

Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data, part 3

After two previous editions of *Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data* (Wassink & Oreel 2008, Wassink 2009a), another selection of data is presented here. It includes the first records of Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*, Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* and Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* for Kazakhstan. I also reviewed reports from publications, which resulted in the rejection of several records (for details, see Rejected records).

New species and interesting records

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

On 19 December 2008, a first-winter Velvet Scoter was found at Karashengel hunting reserve (43:43 N, 77:44 E), Almaty province (Bevza 2009). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

On 14 December 2008, a Squacco Heron was found at Karakol lake (43:32 N, 51:18 E), Mangghystau province (Karpov & Kovshar 2009). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

On 16 July 2009, an adult Indian Pond Heron was photographed at Sorbulak lake (43:40 N, 76:34 E), Almaty province (Kovalenko 2009a). This is a new species for Kazakhstan.

Bearded Vulture *Cypaetus barbatus*

On 11 May 2009, an immature Bearded Vulture was

found at the Karatau mountains near Shetpe (44:10 N, 52:07 E), Mangghystau province (Le Neve et al 2010). This is the first record for western Kazakhstan.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

On 21 May 2009, flocks of 14 and 151 birds were found landing at Fetisovo plateau (42:46 N, 52:40 E) and Fetisovo peninsula (42:45 N, 52:38 E), Mangghystau province, respectively. The birds behaved very vocally, including displaying males. On 24 May 2009, still 39 birds were present at the latter location (Le Neve et al 2010). These records are surprising, given the fact that only eight records (involving 17 birds) were previously known for Kazakhstan, all but one (Qyzylorda province) from Almaty province (Wassink & Oreel 2007, 2008).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

On 14 December 2008, eight Dunlins were found at Karakol lake, Mangghystau province (Karpov & Kovshar 2009). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

On 4 and 7 May 2009, respectively, one and two males Eastern Black-tailed Godwits *L. melanuroides* were found at Kyzylkol lake (43:45 N, 69:30 E), South Kazakhstan province (Wassink 2009b). These are the fourth and fifth record of this subspecies for Kazakhstan. The previous three records were all in the Tengiz-Korgalzhyn region, Aqmola province, during autumn migration in 1999 (Wassink & Oreel 2007). The birds were identified by the many summer plumage feathers on the mantle, scapulars and wing-coverts (the latter showing as a very dark wing), deep reddish brown colour and heavy barring on the underparts (reminiscent of Icelandic Godwit *L. l. islandica* in corresponding plumage) and, in flight, a narrower, shorter wing-bar than *L. l. limosa* (which is a common breeder and migrant).

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

On 14 December 2008, two Eurasian Curlews were found at Karakol lake, Mangghystau province (Karpov & Kovshar 2009). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 21 and 25 April and 20 June 2008, a first-summer Black-legged Kittiwake was photographed from a ship in Kazakh territorial waters in the northern Caspian Sea (44:00 N, 50:00 E). On 30 April and 1 May 2008, a first-summer bird was photographed on the Caspian Sea off Bautino, Mangghystau province (Mischenko 2009a). The records are likely to refer to the same individual. This is a new species for Kazakhstan. Three earlier reports have been omitted from the Kazakhstan list, due to a lack of documentation (Wassink & Oreel 2007).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

On 13 May 2009, an adult Mediterranean Gull was found at the Caspian coast at Fetisovo (42:46 N, 52:38 E), Mangghystau province (Le Neve et al 2010). This is the fifth record (with a total of eight birds) for Kazakhstan (Lindeman et al 2005, Wassink and Oreel 2007).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

A Baltic Gull *L f fuscus*, ringed as a nestling in Finland on 26 July 1981, was subsequently found dead on 28 June 1982 south-east of Ebeyti (48:14 N, 54:56 E) at 48:07 N, 55.30 E in Aqtöbe province (Jari Valkama in litt). This is the first record of Baltic Gull (and Lesser Black-backed Gull of any subspecies) for Kazakhstan. Older immature dark-mantled gulls photographed along the northern Caspian Sea on 21 April, 3 May and 29 June 2008 (Mischenko 2009b) show characters of this species. However, since separation from, eg, Heuglin's

