



Beyond the Taucum Sands
Martin Eccles & Celia Bryce

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Section 1: Prelude

Kazakhstan May 2006

In the second half of May 2006 four friends travelled to Kazakhstan for a two week holiday. In various combinations we were two birders, two walkers, a photographer, a writer and an artist.

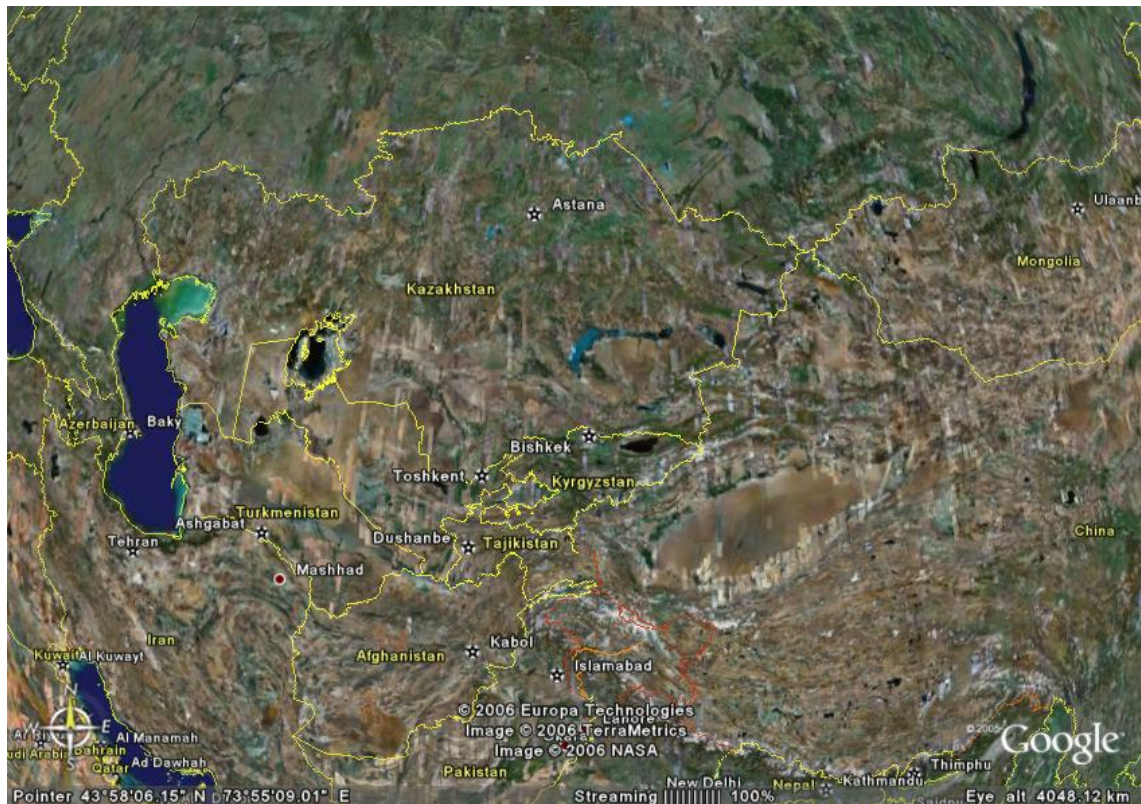
This book contains some of our visual and verbal memories. Most of the poems are Haiku; Japanese poems each comprising three lines and 17 (5/7/5) syllables. The paintings are all watercolours; all were drawn in the field and painted then or soon after.

Section 2: Maps

Google Earth is a fabulous piece of software; it has provided the images of where we went. In order to better place where we were, there are three maps:

- a large scale map showing much of the Palaeartic region with Europe abutting Asia
- a medium scale map showing Kazakhstan within central Asia
- a smaller scale map showing where we went in Kazakhstan.







Section 3: Itinerary

Saturday 13th

A day of travelling starting at 04.30. We travelled from Newcastle to Heathrow and then on to Almaty via Ekaterinberg.

Sunday 14th

Before breakfast we covered the park across the road from the hotel (Blyth's Reed Warbler, Hume's Warbler). After breakfast we set off to the Tien Shan Observatory (2700m) via Great Almaty Gorge (Brown Dipper, Blue Whistling Thrush). Having unloaded we explored around the Observatory in the evening (Black-throated Accentor, White-tailed Rubythroat).

Monday 15th

In the morning we drove up to the Kosmostation (3300m)(Brown Accentor, Hodgson's Mountain Finch, Guldenstadt's Redstart). In the afternoon we drove down to Great Almaty Lake (Ibisbill, Red-fronted Serin)

and in the evening birded around the observatory (Eversmann's Redstart).

