tree line, but birds do also occur in light *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*-forests and small clearings (ROGACHEVA 1992, ERNST 1992).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Hausrotschwanz

Black Redstart was completely missing in the West Siberian basin, even in villages and human settlements, where they find suitable habitat in Europe. Despite this reasonable numbers were seen at rocky faces at higher altitudes in the Altai. All of the birds there belonged to the subspecies *phoenicuroides*, which differs remarkably from European forms.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Gartenrotschwanz

Common Redstart was one of the most common passerines in the west Siberian lowland. Birds were found in all kinds of scrub and light (deciduous) woodlands. There was obviously some strong migration going on in the first half of August. On 12.8. at least 20 birds were seen at Ob artificial lake, but on 2.9. only two remained at the same place. Numbers were lower in Altai and the species was missing in the very dry areas of the highland plains in Altai.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* Braunkehlchen

The excursion area lies close to the eastern range limit of this mainly European species. In the west part of Central Siberia it is a rare and possibly irregular breeder and scarce or vagrant migrant (ROGACHEVA 1992). We observed a single female type bird in fallow land with scrubs beside a small stream in the southern taiga. The bird was probably on passage.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maura* Sibirisches Schwarzkehlchen

Siberian Stonechat was very common and widespread from the West Siberian basin up to high altitude in the Altai mountains. There were few places where no Stonechats were found and this species was certainly one of the most typical birds on the whole excursion. Birds were found in all kinds of fallow land, meadows and so on. Presumably many birds were already on autumn migration, but many families obviously at breeding sites were seen as well.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Steinschmätzer

Northern Wheatears were present in all places with steppe vegetation as well as in mountain tundra above tree line. They were especially common in the dry areas of the Altai, e.g. along the terraces of the Katun river. But specific identification of *Oenanthe* was often difficult while passing by car. Isabelline Wheatear *O. isabellina*, which could possibly be expected, was not seen on the whole excursion.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* Nonnensteinschmätzer

Pied Wheatear occurred in numbers at dry, stony places with sparse vegetation at higher altitude in the Altai (about 1500-1800 m a.s.l.). Specific identification of *Oenanthe spec.* was often difficult while passing by car. Therefore numbers given are certainly much too low. Pied Wheatear reaches its northernmost edge of its range in the Altai region (ERNST 1996).

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* Wüstensteinschmätzer

Desert Wheatear was seen at dry, stony sites of the mountain plains of the Altai as well as along the terraces of the Katun river. As in Pied Wheatear numbers are certainly low, due to problems with identifying Wheatears. The birds are supposed to belong to the ssp. *atrogularis*.

Siberian Rubythroat *Erithacus calliope* Rubinkehlchen

Siberian Rubythroat was recorded at different sites in late August/early September. They were found in dense scrub at higher altitude of the Altai as well as in the lowland at Ob artificial lake. At the latter place three birds were recorded on 2.9., whereas there were none found on close inspection of the same site on 12./13.8. Therefore we suppose that autumn migration just started in late August. Siberian Rubythroat is a very common breeder in the Siberian taiga, where they start autumn migration in early August peaking in the last decade of the month (ROGACHEVA 1992).

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus [ruficollis] atrogularis* Schwarzkehlrossel

Black-throated Thrush was not rare in mountain woodlands, especially those of *Pinus (cembra) sibirica*, between 1400 and 1800 m a.s.l. At the Sarlyk we saw them even well above upper wood limit at rocky slopes with single pine trees. Birds on passage were found roosting in small tree stocks of the semi-desert at Chagan-Usum. Red-throated Thrush *T.[r.] ruficollis* also breeds in the Altai (ERNST 1992, 1996, ERNST & HERING 2000). There were hybrids reported, too. Red-throated Thrush is reported to breed at higher altitude than Black-throated in the alpine tundra.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* Wacholderdrossel

Records of Fieldfare scattered onto the whole excursion area. But numbers in the West Siberian basin (southern taiga and forest-steppe) were much higher than at higher altitude in the Altai. A few birds were seen migrating south in mid August. Fieldfares were observed in various kinds of open woodland, forest edges and wood stocks.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* Singdrossel

Song Thrush was seen in all parts of the excursion area. But numbers seemed to be a bit lower than in central Europe. They were found in different kinds of woodlands.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* Rotdrossel

Records of Redwings were concentrated in the taiga and forest-steppe zone, while we saw them only once in the mountain woodlands of the Altai. Most records referred to small flocks. ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't report them from the Altai. Nevertheless we suggest that they breed in the region, as autumn migration usually starts later in the season.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* Misteldrossel

Recorded from all of the excursion area, but more regular in mountain woodland of the Altai.

