

Georgia in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

29 April – 7 May 2017



Jvaris Pass



Mount Kazbegi



Davit Gareja Monastery



Eastern Caucasians Tur

Report and images by Rob Murray



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Summary

This inaugural Naturetrek trip to Georgia yielded all the highly sought-after mountain species. Caucasian Snowcock, Caucasian Black Grouse, Caucasian (Mountain) Chiffchaff, Guldenstadt's Redstart, Great Rosefinch, Red-fronted Serin and Wallcreeper were all enjoyed in a landscape of sheer beauty. We had comparable success in the steppes to the south finding Finsch's and Isabelline Wheatears, and Egyptian, Cinereous (Black) and Griffon Vultures. Eighteen species of raptors, flocks of Rose-coloured Starlings, numerous Black-headed Buntings and Calandra Larks added to the rich pageant of species encountered. Other spectacular animals included Blunt-nosed Viper, Caucasian Agama, Spur-thighed Tortoise, Eastern Caucasian Tur and Golden Jackal. We sampled the national culture with visits to the iconic monasteries and a Georgian feast too.

Day 1

Saturday 29th April

The tour started with a Turkish Airways flight from London Gatwick to Istanbul.

Day 2

Sunday 30th April

A member of the group singing "I am leaving on a midnight plane to Georgia" was a hint of the humorous banter to come between members of a very friendly group. The flight arrived in the early hours of the morning in Tbilisi, which was three hours ahead of current UK time.

We transferred to a hotel in the city for a few hours sleep and a late breakfast before joining our three 4x4 vehicles to journey up to the Caucasus Mountains at Stepantsminda (Kazbegi), some 124 kilometres to the north. Very loud and demonstrative Blackbirds, with an all too early perception of when dawn commenced, ensured little sleep was enjoyed. Soon we had left the uninspiring blocks of flats and manic traffic of the city behind. We followed the Georgian Military Highway northwards, stopping at Ananauri by the Zhinvali Dam to admire the view and use the facilities. Stalls were laid out giving us our first encounter with Georgian tourist fare. Hats, scarves and gloves were the only good value items amongst the usual crass souvenirs. Long, dangling candle-like sticks hung in bunches. These are Churchkhela which are made by threading walnuts or hazelnuts, almonds and raisins onto a string, covering them with flour and then dipping them repeatedly into simmering grape juice. The road surface deteriorated markedly as we journeyed on up to the snow line and a spectacular viewpoint where the Russo-Georgian Friendship Monument has been erected on a hill overlooking snow clad mountains. Ring Ouzels and Water Pipits abound here. Choughs and Black Redstarts were also conspicuous. The highlight was a displaying pair of soaring Golden Eagles. It was a brilliant spot for observing raptor passage and we could have stayed all day.

Soon we crossed the highest point of the highway at 2,379 metres at the Jvaris Ughelt, or Cross Pass. Snow lay thickly, cladding the mountains down to the verges of the road. We had to explore! Straight away we located Shore Larks and remarked on their lack of yellow. Twite appeared different too. A passage of Steppe Buzzards through the pass was a thrill to see, but an Imperial Eagle gliding over excited everyone. We were advised by a police patrol to move on as they were about to close the road to assist the passage of a stream of heavy lorries

coming out of Russia in convoys! We heeded the advice. Passing through hairpin tunnels was a startling experience.

It was 4pm when we finally made it to our base in Stepantsminda or Kazbegi for a late lunch, after which we sauntered across the bridge to a clump of pines. Here we found our only Semi-collared Flycatcher of the trip and two Red Squirrels. Further down the road, before the next bridge, lay an area cloaked in Buckthorn. This is ideal habitat for Guldenstadt's Redstart and Great Rosefinch. We stared with incredulity as both species popped up before us. Two of the most highly sought species were bagged on the first day! Furthermore, a Wallcreeper was feeding on a slope and Caucasian Black Grouse were 'scoped in the distance.