Tuesday 16th

In the morning we drove back up to the Kosmostation again (Himalayan Accentor, Caucasian Snowcock) and then went down to Great Almaty Lake for a second look at the Ibisbills. In the afternoon we birded round Observatory before setting off to Almaty at about 15.30.

Wednesday 17th

From Almaty to Konshengel. We stopped first at Sorbulak Lake (Dalmatian Pelican, Rose-coloured Starling, Caspian Gull) where it was incredibly windy in the face of an advancing storm. We drove through the storm and, as a consequence, when we arrived at Aldarly there were, in the "magic tree" and the surrounding bushes, plenty of migrants (Long-tailed Shrike, Eastern Nightingale, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Barred Warbler). We stopped for petrol at Konshengel Village (Oriental Turtle Dove, Desert Finch) before arriving at Konshengel

Camp (McQueen's Bustard).

Thursday 18th

Before breakfast we watched the birds coming to the artesian well (Demoiselle Crane, Pintailed Sandgrouse, Bimaculated Lark). Mid-morning we drove to Tamgaly (Pied Wheatear, Eastern Rock Nuthatch, White-winged Lark).

Friday 19th

In the morning we went to look (unsuccessfully) for Caspian Plover (Greater Sand Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, McQueen's Bustard). Colin and Celia went back to Aldarly whilst Julie and I stayed around the camp. In the late afternoon Julie and I walked to Konshengel Village and met up with Colin (Dark-throated Thrush).

Saturday 20th

We watched the artesian well before and after breakfast and then stopped briefly at Konshengel wetland (Citrine Wagtail) then spent three hours driving across the Taucum Sands (Steppe Shrike), stopping at

Zheltorangy (Saxaul Sparrow) before arriving at Araltobe.

Sunday 21st

Birded around Araltobe before returning to Zheltorangy and the surrounding Turanga woodlands (Yellow-eyed Stock Dove, White-winged Woodpecker, Azure Tit). In the afternoon we walked along the Ili River.

Monday 22nd

Day spent driving from Araltobe to Almaty (Shikra) via Bakanas Fishponds, Tamgaly Tas (Red-rumped Swallow) and Kapshaghai Reservoir.

Tuesday 23rd

Despite trying for an early start as we left Almaty we were delayed by traffic. We drove to Nurlu (Syke's Warbler, Rufous Bush Robin) and then through the Kokpek Pass (White-capped Bunting) and on to Bartogai Camp (Grey-necked Bunting).

Wednesday 24th

Around the camp before breakfast (Mongolian Finch) then drove to the Charyn Canyon lookout (Egyptian Vulture) then on to the Ash Tree Grove (Azure Tit). Back via the Red Canyon (Nightjar).

Thursday 25th

Drove from Bartogai to Almaty stopping in the Kokpek Pass (White-capped Bunting, White-throated Robin) and then on to Almaty (White-crowned Penduline Tit).

Friday 26th

All day travelling Almaty to Newcastle via Ekaterinberg and Heathrow.

Section 4: Words and Paintings

Up at 04.30 UK time we arrived at Kazakhstan's second city in the early hours of the morning. Dazed and tired we fell into Alex's 4x4 people carrier.

Almaty on arrival

Now at 4 a.m.
The city's avenues sway;
trees and tiredness.

Barely any distance south of Almaty we started to climb towards the Observatory. As the altitude increased the quality of the road decreased. The precise altitude depended on who you believe (Google Earth or my GPS) - whichever, it was high and somewhere around 2700m.

Arriving at Tien Shan

Up here air is thin,
fracturing our breath; each step
a thousand wing beats.

Black-throated Accentor was about the first bird that we saw. There were a couple of pairs dodging amongst the juniper scrub on the hill behind the Observatory



White-tailed Rubythroat (also known as Himalayan Rubythroat) was one of the birds I most wanted to see on the trip. After a little while working out how to best find them we eventually got fantastic views as they sang from the tops of the Juniper bushes.







The Observatory on a clear night

Too tired to star gaze.
We save it for tomorrow -
wish upon a cloud.

Himalayan Snowcock was proving to be something of a problem. I couldn't hear them and hearing them call from the scree slopes above the valley is the usual way of locating them. Fortunately I got lucky as we stopped to look at a Himalayan Accentor; two birds were outlined on a distant ridge as they called, possibly triggered by the Lamergier that sailed overhead.





Outside our balcony

In Winter snow-pockets -
surviving spring sun - we chill
our Sauvignon Blanc.