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* Streifenschwirl

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler is one of the most numerous warblers in (Central) Siberia (ROGACHEVA 1992). It is a very characteristic species for all sorts of silting up lakes, bushy marshlands and floodplains. We found it to be very common at lakes and riversides, especially at sites with *Salix*, *Betula* and *Carex* and different kinds of herbaceous plants. Numbers in the Altai mountains were much lower and single birds possibly referred to migrants. Birds were actively singing in August and easy to hear, especially in the morning and evening. But obtaining good views was much more tricky. An exceptional high density of singing birds was found in the *Betula*-swamp near lake Swetloe. At Plotnikovo, we probably found a complete family in dense *Carex*-vegetation.

Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* Strichelschwirl

One bird, probably a migrant, was flushed in a mountain fence at Seminsky Pass (about 1700 m a.s.l.). Lanceolated Warbler is said to be fairly common in bogs in Siberia. But *Locustella*-warblers on autumn migration are usually silent and skulky, therefore it's not surprising that we failed in seeing more birds. ERNST (1996) found singing birds up to 1250 m a.s.l.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* Feldschwirl

A single bird was heard singing on 14.8. in the forest-steppe zone at Cherga in a fallow field. Grasshopper Warbler reaches its easternmost limit of range in the Yenisey area and Western Mongolia, but abundance becomes lower from west to east. Grasshopper Warbler is partly replaced by Lanceolated Warbler towards the east in Siberia.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Schilfrohrsänger

Sedge Warbler is distributed throughout Europe and the West Siberian basin reaching its eastern limit of range in the Yenisey valley (ROGACHEVA 1992). It inhabits marshlands and silting up lakes. We recorded two juveniles (possibly on migration) at Swetloe Lake. Higher numbers were present in the reedbeds at the steppe lake Yurti. Breeding doesn't seem unlikely there, but August is also peak migration period.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* Feldrohrsänger

A single bird on migration was found in bushy land aside Ob artificial lake, on a day with generally high numbers of migrating *Acrocephalus*-warblers. But much higher numbers were seen in the reedbeds of lake Yurti within a steppe plain. At this place it was certainly the most abundant Warbler and we strongly suppose breeding at this site. Paddyfield Warbler has a patchy breeding range throughout the dry (steppe) zones in the southern part of Eurasia.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Buschrohrsänger

Unstreaked *Acrocephalus*-warblers have been very common in August in all kinds of scrub, fallow land, herbaceous plants and bushland. Amazing densities were reached on 30.8. in a *Canabis*-field at Cherga. Specific identification of birds was found to be very tricky. Many birds remained unidentified. But often the portion of Blyth's Reed on the one hand and Reed/Marsh on the other could be approximated. Generally Blyth's Reed was reasonable common, often reaching about 50 % of the unstreaked *Acrocephalus*-Warblers seen at one site. Migration was very strong in August as is illustrated by at least 20 birds found at Ob Artificial lake on 12./13.8., but only 2 on 2.9. at the same place. This seems typical for this early migration group.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* Sumpfrohrsänger

Telling apart Marsh and Reed Warbler was almost impossible. The situation is complicated by the occurrence of the subspecies *fuscus* of Reed, which resembles Marsh even more than European birds. A single bird at Plotnikovo (southern taiga zone) on 9.8. showed all the features of Marsh Warbler, to be pretty sure of its identity. But certainly a much higher portion of unidentified Warblers (see Blyth's Reed Warbler) were Marsh, because the species is a fairly common breeding bird in Siberia.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Teichrohrsänger

The difficulties of identification are described under Marsh Warbler (see above). A single bird at Tom river on 11.8. showed all characters of Reed Warbler, enough to be pretty sure of its identity. In general Reed Warbler is rarer in Siberia than Marsh, but breeding is known at least in the Southwest in Kazakhstan.

Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* Dickschnabel-Rohrsänger

A single bird was found creeping around in a dense willow bush at Swetloe lake in the forest-steppe zone. It was rather on migration than on breeding ground. Thick-billed Warbler reaches its western limit of range in the area. It is said to be very common in east Asia.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* Buschspötter

Though being a very common breeder in arable land and of Western Siberia, only two birds were seen during our trip. The birds have been found foraging in dense fallow land vegetation. The birds leave the breeding areas from end of July onwards (SVENSSON 2000), so it's not surprising that most of the birds had left by mid of August.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* Sperbergrasmücke

Probably most Barred Warblers had just left their breeding areas by August. As the species inhabits open scrubland, the distribution reaches its northern border in the southern Taiga. The juvenile birds were found in dense scrubby vegetation near a riverside.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* Klappergrasmücke

Lesser Whitethroats were among the most numerous species seen on our trip. August is the main autumn migration period, so as a consequence good numbers were found roosting together with other Sylviidae in all kind of scrub and bushes. Surprisingly, Whitethroats were dominant during the first week and the proportion of Whitethroats to Lesser Whitethroats switched as soon as we reached Novosibirsk and the Altai region. The Western Siberian birds should belong to the subspecies *curruca/blythi*. But, field characters are not very striking and only in a few birds we succeeded in identifying on subspecific level. We also expected the occurrence of the form *minula* in the region, but we couldn't detect any obviously small and pale individuals fitting in the pattern of that (sub)species.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* Dorngrasmücke

