

Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data, part 6

After five previous editions of 'Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data' (Wassink & Oreel 2008, Wassink 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014) and the publication documenting four new species for Kazakhstan (Wassink et al 2011), another selection of new data for Kazakhstan is presented here, including the first record of Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* and Baikal Wagtail *Motacilla baicalensis*, the first winter records of Eurasian Crane *Grus grus*, Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*, Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*, Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* and Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, the first autumn record of East Siberian Wagtail *M. ocularis* and the first documented breeding of Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus bewickii*

On 11 December 2014, two adults were photographed at Karakol lake at the eastern Caspian coast (Alexandr Katuncev 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the third winter record for Kazakhstan.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

On 20 April 2014, one was photographed at Shili lake, Qostanay province (Aleksey Timoshenko 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the fifth record for Kazakhstan, all but one from northern parts of this province.

Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*

On 11 September 2014, an adult (most probably one of the almost extinct western Siberian population) was photographed at Shoshkaly lake, Naurzum nature reserve, Qostanay province (Murat Baidildin 2014, www.birds.kz; Kanat Batyrkhanuly 2014, www.birds.kz). This species had not been reliably recorded in Kazakhstan after

2005, when two birds passed Chokpak pass on 18 April 2005 (Gavrilov & Gavrilov 2005).

Eurasian Crane *Grus grus*

On 13 January 2014, a flock of 19 passed Karasu in Almaty province (Berezovikov & Kolov 2014). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

On 10 December 2014, one was photographed at Karakol lake at the eastern Caspian coast (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz; Isabekov 2015). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii*

On 8 October 2014, one was photographed in the Irtys valley east of Semey (Aleksandr Feldman 2014, www.birds.kz). This is far north of the breeding range and the northernmost record ever. On 9 December 2014, three colour-ringed birds were photographed south-west of Zhanaozen in Mangghystau province (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz; Isabekov 2015). Apparently, birds wintered already in this region in 2013/14 (Boris Gubin to Askar Isabekov in litt). These are the first winter records in Kazakhstan.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

On 21 January 2014, two were found at Chardara lake in southernmost Kazakhstan (Shmygaleva 2014). On 27 December 2014, a first calendar-year was photographed at Sorbulak lake (Andrey Kovalenko 2014, www.birds.kz). These are the first winter records in Kazakhstan.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

From 13 December 2014 to 18 January 2015, a first calendar-year stayed at Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty province and was photographed (Ivan Belyaev 2014, 2015, www.birds.kz; Belyaev & Berezovikov 2014). This is the third record for Kazakhstan.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediacnemus*

On 5 July 2014, one was found east of Semey (Feldman & Berezovikov 2015), well north of the breeding range in eastern Kazakhstan.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

On 22 June 2011, one was found at Ashchykol lake, Pavlodar province (Reznichenko 2012). This is the second record in northern Kazakhstan.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

On 7 September 2014, a first calendar-year was photographed at the Maly Sorbulak lakes, Almaty

province (Fedorenko et al 2014). This is the second record for Kazakhstan.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 28-29 May 2014, a second calendar-year was photographed at the northern Caspian Sea (Galina Kondratenko 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the second record for Kazakhstan.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

On 12 December 2014, a first calendar-year gull was photographed and identified as Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* at the eastern Caspian coast at Aqtau (Alexandr Katuncev 2014, www.birds.kz; Isabekov 2015). The bird showed a recently started and thus limited moult (confined to upper scapulars, with these feathers having a beige centre and fresh white edge) suggesting a very northern origin. This, together with the pattern of greater coverts and tertials, clear white tips to the primaries and overall striped pattern of head and underparts ruled out other Eurasian large gulls except Herring Gull, including Vega Gull *L. vegae* (Gull Research Organisation in litt; Andreas Buchheim in litt; Rik Winters in litt; and author). The latter has a different tertial pattern, is not expected to have moulted (this amount, if any) of the scapulars yet and has a very easterly biased migration, wintering in Japan.