Ibisbill - the size of an Oystercatcher and the colouring of an Egyptian Plover. How could a bird that looks like that be difficult to see? Perhaps because it's the same colour as the stony shoals and the fast flowing rivers on which it lives.







Walking back from the lake we came across the only Red-fronted Serin that we saw - high up in a pine and strongly back lit.



Birdwatchers Leaving

Last hours. Cuckoos call
heralding our departure;
claiming back the air.

Though we were to see them in other places, the Rosy Starling colony at Lake Sorbulak was impressive. Up to 6000 birds nesting in an array of broken concrete blocks.



Our stay at Konshengel was in a tented camp outside a small village. We were surrounded by dry steppe.

Konshengel Camp

Konshengel Camp blooms
tropical colours from earth
ringing with brown thirst.

Bimaculated Lark was the commonest of the large larks that visited the artesian well. As they flew the lack of a white trailing edge to their wings was obvious.



Dark-throated Thrush was not high on our list of possibilities—we were slightly too late in the season. However, Colin found this one bird on the edge of the gardens at Konshengel Village.



On a blustery day

Tents strain in the wind
and shed like petals the clothes
we hang up to dry.

The desert

Scorpions and snakes,
sand dunes and miles of strangely
comforting nowhere.

As we left Konshengel we stopped of at the “wetland” - a wet area around the flood from an irrigation pipe. No sign of the Red-necked Phalarope from the day before but there was a male and a female Citrine Wagtail.



Skywatching

Desert frosts at night?

Yes: Sky, stars, Jupiter's moons
Saturn's tilting rings.

An unexpected guest joined us at the dinner table.
It looked like a Convolvulus Hawk Moth but I have
no idea if they occur in Kazakhstan.



Taking a walk

Dunes, ridges, dune, ridge
lost in the desert, landmarks
are like grains of sand.

Horses

Plodding, these old horses know who we aren't
so reign us in, slow our pace to a trot.
With the Kazakhs they hurtle down the track
Like fillies at a race, like bullets shot.
Some day soon on some elaborate dish
a horse will lie carved; at some restaurant
her milk will sit fermented in a tall glass.
Plodding still, these old horses know who we aren't.

I hadn't really imagined Pied Wheatear as a village bird but here it was in the middle of Araltobe. As I painted I attracted a small (literally) audience. The children watched as I painted, talking to each other over my head. Occasional fights between the boys enlivened the proceedings.



Later

Bath time's in the river.
A surprise is this, yet
stripped we lay down our towels
and wade; we hope and brave
the current, dodge cow pats
dodge turds which hang on strings
of weed; hopeful as soap on a rope.

Ludmilla's Tuvalet

Better
than *squatty*, this
name; better than *midden*.
But still we've been sitting on months
of shit.

In between the various camps we transited through
Almaty we stayed four separate nights in total.

Almaty

1

Almaty unpicked
from Moscow's warp and weft sits
startling as tinsel

2

Its streets: bursting banks;
rivers of cars; vast snow-melts
gushing to its heart.

3

Everywhere, advertises
signs of a freedom to want
impossible things

4

Shops here now blossom
with glad rags, Gucci bags and
seeds of discontent.

5

Tien Shan mountains lean,
breathing in the city's heat
swallowing it whole

6

There is China here
Mongolia too; sculpted
into faces on the street.

The park opposite the hotel was a convenient place for early morning birding - but there was a number of other faces to the park.

In the park

1

Lovers, children, dogs
gather round monuments; bright
as autumn leaf fall

2

Those with war-bitten
frost bitten missing feet, sit
trampling with their eyes.

3

Sculptural triptych
blazing past wars and glories;
monument to death.

4

A thousand trees here
shielding us from a city
searching for its roots

Out of Almaty and off to the east to the high plateau
and the Charyn Canyon.

Canyons

1

Here, earth's sturdy jaws;
inflamed, full of cavities
and fresh ancient breath

2

We are reduced now
to insignificance; ants
boast more presence here.

3

Above, the wheeling
birds observe our movements; take
note of our patterns.

The Charyn Canyon is like a slightly smaller version of the Grand Canyon in the USA. The mix of colours and shapes is spectacular.



Nurly - no Pallas's Sandgrouse but good views of Syke's Warbler. Unfortunately our fieldcraft (tucking into the bushes to be unobtrusive) resulted in us getting covered with ticks.



Steppeland

1

From the Caspian Sea
to China, a million miles
it seems, of nothing.

2

The wind's knife scores out
signs of life and Nomad tracks;
ignoring pipelines

3

Poppies like embers
burn into the horizon.
and leave it wilting.