At the beginning of August, Whitethroats were among the most common species found in all kind of scrub and fallow land. By mid August and towards the Altai region numbers dropped noticeably. Though, it's not clear if this happened as a consequence of regional differences in abundance of migrating Whitethroats, or simply due to the fact that we progressed in migration time. Noticeably, numbers at Novi Pasielok had been high in mid August, but very low in early September. That indicates that the decrease in numbers was mainly due to progression of autumn migration. Whitethroats tend to become larger and paler to the East. The birds in Western Siberia should belong to *S.c.volgensis*.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* Gartengrasmücke

Garden Warblers are quite elusive during autumn migration, that starts in August. Though, the low number of observations is surprising. Only at two places birds were seen in dense scrubs. Birds in Western Siberia should belong to the ssp. *woodwardi*, a paler and greyer clinal variation of European birds. We did not identify on subspecific level.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Grünlaubsänger

Seen almost daily mainly in light forests (*Pinus*, *Populus*, *Betula*), especially the forest edge and riverside *Salix*-scrubs, as well as forest steppe and dense scrub vegetation. Autumn migration peaks in August. Hence, numbers at one place sometimes changed drastically from one day to another, as happened at Ob artificial lake from 29 birds on 12.8. to 10 birds on 13.8. Towards end of August numbers dropped. Birds seem to keep on singing on migration intensively. Most of the birds on 12.8. were singing! Only in the upper mountain reaches (Seminskii-pass) we didn't find any Greenish Warbler.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* Wanderlaubsänger

Migration from the breeding grounds in the northernmost Taiga starts mid August. Probably the main migration through the area visited is in the first third of September. We succeeded in finding two birds. The first one was singing at a *Betula* forest-edge in the Southern Taiga. The second was feeding in *Salix* sp. on the Ob plateau near Barnaul.

Pallas' Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* Goldhähnchen-Laubsänger

Probably, Pallas' Leaf Warblers reach the Western Siberian basin only in small numbers. Being a very abundant breeder in Eastern Siberian tall dark-coniferous forests, birds migrate to the south and south-east to winter in Southern China. The two observed birds were part of a mixed feeding flock of Long-tailed Tits, Willow Tits, Chiffchaffs and Yellow-browed Warblers. They were collecting insects in a low and light *Betula*-forest right at the edge of the Wasjuganskoe bog complex. As migration in Central Siberia doesn't start until August 16 (ROGACHEVA 1992), the birds might have bred in the surroundings.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* Gelbbrauenlaubsänger

In all cases, Yellow-browed Warblers were found in forests and scrubland near water (river, lake, bog). Mostly seen in small numbers, often together with Tits or other *Phylloscopus* species, an exceptional 12 were seen at the Chuja riverside in all kind of bushes and light forests. Here, Hume's Warbler were extremely numerous as well. Hume's is certainly the much more numerous of the *Ph. inornatus/humei* complex in the mountain woodlands. But autumn migration had already begun in August, which explains the good numbers. At Cherga, two adults migrated in a large flock of Long-tailed and Willow Tits.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* Tienshan-Laubsänger

Only found in the Altai region, but then very numerous and the most abundant Warbler. Peak numbers were reached in the inner Altai at the Cherga riverside, where dozens of birds were feeding in all kind of riverside scrub and forests. Probably, the species breeds in the area, as well. At Chagan-Usum, some birds were singing.

Radde's Bush Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Bartlaubsänger

Main breeding areas are in open Taiga in South-east Siberia. The Western Altai is at the far West edge of the breeding distribution. A singing bird was seen at about 1900m a.s.l. near the Seminskii Pass in *Pinus cembra sibirica* and other scrub at the forest line. The second one was foraging in the dense understory of a spruce-swamp near Aktash. ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't give any records from the Altai, indicating that it is not common there.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Dunkellaubsänger

Like Hume's, Dusky Warblers were only seen in the Altai region. They were found singing in all altitudes up to the 1800m Seminskii Pass. All observations were near water: at the Seminskii Pass and Aktash in extended valley-spruce-swamps, at Chagan-Usum in dense *Salix* scrub near the river, and in Cherga in dense *Cannabis*-shrub right at the riverside. ERNST (1992) mentions Dusky Warbler to be abundant at 1900-2400 m a.s.l.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscop. sibilatrix* Waldlaubsänger

A quite surprising observation was a Wood Warbler on 1.9.2000 near Chumish. The breeding area of the species extends from Europe east to about the Caspian Sea. From there, birds migrate southwest to winter in Africa. ERNST (1992) reported the species to be scarce east of the Ural but gives quite a few records. Therefore regular, but scarce breeding is supposed eastward to the Tomsk region.