Day 3

Monday 1st May

Another bright and sunny day was in prospect as we boarded the jeeps at 7.30am for a short, bumpy ride beyond the Rooms Hotel to the foot of the mountain. However, this hour of the morning presented a cold wind and low temperature. Coats, hats, scarves and gloves were appreciated initially. The haunting curlew-like whistles of the elusive Snowcock reverberated across the incised gullies and over-grazed slopes of tough, tussocky grasses. Constant scanning back and forth failed to pinpoint the source of these tormenting calls. Locating several displaying Caucasian Black Grouse was an amusing distraction as they leaped into the air with wings flapping and long tails erect. Seeing Eastern Caucasian Turcs surreptitiously nibbling at the remnants of a grassy sward high up towards the ridge was a keen test of patience as these wild goats were well camouflaged. They advanced slowly up the slope with sure-footed arrogance as they boulder-hopped their way to the sanctity of the crags. The parachute displays and songs of amorous Water Pipits enveloped us. Six Red-fronted Serins bounded over our heads and disappeared into the distance. We needed something to refocus our attention on our primary aim of seeing a Snowcock. Suddenly, two Snowcock flew across the scree slopes to our right and dipped behind a spur; but they were not picked up in time by everyone. Fortunately, one was spotted squatting on the boundary between the scree and grass, nonchalantly nibbling at this and that or just staring down at us unconcerned. It was distant but satisfying after our long vigil. At this point a jeep arrived with our mid-morning snacks, tea and coffee. A Steppe Buzzard flew close by and perched on a rock and then a magnificent Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture) sailed into view and glided down the valley.

Next we headed north towards the Russian border. A brief stop near Gveleti at the base of a vertical cliff to see nesting Griffon Vultures also yielded Grey Wagtail and Dipper. At the border a new monastery was under construction. We made use of the toilets then scanned the cliff faces and escarpment. Three Eastern Caucasian Turcs and a pair of obliging Golden Eagles were the highlights.

We returned to the hotel for lunch then began the adventurous ascent of a meandering, boulder strewn, rutted, dusty and then muddy track up to the iconic Gergeti Trinity Church. It seemed that everyone in Georgia had elected to take on the challenge today. There were endless streams of 4x4s snaking up and down, causing congestion, anger and frustration. We witnessed the most appalling, selfish and thoughtless driving, but we completed the trip unscathed after 45 minutes of bone-rattling torture. This 13th century stone building certainly commands an inspiring view down the valley and across the villages below. The temptation of adding a few woodland species to our tally by interrupting our descent at a forest was worth yielding to. We added Siskin and Wren!

Day 4

Tuesday 2nd May

Although it was raining today, we carried on regardless. To begin with we drove a short distance to an area of Buckthorn scrub just to the south of the village and the area scrutinised yesterday for Snowcock. A couple of us had brief and distant views of two female Great Rosefinches and Mountain Chiffchaffs.

Khobi seemed a better bet. Here there is a steep cliff with intriguing geology. It is comprised of roughly hexagonal blocks of basalt and is a known haunt of Wallcreepers. Undeterred by the steady rain, we began to scour the cliff. Sure enough, we found a Wallcreeper feeding avidly as it flicked its way up to the summit. Chough, Ring Ouzel and Black Redstart were quite approachable and a Red-backed Shrike sat still long enough for everyone to enjoy. As we were standing by the jeeps enjoying a snack, a Wallcreeper descended to eyelevel and began probing in the rock crevasses at a distance of only 18 metres. It was such a captivating sight and for many ranked as the outstanding experience of the trip. Then six Red-fronted Serins flew in and perched just long enough to be appreciated.

The rain was easing so we decided to drive down a dirt track leading to a derelict farm and church. This is a plain with scattered boulders and low stone walls following the River Tergi. A Little Ringed Plover fled from the track as our convoy rumbled along. A superb and immaculate male Rock Thrush was utilising the bit of elevation provided by piles of stones, and 45 Twite landed in the only tree for miles around. We returned to the hotel for lunch of a tasty green, thick soup and Khachapuri which is cheese bread.