4

Impossibly, life
(sheep, goats, horses and shepherds)
erupts from nowhere

Isabelline Wheatear was one of the commoner roadside birds - we often saw them on roadside telegraph wires.



The Ash Forest was the best place we found for Azure Tit. They responded remarkably well to pishing.





Bartogai Camp after the tornado

Tiny storm tents squat
like mountain flowers planted;
yellow drops of hope.

Grey-headed Buntings sang from the top of the hills
behind the camp.



There were two Ruddy Shelduck on the lakeshore during most of our stay at Bartogai camp.



Photographing the sun

Last days, last sunset.
Resting upon the lake's skin;
eighteen carat gold.

Our last trip back into Almaty. We stopped for lunch at a small village on the way.

The Market

A soup of colours
of noise and din; we stop here
drinking it all in.

Section 5: Homestay

Alexander stops the car at a junction and looks perplexed, worried even. He picks up his instructions and studies them, peers about, then looks at them again. We wonder, is this the place? He tells us it is but sounds unsure, takes a left hand turn and moves on. A cloud of Rosy Starlings erupts from the side of the road. It has been an interminable day of travelling.

The village is deserted apart from a couple of Kazakh children who sit stirring dust with sticks. They stop and look, alert as deer, watching this strange car with its curtained windows, its hump of luggage on the back, and scramble up from the dust to run behind, claiming it. There isn't another toy in sight.

It is still early May, but at five in the evening the heat is stifling. We have travelled in such heat for around six hours with the air conditioning turned off to conserve petrol: yesterday high winds disrupted the power supply and consequently, power to the only two petrol stations in the area. Alexander's old soviet

atlas, usually stuffed into the seat pocket behind him has been by his side all day and every now and then he has consulted pages eighty-six and eighty-seven, dedicated to Kazakhstan which is as big as western Europe with a fraction of its population and with the largest dry steppe in the world. Only its major regions, roadways and railways are marked on this necessarily sparse map, but in glorious bold black print and significant as pyramids or hanging gardens, significant as water holes or gods, are the petrol station symbols. In a land as big and empty as this, such a thing as petrol cannot be left to hope or chance.

We pull up at some blue metal gates which are closed. Alexander rubs his face wearily and says he'll try to find...and off he goes without finishing the sentence. There's no-one around; even the dusty children have given up, perhaps finding something more certain to play with.

Like molasses we emerge from the car and ease blood into our limbs. It's nice to stretch. Five dogs squirt out from under the blue gates

and prowl around us, sniffing, inspecting. One, a female puppy, hobbles around behind the others. Her front paw looks unhinged and awkward, unstructured, as if all the bones are floating. It is a miserable and painful sight.

Martin and Colin wander off in search of birds and are rewarded instantly. Their conversation tolls through the silence. Near the gates sits a cast iron skeleton of a bench with two rough planks laid hopefully on top; they are loose and unwelcoming but Julie and I sink down onto them in the heat and wait for something to happen.

Up the road a cow lumbers into view, wandering across the street and like a camel collapses into a sitting position under a streetlamp as if it's shady there.

Alexander's return is heralded by the dogs who yelp and bark and race up the road like banshees leaving behind the floppy legged puppy who finds a corner to pee into as if she could care less. There's a woman with

Alexander who wears a simple brown sleeveless dress and a white scarf wrapped close around her head. On her feet, short black socks and pink plastic shoes, half flip-flop, half clog.

The woman is all gestures and Russian words but it is not hard to understand her apology for not being here and isn't it hot and she hates the heat and well, never mind that, come in anyway. We follow her, leaving the others to the birds.

This is Ludmilla, startling blue eyes, tanned, graceful limbs and hands as hefty as shovels, working hands. The ecstatic dogs career around her, jostling for attention. She opens the blue gates and shouts at the animals who follow her inside and immediately flop down in a yard brimming with sun. The doughy face of a calf pushes through the fencing at the bottom of the garden and somewhere there are hens.

Ludmilla's kitchen has a dusty flagged floor, a balding ceiling and above the oven an area of

bare plaster and lathe like an open wound. It is as dilapidated as the bench outside, unstructured as the puppy's paw. There's an odd smell, a strange scratching sound. Lizards? Rats? A large dirty looking cat sits sluggishly under the table and occasionally farts.

Surely this is not it? Surely this is not the Homestay? Surely, somewhere, there is nice accommodation with showers and beds and all the tour operator promised; after three nights in a desert camp, surely this is not the place? Alexander looks embarrassed. Until now he has been pleased and proud to show off his land: the beauty of it; the canyons; the rivers and forests, the fields of poppies; the mountains and the stars above them.