Eastern Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus* Bergzilpzalp

Three birds with features of that form were seen in the Altai. They closely resembled the most abundant Eastern Chiffchaff *tristis*, but were uniform brownish with brownish breast sides and flanks, completely lacking greenish, yellowish or greyish tones. Thus, they remarkably differed from any of the *tristis* we had seen, as well as from western Chiffchaff forms. The birds breeding in the Altai belong to the nominate race *sindianus*. One of the birds seen was migrating with a large flock of Long-tailed and Willow Tits near Cherga, another two in the spruce-swamps at our campsite near Aktash. All three birds were seen very well at low distance.

Taiga Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis* Taigazilpzalp

Not very surprising, *tristis* proved to be the most abundant *Phylloscopus* species on the trip. They were found in all situations with dense scrubby vegetation and in light forests, most numerous along the Ob and Tom rivers and throughout the Altai. As density was quite high sometimes, we expect that migration just started by August.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita / abietinus* Zilpzalp

On 13.8., 4 birds at the shore of Ob Artificial Lake showed plumage pattern and calls of the western Chiffchaff. We consider them to be of races *collybita* or *abietinus*, though *abietinus* being much more likely due to distribution. So far we don't know if these populations regularly migrate through Western Siberia.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Fitis

Willow Warblers have only been seen in small numbers in the Western Siberian lowlands. They foraged in *Salix* and other scrub, near rivers and lakes. There're no really distinct subspecies, but they tend to become paler towards the East. The Western Siberian birds are considered as *acredula*.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* Wintergoldhähnchen

Only in the Salair aspen-fir-forests a little flock has been observed. A single bird was near Barnaul in *Betula* forest.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Grauschnäpper

Western Siberian birds are a little paler than European ones and are sometimes considered as a different subspecies *neumanni*. Spotted Flycatchers leave their breeding areas by August, so most of the birds seen might just have started migration. E.g., of 10 birds at Lake Swetloe on 14.8., only one bird remained until 15.8. at the same spot. On the other hand, all places (open scrubland) would also provide suitable breeding habitats.

Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* Braunschnäpper

The breeding range is said to start east of the Jenissej in southern Taiga forests. Birds migrate mainly in August (ROGACHEVA 1992) southeast to winter in South-East Asia. The observation of three to four birds at Novi Pasielok indicates regular migration through the eastern parts of the Western Siberian basin. The observations at Chagan Usum should be in the normal range of migration, too, even if ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't mention any records.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* Taigaschnäpper

Migration concentrated in the Central Altai near Chagan Usum in riverside forests and scrubs. Besides, only few birds were seen at several locations. The (sub)species *albicilla* is quite distinct from the European *F.parva*. On our trip we only saw one adult male at Chagan Usum.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* Trauerschnäpper

Breeds only in the Western Siberian parts and winters in Africa. Only few migrating birds were seen in light forests. Breeding population in Siberia belongs to *muscipeta*.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* Schwanzmeise

Though being mainly resident in Europe, at least parts of the Siberian nominate population seem to migrate south. The flock at Wasjuganskoe might have consisted of resident families, whereas the two large flocks at Aktash and near Cherga actively migrated. They built mixed flocks with Willow Tits, Nuthatches and *Phylloscopus*-Warblers.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris* Sumpfmeise

Birds of the Eastern palearctic ssp. *brevirostris* were seen migrating with other Tits and Warblers near Cherga. Despite of ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't mention any records from the Altai, we saw them in reasonable numbers.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus* Weidenmeise

They pale Siberian subspecies *uralensis* is a very common resident in the Western Siberian basin as well as in the Altai region. Peak numbers were counted in the subalpine zone with *Pinus cembra sibirica* at the Seminskii Pass, in spruce-swamps near Aktash and in *Salix* scrub along the Chuja river at Chaga Usum (all in the Altai mountains). Active migration together with other Tits has been observed at Cherga, Aktash and Chagan Usum.

Siberian Tit *Parus cinctus* Lapplandmeise

Breeding range of the nominate *cinctus* extends along the northern Taiga, especially in Pine forests. Observations of several birds in *Pinus (cembra) sibirica* forests near the forest line at the Seminskii Pass indicate that breeding range extends south in Central Siberia. The birds are known to be strongly resident. ERNST (1992) points out, that Siberian Tit is strongly tied to *Pinus (cembra) sibirica* in the Altai.

Coal Tit *Parus ater* Tannenmeise

Coal Tits were found along the whole range of the excursion in all kind of forests and scrubs, but mainly in different coniferous forests (pine, spruce, fir). At Novi Pasielok and at the Seminskii Pass, active migration has been observed. At the latter place, numbers peaked with a hundred individuals migrating westwards with other Tits and Hume's Warblers.