Gull *L heuglini* is notoriously difficult, no decisive conclusion could be made based on these photographs.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

On 26 April 2006, a Woodlark was found singing at Urda (48:46 N, 47:26 E), Volga-Ural region, West Kazakhstan province (Kovalenko 2009b). Because the bird was found in typical breeding habitat (sandy area, with pine forest and small patches of poplar and aspen) and since the species is a common breeding bird only c 70 km away, at Elton lake (49:09 N, 46:41 E), Russia, it presumably bred at this location.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

On 17 May 2009, a first-summer female Pied Bush Chat was photographed at Kenderli, Mangghystau province (plate 161). Another female was photographed at Kenderli, Mangghystau province, on 24 May 2009 (Le Neve et al 2010). These are the first records for western Kazakhstan.

Semicollared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*

Between 12 April and 3 May 2009, seven (males and females, of which a first-summer male photographed) Semi-collared Flycatchers were found at Kenderli (42:47 N, 52:38 E), Mangghystau province (plate 162). On 25 April 2009, a first-summer male was photographed at Fetisovo plateau, Mangghystau province (Le Neve et al 2010). These are the second to third record for Kazakhstan, totalling nine individuals.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

On 14 December 2008, 15 Meadow Pipits were found at Karakol lake, Mangghystau province (Karpov & Kovshar 2009). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

161 Pied Bush Chat / Zwarte Roodborsttapuit *Saxicola caprata*, first-summer female, Kenderli, Mangghystau province, Kazakhstan, 17 May 2009 (Arnaud Le Neve/ Abu Dhabi National Avian Research Center)



162 Semicollared Flycatcher / Balkanvliegenvanger *Ficedula semitorquata*, first-summer male, Kenderli, Mangghystau province, Kazakhstan, 22 April 2009 (Christophe Gouraud/Abu Dhabi National Avian Research Center)

Masked Wagtail *Motacilla personata*

On 13 January 2008, two Masked Wagtails were found at Slavnov (43:08 N, 74:33 E), Zhambyl province (Belyalov & Karpov 2009). This is the second winter record for Kazakhstan.

Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*

On 27 January 2008, several Two-barred Crossbills were found amongst flocks of Red Crossbills *L. curvirostra* at the Tautekeli valley (49:03 N, 85:00 E), southern Altai (Starikov 2009). This is the fourth record for Kazakhstan and the first in winter.

Rejected records

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

In 2008, a Red-necked Stint was reported at Isey lake, Korgalzhyn nature reserve, Aqmola province (Koshkin 2009). There is no description or photograph supporting the identification. Also, there is no exact date. The record is, therefore, rejected.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

On 6 June 1978, a Radde's Warbler building a nest was reported in the Ivanovskiy mountains (50:28 N, 69:33 E), western Altai (Scherbakov 2009). There is no description, photograph or sound-recording supporting the identification. The record is, therefore, rejected. With only three records, the species is a vagrant in Kazakhstan.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

On 19 April 2008, a male Unspotted Bluethroat *L. s. magna* was reported at Karazhar (50:28 N, 69:33 E), Korgalzhyn nature reserve, Aqmola province (Koshkin 2009). As with the report at the same location on 28 June 2007 (erroneously given as 2008 in Wassink 2009a), it is far more likely that this report also refers to a completely blue-bibbed ('*wolfi*') morph of the subspecies *L. s. pallidogularis* or *L. s. svecica*. The report is, therefore, rejected.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

On 11 January 2008, a Siberian Buff-bellied Pipit *A. r. japonicus* was reported at Chu river (44:52 N, 70:55 E), Zhambyl province (Belyalov & Karpov 2009). There is no description or photograph supporting the identification. The record is, therefore, rejected. Although Gavrillov & Gavrillov (2005) state that the species probably is a winter visitor, there is still no documented record confirming the species' winter occurrence in Kazakhstan (Wassink 2009a).

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