Ludmilla's kitchen is not lovely. She squirrels nervously around it. This seems hard for her too. Then salvation. She swings the kettle onto the hob. *Chey?* Oh there is such familiar woolly comfort in the simple ignition of a gas ring; the stutter of a lighter; wisps of blue flame cradling

the base of a battered old kettle. In this small corner of her kitchen is a straw we can all grasp, a moment of commonality and union, stretching across continents and time zones and miles and miles of nothingness; something to grasp with both hands and be comfortable with strangers.

Yes, tea would be good.

Waiting for the kettle to boil Ludmilla talks in rapid-fire Russian to Alexander. This results in him taking off his shoes and disappearing into another part of the house; to the bathroom we assume. Then Ludmilla gestures that we might like to get washed and points to a vanity unit and sink in the corner of the room. She then goes out into the yard. Her actions are quick and jerky as if there isn't enough time to fit everything in.

Nothing comes out of the tap, not even a belch of air. A flat pebble of aged soap sits on the ledge above, toothbrushes lean in a mug next to a hairbrush woven with dark hairs, probably

Ludmilla's. We are intruders. Martin and Colin come in, animated, full of new birds, new locations. Then they are silenced, levelled, as they look around. We all stand in uneasy arrangement as the shadows gather in Ludmilla's kitchen.

She returns then carrying two large buckets of water as if they are merely cups and begins to fill the vanity unit through a trap door behind the mirror. At last the water flows from the tap and we all scoop it up and splash our faces. It is shockingly refreshing, a small invigorating luxury.

Around the table huddles a random collection of stools and chairs. We sit down uninvited, more to tidy up the place than anything and to wait for whatever is to happen next.

Alexander comes back looking grave and says that perhaps somewhere else would be better; the bedrooms are not right, there are not enough of them for five people. This is the first time that Ludmilla has done a Homestay, he

explains, and it would be better to find somewhere else. Sleeping will be difficult. He looks deflated as if the world has finally come to an end. There is a moment when only the scratching from the corner is audible, and the low sound of the kettle beginning to whine.

We look at each other and the decision is made. This is only for two nights and then there'll be the hotel for a night back in the city and a bath; hot running water. No-one wants to get back into the car and worry about petrol and finding another place to stay; no-one wants to say that Ludmilla's home is not good enough, it is good enough, it will be good enough. It is not a problem, we tell him, because really, it isn't. Alexander doesn't look convinced; he has spent too many years as guide and interpreter to fussy tourists.

Ludmilla has already decided that we are staying. She begins to empty the contents of the dresser onto the table. Out comes a plate of what looks like deep fried pigs' trotters; out comes a plate of sweets, a plate of biscuits;

she cuts into a loaf of bread. Only a couple of hours ago we ate the picnic provided by the desert camp; it was very filling, dinner is at eight and it is half past five already. We try to tell Alexander that no-one is hungry; tea would be just fine, *tell her* we say, wanting to save her the trouble. He speaks quietly to Ludmilla who ignores him completely and continues to cut bread. The kettle begins to sing. The cat farts once more. Out comes another plate this time piled high with jellied sweets and slices of swiss roll, now a dish of apricot preserve. The dogs bark and scurry outside and the kitchen door opens and in walk two women with a baby and a small boy; they are introduced as Ludmilla's sister, her daughter in law and her grandchildren. We stand to say hello. Ludmilla looks relieved to see familiar faces. A plate of sliced sausage is laid on the table, tea is made, bowls are put out; a large jar of thick clotted cream, slices of cheese, all from her own cows.

The door has been left open and the maimed puppy noses in. The boy runs at it, yanks it up

by the neck and throws it out in a flurry of arms and legs and paws and yelps. Ludmilla shrieks at him then shakes her head. Kids! With a wave of her hand everyone is pressed into sitting down. The family waits for us. There is so much food the table shrinks.

We graze; a little of this, a little of that. The pigs' trotters are not pigs' trotters but lumps of cold deep fried fish which blossom into the whitest flesh when broken into.

Alexander moves from sweet to savoury and back to sweet. Now he is at the apricot preserve. It is drippy and sticky and ebbs and flows over the bread, lacing the edge and like larva drips onto the table. He dips his spoon into it, drinks and dips again. Ludmilla has made this from her own apricots, he translates, pouring some onto one biscuit, and then on to another. Ludmilla joins him. Ludmilla's family join him. We join him too. Spoons dip and dip again into the dish which is soon empty and which is once again filled.