Azure Tit *Parus cyanus* Lasurmeise

Following one migrating bird at the Seminskii Pass, up to five (2 ad., 3 juv.) were seen at the Chuja riverside at Chagan Usum. Another 12 birds were present at Chumish. Following our records Azure Tit seems to be widespread, but not abundant in Western Siberia. Remarkably, we failed to find any in the West Siberian basin, but small flocks in a small birch-valleys within the semi-desert at Chagan Usum.

Great Tit *Parus major* Kohlmeise

Common species during the whole trip, but with peaking numbers in the region around Novosibirsk. At some places birds migrated together with other Tits. The birds are obviously a little paler than the Central European ones, but probably still belong to the nominate race.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Kleiber

The small, withish ssp. *asiatica* is widespread and common in all kind of woodland, especially coniferous forests. Quite obviously numbers were higher in the Altai mountains than in the lowland forests. At Barnaul, 2 birds actively migrated southwest over the Ob river.

Common Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* Waldbaumläufer

Treecreepers occurred only in pure coniferous or mixed forests, but not in pure *Betula* or *Populus* woodland. Numbers were low over the whole range of the excursion, but an exceptional ten were counted in the Salair fir-forests. Birds belong to the whitish *familiaris*.

White crowned Penduline Tit *Remiz coronatus* ,Weißkronen-Beutelmeise'

Up to 15 birds in one flock were observed foraging in *Salix* scrubs at the Chuja riverside at Chagan Usum. This form was quite recently split from the *R. pendulinus*. The birds at Chagan Usum gave the same calls, used the same habitat and showed the same behaviour as their European relatives. ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't mention any records from the Altai.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* Pirl

Golden Orioles were seen in the Western Siberian basin, only. The large numbers at Lake Swetloe in a small *Betula*-swamp were really exceptional, and we consider them to be a migrating flock (August is the main migration period). Most of the birds were juvenile and females, only one adult male was seen in the center of Tomsk. Orioles breed in deciduous forests of the southern taiga, the forest taiga and floodplains.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* Neuntöter

Mainly found in fallow land with bushes and dense herbaceous vegetation. Most birds were juvenile, sometimes still being fed by their parents.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Eichelhäher

Western Siberian birds belong to the *brandtii* subspecies group, which strikingly differs from the European forms. We only saw few birds, with peak numbers in the fir-forests of the Salair mountains.

Siberian Jay *Perisoreus infaustus* Unglückshäher

We didn't succeed in finding Siberian Jays in the Southern Taiga where they are supposed to breed, but three birds were seen in the fir-forests of the Salair mountains.

Magpie *Pica pica* Elster

Very patchily distributed over the range of our excursion, but most times in small flocks.

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Tannenhäher

Birds of the race *macrorhynchos* were seen in all situations with coniferous forests, no matter which tree species dominating. They occurred regularly in the Western Siberian basin as well as in the Altai mountains. The 15 birds seen in the middle of the inner-mountainous semi-desert at Chagan Usum in herbaceous riverside vegetation strongly indicate migration behaviour. But there might also be a population breeding in herbaceous forests.

Cough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Alpenkrähe

Birds belong to the eastern subspecies *docilis*. We only saw Coughs in the semi-desert of the Central Altai in the Mountains around Chagan Usum. They were not shy at all and behaved the way we're used to in the case of Alpine Cough.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* Dohle

Only seen at the far ends of our excursion: in the village of Plotnikovo at the northernmost (southern Taiga), and in the Altai semi-deserts near the Chuja river. The birds should be of the race *soemmerringii*.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Saatkrähe

Rooks occurred quite regularly in all parts of the Western Siberian basin just to the western reaches of the Altai at Cherga. Mainly, they were seen near villages and towns, but a large roosting community of mainly juvenile birds at Lake Swetloje was quite a distance from the next settlement. No active migration has been observed.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* Rabenkrähe

Carrion Crows have a disjunct breeding distribution due to the last glaciation. The breeding range of the eastern subspecies *orientalis* starts in the Russian Altai and extends east to the Pacific. Our observations fit perfectly in this picture, as Carrion Crows were only seen beyond the Seminskii Pass between 1200 and 1900 m a.s.l..

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* Nebelkrähe

A very common bird in the whole Western Siberian basin, Hooded Crow seems to be absent from the Altai region. No bird was seen beyond the Semiskii Pass, where Hooded Crow is been replaced by the eastern Carrion Crows. The birds belong to the Eastern race *sharpii*. ERNST (1992) gives an upper limit of it's occurrence in the Altai at about 300 m a.s.l.