The record of a Herring Gull seems very much out of place but, although still c 800 km west of the eastern Caspian coast, 15 Herring Gulls were found at the Black Sea coast of Georgia in January 2014 (Adriaens 2014). This is a new species for Kazakhstan.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

On 12 December 2014, a first calendar-year was photographed at the eastern Caspian coast at Aqtau, Mangghystau province (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the fifth record for Kazakhstan.

Lesser Spotted x Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* x *clanga*

A second calendar-year hybrid was photographed at Atyrau on 5 October 2014 (Alexandr Katuncev 2014, www.birds.kz). There are no records (yet) of pure Lesser Spotted Eagle but the species is expected to occur in Kazakhstan.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

On 11 December 2014, a first calendar-year was photographed at Aqtau (Alexandr Katuncev 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first documented winter record in Kazakhstan.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*

On 10 December 2014, two were found in Almaty (Berezovikov 2014). This is the second winter record in Kazakhstan.

Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*

In 2010 and 2011, a breeding pair was occupying a nestbox in Naurzum forest, Naurzum nature reserve (Bragin & Bragin 2012). These are the westernmost breeding records in Kazakhstan and the first in Qostanay province.

Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

On 22 May 2014, a (probably second calendar-year) female was photographed at Öskemen (Alexey Maznitsin 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the second record in northern Kazakhstan. On 1 November 2014, a (probably) first calendar-year was photographed and identified as Red-tailed Shrike *L. phoenicuroides* at Cape Zhulandy at the Mangghystau coast (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz, 2015). This is the first record in Mangghystau province and the westernmost in Kazakhstan.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

On 3 January 2015, one was photographed at Kolshengel (Vassiliy Fedorenko 2015, www.birds.kz). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

On 30 September 2014, one was photographed at Tengiz lake, Aqmola province (Alexandr Fedulin 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first documented record in Aqmola province. On 18 October 2014, one was photographed at Karamendy, northern Qostanay province (Aleksey Timoshenko 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first record in Qostanay province and the westernmost in Kazakhstan ever.

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis*

On 28 June 2014, two were found singing in Ili-Alatau national park (Andrey Kovalenko 2014, www.birds.kz). After confirmed breeding at Esik gorge in 2012 (Oleg Belyalov 2012, www.birds.kz), this record seems an indication that this species has started to breed on a regular basis in the Zailiyskiy Alatau.

Ménétriés's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*

Birds were found at Chu valley south of Qandyozek on 9 May 2014 (Andrey Kovalenko 2014, www.birds.kz) and at lower Ili valley south-east of Akzhar on 26 May 2014 (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz). Singing males and, in case of the Ili valley, a bird carrying nest material were ob-

served, indicating that this species breeds at these locations, respectively 400 and 700 km east of their previously known breeding range. Earlier records at lower Ili valley in May 1992 (Gavrilov & Gavrilov 2005) and July 2005 and 2007 (Westerbjerg Andersen 2005, 2007), probably referred to breeding birds as well.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

On 22 July 2011, a nest containing a young was photographed at Karabalyk in northernmost Qostanay province (Yuriy Malkov 2011, www.birds.kz). This is the first documented breeding record for Kazakhstan.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

On 18 August 2010, one was found at Öskemen (Berezovikov & Alekseev 2014). This is only the third record outside the breeding range in the Altai.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

On 2 November 2014, a first calendar-year was photographed at Atyrau (Alexandr Kantuncev 2014, www.birds.kz). Previously, no records were known after mid-September (Wassink & Oreeel 2007).