Ludmilla sits triumphantly and watches as we find a hungry space and fill it. She gestures, more tea and rises once more to refill the pot. Another gesture, some more Russian translated and it appears that in the box by the chimney are six small chicks eating mashed egg. So there are no lizards or rats and the smell is explained. Something about that is relieving.

Back at the table our tea bowls are refilled and we cannot eat any more. We ask Alexander if that's alright? Have we done enough? Yes he says, it is alright, it is enough. Kazakh hospitality, he says then, is good? Yes, we say, very good. And for the first time in what seems like a million square miles, Alexander smiles.

Section 6: Systematic List

The sites are generally described in terms of the broad areas that we were visiting rather than in terms of precise counts (which we never did) at specific locations. For some of the more sought after species there are accurate numbers and sites though most, if not all, of these are at well known sites.

Systematic List

1. Black-necked Grebe, *Podiceps nigricollis*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
2. Dalmatian Pelican, *Pelecanus crispus*, up to 20 Lake Sorbulak.
3. Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*, a few Lake Sorbulak; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
4. Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
5. Ruddy Shelduck, *Tadorna ferruginea*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several on the way to and from the Tien Shan; several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
6. Common Shelduck, *Tadorna tadorna*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
7. Gadwall, *Anas strepera*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
8. Eurasian Teal, *Anas crecca*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
9. Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
10. Garganey, *Anas querquedula*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
11. Northern Shoveler, *Anas clypeata*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Topar

- Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
12. Tufted Duck, *Aythya fuligula*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 13. Red-crested Pochard, *Netta rufina*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 14. Ferruginous Pochard, *Aythya nyroca*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 15. Goosander, *Mergus merganser*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 16. Black-eared Kite, *Milvus migrans lineatus*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River;
- several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
 17. Lammergeier, *Gypaetus barbatus*, two Tien Shan.
 18. Egyptian Vulture, *Neophron percnopterus*, one or two Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 19. Monk Vulture, *Aegypius monachus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Tien Shan.
 20. Western Marsh Harrier, *Circus aeruginosus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 21. Ring-tailed Harrier, *Circus sp*, a few Tien Shan.
 22. Montagu's Harrier, *Circus pygargus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding

- area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
23. Shikra, *Accipiter badius*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 24. Eurasian Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Tien Shan; a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 25. Eurasian Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 26. Long-legged Buzzard, *Buteo rufinus*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
 27. Imperial Eagle, *Aquila heliaca*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 28. Steppe Eagle, *Aquila nipalensis*, one or two Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); one or two Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
 29. Booted Eagle, *Hieraetus pennatus*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 30. Lesser Kestrel, *Falco naumanni*, several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 31. Eurasian Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 32. Merlin, *Falco columbarius*, one or two Tien Shan; one or two Sogaty Plain

- and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
33. Eurasian Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 34. Barbary Falcon, *Falco pelegrinoides*, one or two Tien Shan; one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
 35. Himalayan Snowcock, *Tetraogallus himalayensis*, several heard Tien Shan; two seen well on the ground.
 36. Chukar, *Alectoris chukar*, several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
 37. Demoiselle Crane, *Anthropoides virgo*, a few steppe plateau around Konshegel.
 38. Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 39. Common Coot, *Fulica atra*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 40. Macqueen's Bustard, *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, two steppe plateau around Konshegel.
 41. Eurasian Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus*, a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 42. Ibisbill, *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, two or three on Great Almaty Lake Tien Shan.
 43. Black-winged Stilt, *Himantopus himantopus*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
 44. Collared Pratincole, *Glareola pratincola*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake

- Sorbulak).
45. Northern Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*, a few Tien Shan.
 46. Little Ringed Plover, *Charadrius dubius*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 47. Lesser Sand Plover, *Charadrius mongolus*, four steppe plateau west of Konshegel.
 48. Greater Sand Plover, *Charadrius leschenaultia*, several steppe plateau west of Konshegel.
 49. Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 50. Common Redshank, *Tringa totanus*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 51. Spotted Redshank, *Tringa erythropus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 52. Wood Sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 53. Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos hypoleucos*, a few on the shore of Lake Bartogai.
 54. Temminck's Stint, *Calidris temminckii*, a few Tien Shan; several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 55. Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
 56. Red-necked Phalarope, *Phalaropus lobatus*, one Konshegel wetland.