Hooded x Carrion Crow *Corvus corone x cornix* Raben- x Nebelkrähe

Birds at medium altitude at Cherga (400 m a.s.l.) obviously showed features of hybrids between Hooded and Carrion Crow, indicating a zone of interbreeding between the two forms. Compared to Europe, the range of the two forms seems to be stronger separated by ecological needs. 4 birds at Cherga looked like hybrids between these two species. As the Western edge of the Russian Altai is a contact zone of both forms, the occurrence of hybrids is not surprising.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* Kolkrabe

A widespread species, that breeds in the coniferous forests of the Taiga as well as in the harsh rocky semi-deserts of the Central Altai. No bird resembled Brown-necked Raven in any respect.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Star

Large roosting communities were only observed at Lake Yurti. At other places Starlings were surprisingly rare, and no birds were seen in the Altai region! The subspecies *poltaratskyi* breeds in Siberia.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Haussperling

Seen only in three places outside of bigger towns. Obviously the species is not necessarily restricted to human settlements.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Feldsperling

Very common and a bit more numerous in open land than House Sparrow.

Streaked Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* Steinsperling

5-20 birds were seen above the forest line at about 2100 m a.s.l. in rocky alpine tundra at Mt. Sarlyk near the Seminskii Pass. The birds could belong to the Middle Asian subspecies *kirhizica*. ERNST & HERING (2000) mention breeding in the Altai from 1400-2400 m a.s.l.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Buchfink

The steppe areas might be out of breeding range of the species, and the flocks seen there might have been migrating birds. This should at least apply to the big assemblage of Chaffinches at the edge of the *Populus*-swamp at Lake Swetloe, including some actively migrating. Strangely no birds were seen in the Southern Taiga around Plotnikovo. Following no birds at Novi Pasielok by mid August, 10 gathered at the beach at the beginning of September. The Altai region seems to be fully covered by Chaffinch.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* Bergfink

Surprisingly only seen on two occasions. Probably, the birds leave their breeding grounds in the Taiga forests later in autumn.

Eurasian Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* Stieglitz

The strange looking more or less grey-headed subspecies *paropanisi* and *caniceps* are widely distributed and common in the excursion area. They feed on all kind of seeds of perennial herbs.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* Hänfling

Linnets were mostly seen in the Central Altai and the Salair mountains. Only at two spots in the Western Siberian basin observations happened.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* Berghänfling

Only seen at Chagan Usum in the rocky areas right at the edge of the riverside vegetation. The birds were extremely uniform pale brownish, lacking almost all typical patterns we were used to from European birds and belong to the Asian *korejevi*. Assuming that they were probably not migrating birds, the habitat differs amazingly from the breeding grounds in northern Europe. ERNST (1996) reported Twite as breeding in dry, stony slopes of central and south-eastern Altai.

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* Birkenzeisig

The birds inhabiting the northernmost Taiga start migration later in year, so only one bird was seen at Plotnikovo.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus* Erlenzeisig

Siskin is not very common in the region, and there's a gap between the western and eastern siberian population. But the species seems to extend its distribution in the region during the 20th century (ROGACHEVA 1992). We only found a bird in the botanical garden of Novosibirsk.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Fichtenkreuzschnabel

Only two birds were seen in a spruce forest near Aktash. Two further observations of unidentified Crossbills (one at the Seminsky Pass and one in the West Siberian basin) probably belonged to this species, too.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Karmingimpel

Common bird in the whole excursion area. Migration just starts by August, so the observation of two actively migrating birds on the Ob plateau is not surprising. At some places family bounds still held together. Peak numbers reached at least 25 birds at Cherga on 30.8.

Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator* Hakengimpel

We saw small flocks (families?) at three places around our campsite at Seminskii Pass. This strongly indicates breeding in the region. Surprisingly ERNST (1992, 1996) and ERNST & HERING (2000) didn't record Pine Grosbeak in the Altai.

Northern Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Gimpel

A surprisingly low number of observations, with two birds in the Western Siberian basin and four birds in the Altai.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Kernbeißer

Observations are patchily distributed over the excursion area. The species should be a common breeder in the whole area.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* Goldammer

Western Siberia is the main overlapping zone of Yellowhammer and Pine Bunting (ERNST 1992). . Unfortunately we didn't happen to see any hybrid. A few Yellowhammers were seen outside the Central Altai region, but were more numerous at lower altitudes in the Altai. In contrast to European birds they occurred mainly in coniferous forests. The species was by far less numerous than Pine Bunting!

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephala* Fichtenammer

A quite common bird along the whole range of sites visited, in all kind of open scrubby land. No Pine Buntings were seen at Cherga, the Seminskii Pass and at Chagan Usum. In the Altai region both, Yellowhammer and Pine Bunting, occurred, but numbers of Pine Bunting were lower than in the Western Siberian basin. Migration might start by the end of August, as 12 birds were seen at Novi Pasielok on 2.9. where only one has been by Mid August.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides* Wiesenammer

On a steep rocky slope right at the Katun river a little flock including males, females and juveniles was seen twice, on 24.8. and 29.8. So birds seemed to be residential families. ERNST & HERING (2000) reported it to be a scarce breeder in mountain valley of the Altai.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* Ortolan

A whole bunge of roosting birds was seen at the edge of the riverside vegetation in rocky semi-desert areas at Chagan Usum. Only one other birds at Aktash. ERNST (1992) reported Ortolan Bunting as a common breeder in half open landscape up to 2000 m a.s.l.