The potential of the Khobi dirt track was such that we elected to go back there for the afternoon, but to penetrate further towards the border with South Ossetia. It was a wild, scenically captivating, glaciated landscape with fascinating geological features and abandoned watch towers. A Nightjar fled from our path and settled on an old wooden box on the porch of a derelict house. It stayed put for ages. More Rock Thrushes, Ring Ouzels and Black Redstarts were enjoyed when a small falcon appeared, perched in a tree. There was much speculation as to its identity until it flew, when it was seen to be a highly unexpected Merlin. Abandoned or dilapidated farms and industrial remnants were scattered along the course of the river and served by the dishevelled track we were pursuing. A Georgian flag fluttering ahead was an indication that we had reached the limit of safe ground so we stopped to scan the mountainsides. We could hear forlorn wailing whistles of Snowcock on both sides of the valley. Scanning revealed a high density of Caucasian Black Grouse variously hiding amongst the droplets of grass or leaping heavenwards in display. It was certainly an exciting off-road drive with good birds and fascinating scenery to match. We could have spent hours here just watching and imbibing the atmosphere of abandonment by man and repossession by nature.

Day 5

Wednesday 3rd May

The day started dull and overcast with light rain and murky swirls of mist over the peaks. This was of little concern as today was largely one of travelling back to Tbilisi. Luggage was loaded and we set off at 7.45am as planned. As we approached the high pass, we pulled over just before the entrance to one of the tunnels for a quick scan. This was very productive as wheatears, Water Pipit, White Wagtail and Twite were hopping about on the bare rocks protruding above the mantle of snow. Then the unmistakable coloured flashes of a male Guldenstadt's Redstart assaulted the eyes. It perched close enough for shutters to ring out and its tangible image was converted to virtual.

By 10am we had reached Ananuri again and stopped for coffee and snacks in persistent rain. Skirting the southern flanks of Tbilisi and taking the road towards Kojori brought us to a layby with a view across fields and forests. Woodlarks and Tree Pipits were singing and display flighting, and a Rock Bunting called. As we endeavoured to locate it, a thick mist descended and enveloped the forest. We had come with the expectation of seeking out Kruper's Nuthatch but the mist put paid to that. A Black Woodpecker called and enabled a couple of us to see it retreat into the gloom. Further searching was fruitless so we dropped down to less obscure elevations and gave Mtatsminda Park a try as the nuthatches are also claimed from this spot.

There was a fine, panoramic view across the city from here. Nightingales and a Common Redstart were singing. As more rain threatened, we opted to check into our hotel at 4pm and seize a little time to relax before the evening meal. Some pounded the city pavements and enjoyed a personal tour of the main attractions which can be visited in two to three hours.

A coach picked us up and delivered us to a typical Georgian restaurant where local people congregate to eat, drink, dance and be merry. There were about 200 diners seated at long tables festooned with food and numerous flagons of wine. A very loud, live band pumped out traditional music and songs while dancers in Georgian costumes performed the most energetic of dance routines. At any excuse for a toast, the Georgians were on their feet. Dishes of food kept appearing and as space on the table was now at a premium, they were piled on top of each other. It was a riotous evening which we left replete, well-oiled and with ears ringing.

Day 6

Thursday 4th May

After breakfast we were southbound with Signhagi as our final destination. There was a dramatic contrast in scenery as we approached the steppes. Vast areas of open country confronted us and bee-eaters, hoopoes and shrikes replaced Snowcock, grouse and rosefinch. It was 9.40am when our convoy halted at the edge of a huge expanse of water known as Lake Jandarilaki. Visible migration was underway and as we stood, a procession of species passed over us. It was spectacular for terns. Little, Common, Gull-billed, Black, White-winged and Whiskered Terns all showed up. Black-necked Grebe, Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant, and Purple, Black-crowned Night and Squacco Herons paraded around the marshy fringes. Raptors included Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Black Kite, Lesser Spotted and Booted Eagles, Egyptian Vulture, Honey Buzzard and Sparrowhawk. A Slender-billed Gull appeared from nowhere. Unfortunately, one of our drivers was cajoled into playing the Good Samaritan and raced off to rescue a foolish Subaru driver whose car was submerged in thick, glutinous mud. The entirely predictable outcome was that he also became stuck. It was a fiasco that cost us a great deal of time.