57. Caspian Gull, *Larus cachinnans*, a few Lake Sorbulak.
58. Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*, common Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
59. Little Gull, *Larus minutus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
60. Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
61. White-winged Tern, *Chlidonias leucopterus*, common Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
62. Black Tern, *Chlidonias niger*, a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
63. Pintailed Sandgrouse, *Syrnhaptus paradoxus*, up to four steppe plateau Konshegel.
64. Black-bellied Sandgrouse, *Pterocles orientalis*, common steppe plateau around Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); common Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
65. Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia*, common Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
66. Stock Dove, *Columba oenas*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
67. Yellow-eyed Stock Dove, *Columba eversmanni*, several in Turanga woodlands Zheltorangy.
68. Common Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus*, common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
69. Oriental Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia*

- orientalis*, a few Tien Shan; several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
70. Eurasian Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
71. Laughing Dove, *Streptopelia senegalensis*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
72. Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
73. Scops Owl, *Otus scops*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
74. Common Swift, *Apus apus*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Tien Shan; a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
75. Common Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
76. European Bee-eater, *Merops apiaster*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
77. European Roller, *Coracias garrulus*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); abundant steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; abundant Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; abundant Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); abundant Kokpek Pass and area to east of

Almaty.

78. Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
79. White-winged Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos leucopertus*, three in Turanga woodlands Zheltorangy.
80. Calandra Lark, *Melanocorypha calandra*, common steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
81. Bimaculated Lark, *Melanocorypha bimaculata*, common steppe plateau around Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
82. White-winged Lark, *Melanocorypha leucoptera*, three near Tamgaly.
83. Greater Short-toed Lark, *Calandrella brachydactyla longipennis*, common steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River, common Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
84. Lesser Short-toed Lark, *Calandrella rufescens*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
85. Crested Lark, *Galerida cristata*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
86. Eurasian Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).

87. Horned Lark, *Eremophila alpestris albigula*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
88. Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
89. Pale Martin, *Riparia diluta*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
90. Eurasian Crag Martin, *Hirundo rupestris*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
91. Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
92. Red-rumped Swallow, *Hirundo daurica rufula*, common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
93. House Martin, *Delichon urbica*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
94. Tawny Pipit, *Anthus campestris*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
95. Tree Pipit, *Anthus trivialis*, a few Tien Shan.
96. Water Pipit, *Anthus spinoletta*

- blakistoni*, several Tien Shan.
97. Masked Wagtail, *Motacilla alba personata*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
 98. Citrine Wagtail, *Motacilla citreola werae*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); two Konshegel.
 99. Black-headed Wagtail, *Motacilla flava feldegg*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
 100. Syke's Wagtail, *Motacilla flava bema*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
 101. Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea melanope*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Tien Shan; a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
 102. Bohemian Waxwing, *Bombycilla garrulous*, two Tien Shan.
 103. Brown Dipper, *Cinclus pallasii tenuirostris*, one Tien Shan.
 104. Winter Wren, *Trogylydites trogylydites*, a few Tien Shan.
 105. Brown Accentor, *Prunella fulvescens*, a few Tien Shan.
 106. Black-throated Accentor, *Prunella atrogularis*, several Tien Shan.
 107. Himalayan (or Altai) Accentor *Prunella himalayana*, one on the way up to the Kosmostation.
 108. Common Nightingale, *Luscinia*

- megarhynchos hafizi*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
109. White-tailed Rubythroat, *Luscinia pectoralis*, several Tien Shan.
110. Bluethroat, *Luscinia svecica*, one or two Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
111. Rufous Bush Robin, *Cercotrichas galactotes*, in roadside bushes east of Nurly.
112. White-throated Robin, *Irania gutturalis*, two up a side valley, Kokpek Pass.
113. Eversmann's Redstart, *Phoenicurus erythronotus*, a pair breeding behind the Observatory, Tien Shan.
114. Common Redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
115. Guldenstadt's Redstart, *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*, a few around the Kosmostation, Tien Shan.
116. Northern Wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe*, several Tien Shan; several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
117. Pied Wheatear, *Oenanthe pleschanka*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
118. Desert Wheatear, *Oenanthe deserti*, one or two Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
119. Isabelline Wheatear, *Oenanthe isabellina*, a few Tien Shan; several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); common steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; abundant Sogaty Plain

and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); common Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

120. Siberian Stonechat, *Saxicola torquata maura*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
121. Eurasian Blackbird, *Turdus merula*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
122. Black-throated Thrush, *Turdus naumanni naumanni*, one Konshegel Village.
123. Mistle Thrush, *Turdus viscivorus bonapartei*, several Tien Shan.
124. Blue Whistling Thrush, *Myophonus caeruleus*, a few Tien Shan.
125. Cetti's Warbler, *Cettia cetti*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including

Lake Sorbulak); several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; one or two Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

126. Paddyfield Warbler, *Acrocephalus agricola*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
127. Caspian Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
128. Blyth's Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); common steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
129. Great Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.