A juvenile bird seen at Barnaul roosting in herbaceous scrubs was first identified as **Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani* due to very fine and thin streaking of the breast-sides and flanks and a quite strong call, harsher than that of Ortolan. Unfortunately we couldn't see the very important pattern of tertials, mantle and rump, so identification is not reliable. Grey-necked Buntings leave their montaneous breeding grounds by Mid August, so a straggler would not be completely out of range at Barnaul.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* Zwergammer

Main migration of Little Bunting starts in September. The three birds were found in scrub and bushes at river and lake sides in early September, fitting perfectly in the beginning of autumn migration. The birds were very shy and skulky, and thus hard to see properly. There were some other small *Emberiza*-Buntings around, too. Probably at least some of them belonged to this species, as well.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* Rohrammer

At three occasions Reed Buntings were found foraging in dense perennial herbaceous vegetation. The subspecific identity of the birds is not clear, but field characters didn't differ much from European birds.

Pallas' Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii* Pallasammer

Nominate race *pallasii* breeds in Middle Asian Mountains. Only at Chagan Usum three individuals were found. Surprisingly they sat in sparse vegetation in the semi-desert of the Chuja steppe, just some hundred meters away from the riverside. Pallas' Reed Bunting is said to be very abundant in the alpin tundra of the Altai (ERNST & HERING 2000).

Bunting sp. *Emberiza spec.* Ammer spec.

At a few occasions unidentified "tick"-Buntings were seen overflying. One resembled Rustic Bunting, whereas a few birds at Lake Yurti and Chumish were female/juv. Brown-headed or Yellow-breasted Buntings.

Godlewskis Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii* Godlewski-Ammer

One male was found on rocky slopes with scrub and bushes near Aktash. ERNST (1992) found it breeding at bushy and rocky slops in the northern and eastern Altai up to 1300 m a.s.l.

IV. References

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Appendix: Table of Records

English name	Scientific name	7-8-2000	8-8-2000	9-8-2000	10-8-2000	11-8-2000	12-8-2000	13-8-2000	14-8-2000	15-8-2000	16-8-2000	17-8-2000	18-8-2000	19-8-2000	20-8-2000	21-8-2000	22/23-8-00	24-8-2000	25-8-2000	26/27-8-00	28-8-2000	29-8-2000	30-8-2000	31-8-2000	1-9-2000	2-9-2000	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>									30	20	30															
Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>										1										3						
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>																										
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>							2		8	15	8	8								20						
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>																									6	
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>																								1		
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>																					3					
European Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>																					24					
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		8	8		1						2	3														
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>					2	3	1	3		2	15	10	8								10					
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			1			2					7	7														
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>			1								6	3													1	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>											6	5														
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>			1																							
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>																					8					
Common Goldeneye	<i>Eucephala clangula</i>												1									5					
Smew	<i>Mergus albellus</i>																					1					
Goosander	<i>Mergus mergamser</i>																					1					
Honey Buzzard	<i>Fernis apivorus</i>		3		1	1			2	4																8	
Oriental Honey Buz.	<i>Fernis ptilorhynchus</i>											2														1	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		5	10	32	5	10	10	4	160	30	20	20				5	15	50	5	8		5	4	38	5	
Pallas's Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucorhynchus</i>																								1		
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>																	1	1								
Western Marsh Har.	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>										3	3	2														
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>			1	1							1	1	1	3			5									
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>										7	2	1	1	2												
Montague's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>										1		1														
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>			1			1								1												1
Northern Sparrowh.	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		1	2	1	1				3	4					2	3				5				1	1	
Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>				1				1	15	15	3	1			2	20	10							2	118	
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>																					3					
Greater Spotted	<i>Eagle Aquila clanga</i>		1																								
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>											1									1	6					
Eagle spec.	<i>Aquila spec.</i>										1						2				2						
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>										2				3	1	2	1									
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>																	1		1							
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>									1	1										2			2			
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>																									1	
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>																		15	1							
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>				1	1				10	10	8	2		2	3	9				1	2		1		1	
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>																										
Amur/Red-footed F.	<i>F. amur. /vespertinus</i>												1														
Northern Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		2	2	2	2		3	2	2	1				1	1	1	3									1
Saker	<i>Falco cherrug</i>																				2			3	2		
Peregrine Falcone	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>									1																	
Hazel Grouse	<i>Bonasa bonasia</i>										3										1						
Willow Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>																				7						
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>							6	6				4														
Spotted Crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>				1																						
Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>											1															
Baillon's Crane	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>											5															
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>								2	3	5	2															
Demoiselle Crane	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>																				3	3					
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					2					2	2	1														
Pacific Golden Pl.	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>												1														
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>				1				3				2														
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>									1																	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>									1	5	2															
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>										5	2									2			3			
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>										1																
Stint spec.	<i>Calidris spec.</i>			6																							
Broad-billed Sandp.	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>										1																
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>											3	2														
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				1					1																	
Pintail Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>												1														
Pintail/Swinhoe's Sn.	<i>G. stenura /megala</i>																										
Solitary Snipe	<i>Gallinago solitaria</i>					2																					
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>												3														
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		6			1	1			4	1	1															
Curlew	<i>Numenius aquaticus</i>		1	1	2					1	3	3															
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>		1							1					</												