White-tailed Rubythroat *Calliope pectoralis*

On 8 May 2014, a second calendar-year male was photographed at the famous Wish Tree, west of Bozoy, en route to Kolshengel (David Anderson in litt). This is only the third record outside the breeding range in the south-eastern mountain ranges.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

A male stayed at Naurzum nature reserve from 20 April to 19 May 2014 (Baydildin & Timoshenko 2014). This is a new species for that region, well north of the breeding range.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

On 22 June 2014, a second calendar-year male was photographed at Ural delta (Victoria Kovshar 2014, www.birds.kz; Alexandr Katuncev 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first record in the northern half of Kazakhstan. Kovshar's suggestion that the species bred at this location is not documented. The photographs show juvenile Siberian Stonechats *S. maurus*, based on the very dark upperparts with contrasting streaking, pale underparts, some white at the base of the tail, white uppertail-coverts and relatively long primary projection (Rafael Ayé, Nils van Duivendijk and Manuel Schweitzer in litt and author).



40 White-tailed Rubythroat / Zwartborstnachttegaal *Calliope pectoralis*, second calendar-year male, Bozoy, Almaty province, Kazakhstan, 8 May 2014 (David Anderson)

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

On 3 January 2015, a second calendar-year male was photographed at Kolshengel (Vassiliy Fedorenko 2015, www.birds.kz). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

On 7 December 2014, one was found at Aqtau (Isabekov 2015). This is the first winter record in Kazakhstan.

Baikal Wagtail *Motacilla baicalensis*

On 12 April 2014, two, of which at least one adult male photographed, were found at Sorbulak lake, Almaty province (Vassiliy Fedorenko 2014, www.birds.kz). This is a new species for Kazakhstan. Three previous records were not documented and, therefore, omitted (Wassink & Oreeel 2007).

East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla ocularis*

On 16 October 2011, a first calendar-year was photographed at Sorbulak lake (Vassiliy Fedorenko 2011, www.birds.kz). This is the first autumn record in Kazakhstan.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*

On 25 May 2014, a male was photographed at Kolshengel, Almaty province (Machiel Valkenburg in litt). On 1-2 November 2014, two (at least one male) were photographed at Cape Zhulandy at the

Mangghystau coast (Askar Isabekov 2014, www.birds.kz; Isabekov 2015). These are the fifth and sixth records for Kazakhstan.

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni*

On 27 January 2014, an adult male was photographed at Öskemen, East Kazakhstan province (Viktor Kolesnikov 2014, www.birds.kz). On 15 February 2014, another adult male was photographed at nearby Mount Pechi (Valentin Zenkov 2014, www.birds.kz). These are the first and second documented records for Kazakhstan (see also Rejected reports).

Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii decolorata*

An adult male was photographed at Zhabagly at western Tien Shan foothills on 4 November 2014 (Yevgeny Belousov 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first record in the western Tien Shan foothills. A first calendar-year photographed at the same location and date could also refer to this species but Rock Bunting *E. cia* was not excluded.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

In winter 2014/15, one was photographed at Karabalyk in north-western Qostanay province (Yuriy Malkov 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the second documented winter record in Kazakhstan.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

On 23 April 2014, one was photographed at Katon-Karagay in the southern Altai (Vladimir Vorobyov 2014, www.birds.kz). This is the first record in the Altai and the easternmost in Kazakhstan ever.

Rejected reports

East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla ocularis*

An alleged second calendar-year was photographed at the Karatal river near Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty province, on 16 February 2014. This would constitute the first winter record in Kazakhstan (Belyaev & Berezovikov 2014). However, the observers described a head pattern with only a thin eye-stripe behind the eye and plain lores lacking a dark stripe, also visible on the photographs. East Siberian should show a distinct dark eye-stripe in front and behind the eye. Alström et al (2003) state that 'some young *alba* show an indistinct dark eye-stripe on the ear-coverts, but it is always lacking on the lores'. The bird was, therefore, (re)identified as White Wagtail *M. alba*.

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni*

An adult male first published to have been photographed near Almaty in December 2011 (Ottaviani 2012, www.oiseau.net), turns out to have been photographed in Finland (Michel Ottaviani in litt). The record is, therefore, removed from the Kazakh list.

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