130. Sykes' Warbler, *Hippolais rama*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
131. Siberian Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
132. Sulphur-bellied Warbler, *Phylloscopus griseolus*, one or two Tien Shan.
133. Hume's Warbler, *Phylloscopus humei*, common Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); abundant Tien Shan; several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
134. Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
135. Greenish Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Tien Shan; several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
136. Common Whitethroat, *Sylvia communis rubicola*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
137. Lesser Whitethroat, *Sylvia curruca halimodendri*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest), common Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
138. Hume's Lesser Whitethroat, *Sylvia*

- curruca althaea*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
139. Barred Warbler, *Sylvia nisoria*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
140. Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa striata*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
141. Coal Tit, *Parus ater rufipectus*, common Tien Shan.
142. Great Tit, *Parus major*, several Tien Shan; common Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak).
143. Turkestan Tit, *Parus bokharensis* several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
144. Azure Tit, *Cyanistes cyanus*, two in Turanga woodlands Zheltorangy; also present in Araltobe; several the Ash forest, Charyn Canyon.
145. Eastern Rock Nuthatch, *Sitta tephronota*, one Tamgaly.
146. White-crowned Penduline Tit, *Remiz coronatus*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
147. Eurasian Golden Oriole, *Oriolus oriolus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); one or two Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
148. Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius collurio*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
149. Isabelline Shrike, *Lanius phoenicuroides*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake

- Sorbulak); abundant steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; abundant Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; abundant Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); common Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
150. Steppe Shrike, *Lanius pallidirostris*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
151. Lesser Grey Shrike, *Lanius minor turanicus*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
152. Long-tailed Shrike, *Lanius schach erythronotus*, one or two Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
153. Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Tien Shan; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
154. Red-billed Chough, *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, several Tien Shan.
155. Eastern Jackdaw, *Corvus monedula sommerringii*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several Tien Shan; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
156. Rook, *Corvus frugilegus*, several Tien Shan; several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

157. Oriental Carrion Crow, *Corvus corone orientalis*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
158. Common Raven, *Corvus corax*, several Tien Shan; a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
159. Brown-necked Raven, *Corvus ruficollis*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
160. Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, a few Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few Tien Shan; a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River;
- several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
161. Rosy Starling, *Pastor roseus*, abundant at Lake Sorbulak; abundant steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; common Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
162. European Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris poltaratskyi*, a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
163. Saxaul Sparrow, *Passer ammodendri*, two or three Zheltorangy.
164. Indian House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus bactrianus*, several steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; several Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); common Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

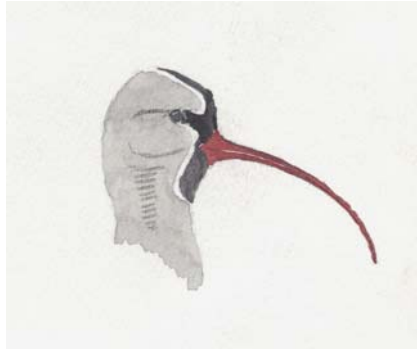
165. Spanish Sparrow, *Passer hispaniolensis*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
166. Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, several Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
167. Eurasian Linnet, *Carduelis cannabina*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
168. European Greenfinch, *Carduelis chloris turkestanika*, several Almaty and surrounding area (including Lake Sorbulak); a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel.
169. Grey-crowned Goldfinch, *Carduelis carduelis caniceps*, a few Tien Shan.
170. Red-fronted Serin, *Serinus pusillus*, a few Tien Shan.
171. White-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas carnipes*, a few Tien Shan.
172. Common Rosefinch, *Carpodacus erythrinus*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
173. Red-mantled Rosefinch, *Carpodacus rhodochlamys*, a few Tien Shan.
174. Mongolian Finch, *Bucanetes mongolica*, one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest).
175. Desert Finch, *Bucanetes obsoleta*, a few steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.
176. Plain Mountain-Finch, *Leucosticte nemoricola*, common Tien Shan
177. Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schoeniclus pyrrhuloides*, one or two Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River.
178. Grey-necked Bunting, *Emberiza*

buchanani, common Sogaty Plain and the Charyn Canyon (including the Ash forest); several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

179. Rock Bunting, *Emberiza cia*, one or two Tien Shan; one or two steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; a few Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.

180. White-capped Bunting, *Emberiza stewarti*, a few Kokpek Pass.

181. Red-headed Bunting, *Emberiza bruniceps*, several Tien Shan; abundant steppe plateau west of Almaty to Konshegel; abundant Topar Lakes, Araltobe and the Ili River; several Kokpek Pass and area to east of Almaty.



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