English name	Scientific name	7-8-2000	8-8-2000	9-8-2000	10-8-2000	11-8-2000	12-8-2000	13-8-2000	14-8-2000	15-8-2000	16-8-2000	17-8-2000	18-8-2000	19-8-2000	20-8-2000	21-8-2000	22/23-8-00	24-8-2000	25-8-2000	26/27-8-00	28-8-2000	29-8-2000	30-8-2000	31-8-2000	1-9-2000	2-9-2000		
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>								4										5									
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		20	5	2	5	40	50	15	15			4	50		20	10	40		50	10		20	5		12	5	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		5																									
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>															2	5	130	10	10	10		2					
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	26	15	2	2	6	300	5	200	100	150	50			10	5	1	4		5		2	31		1	3		
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>				1	3	1	1	1	8	18	15				1					10			2			4	
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	30	25	3	2	2	1	1	3	2						5	5	2	4	5		4					2	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	100	50	15	10	30	30	20	170	30	50	5				15	35	50	10	50		10	25	5			30	
Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>																					1						
Black-throated Acc.	<i>Prunella atrogularis</i>																						2					
Accentor spec.	<i>Prunella spec.</i>																		7		1							
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		2																									
Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>						1																					
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>			1		3	2		2	1	3	1									3		5		12	8	8	
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>																						3	1		1		
Evermann's Redstart	<i>Phoenic. erythronotus</i>																						1					
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenic. cohenurus</i>																						15	2	20			
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenic. phoenicurus</i>	1		5	10	10	26	15			1		1			10	7					1					2	
Whinchat	<i>Savicola rubetra</i>			1																								
Siberian Stonechat	<i>Savicola maura</i>		4	10	1	1	2		4	2			8	2														
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>									1																		
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>																											
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>																											
Siberian Rubythroat	<i>Erithacus caliope</i>																											
Black-throated Thr.	<i>Turdus [r.] atrogularis</i>																											
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		15		2	10	25	10	50	5			8		12	2	4										2	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			2	2	8				1	5																	
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>					10	5	5	5	1			2															
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			2																							2	
Pallas's Grassh. W.	<i>Locustella certhiola</i>				5			1	15	10						1												
Lanceolated Warbler	<i>Locustella lanceolata</i>																											
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>								1																			
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acorc. schoenchaenus</i>									2		7	5															
Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acorcephalus agricola</i>																											
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acorceph. dumetorum</i>				3		5	2	2				1	1		10	5											
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acorcephalus palustris</i>			1																								
Reed Warbler	<i>Acorceph. scirpaceus</i>				1	1																						
Reed Warbler spec.	<i>Acorcephalus spec.</i>		1		12		20	25	10	7	5	5			21	6									120	15	5	
Spotted Nuthacker	<i>Mucifaga caryocatact.</i>		9	3	10	9				1	2																1	
Cough	<i>Pyrhocorax pyrhoc.</i>																											
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>			20	10																							
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			50	20	30	1		130	30	30	50	50															
Carion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>																											
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>		40	40	30	40	20	40	40	30	50	50	30														20	
Hooded x Carion Cr.	<i>C. corone x cornix</i>																										4	
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		3	5			2	3	2	2	3	10	3			5	20	10						3	2	2	3	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>					6				1000	1000	300	4															
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>				50				30																		20	
Eurasian Tree Sparr.	<i>Passer montanus</i>				30		50	10	20	50	50	30				20	15									10	20	
Streaked Rock Sparr.	<i>Petronia petronia</i>																											
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>						2		70	30			10			10	40	10	10	10			20	40		25	20	
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>			1					3																			
Eurasian Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		30			3			5	7	2		2				10				3	40		5		4	5	
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>						2										2											
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>																											
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>			1																								
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>																											
Crossbill spec.	<i>Loxia spec.</i>				1																							
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>		3	5	2		1	4								1											2	
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>																											
Northern Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			1		1																						
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes cocco.</i>																											
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				1											2	4										2	
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephala</i>			4		2	1	1	20	20	6	8	12			5	10										12	
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza citorides</i>																											
Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>																											
Ortolan Bunting spec.	<i>E. hortulana buchani</i>																											
Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>																											
Reed Bunting	<i>Emb. schoeniclus</i>			1								3	1															