Eventually, we pressed on across the steppes towards Davit Gareja Monastery. Calandra and Crested Larks were frantically displaying and charging about, but Isabelline Wheatears were more sedate. The monastery was strategically placed to give commanding views across the hilly, steppe country. Drizzle fell but that didn't deter a brief clamber over the ruins. A vigil by the tubular mud nest of a Western Rock Nuthatch was rewarded when a pair arrived home. A superb Blue Rock Thrush leapt up onto a wall. Then a pair of Rock Sparrows appeared. The surrounding scrub concealed a Red-breasted Flycatcher.

All too soon it was time to continue our southward journey. A much sought after species presented itself at the trackside; Finsch's Wheatear was a new bird for many of the group. After a long day of travelling, we checked into our hotel in Signhagi.

Day 7

Friday 5th May

It was a warm and sunny day initially, but rain set in later on. A random hillside stop above the village of Gamargveba, amongst thorny bushes and scrub, yielded some excellent birds. Montagu's Harrier, Woodchat and Red-backed Shrikes and our first Black-headed Buntings were the highlights. Bizarrely, six Ruddy Shelducks flew over. We gave some attention to a small reservoir where Black-winged Stilt, Hobby and Hoopoe were discovered. A roadside stop with an avenue of trees bordering the highway produced Golden Oriole, lots of Black-headed Buntings and an overhead raptor passage of 12 Honey Buzzards, Imperial Eagle and Cinereous (Black) Vulture. A pair of Montagu's Harriers was a delight to watch as we crossed vast fields of winter wheat along dirt tracks. Some of us were lucky enough to spot a Golden Jackal bounding through the crop. Scattered thorn bushes survived the excessively heavy grazing in this open country and proved to be attractive to another highly desired species. A random stop at a likely looking vantage point led us to Menetries's Warbler. A Corn Crake called, as did a Chukar, but neither showed itself. However, a Short-toed Snake Eagle and an Imperial Eagle were much more obliging.

We had now entered the Vashlovani National Park and it is certainly well off the beaten track and only accessible by four wheel drive vehicles. An inviting gully resembling a wadi beckoned us in for a lunch break. There were orchids in flower and several reptiles scurrying about. Caucasian Agamas, robust, large lizards, were scrambling over the rock faces. The best find was a Blunt-nosed Viper discovered basking in the open. It was a large specimen! This is a well-known location for Eastern Orphean Warbler and two were seen well by most people. A train of Griffon Vultures came down the wadi looking for an early roost to avoid the threatening rain clouds, suggesting a storm was imminent. The next viewpoint saw us gazing down at a vast expanse of fretted hills and ridges clad with low trees. The information board stated that Leopards still existed in this area although none has been observed since 2009. It was still worth a scan! Passing through farmsteads on our retreat led us to a flock of Spanish Sparrows and Little Owl.

It had been a long day with a great deal of time in the vehicles, but we had certainly seen some spectacular wildlife and scenery. After our evening meal we were invited to a wine tasting session at the Pheasant's Tears Winery. White, amber and red wines were proffered, but the dried bread nibbles and olive oil proved to be more palatable.

Day 8

Saturday 6th May

Today we again headed south, but this time to the Chachuna region and Lake Dali. The small reservoir we had visited yesterday was our first port of call. A pair of Long-legged Buzzards was at their pylon nest site and the heads of chicks could just be discerned. Seven Red-necked Phalaropes spun and twirled about, remaining in close proximity to each other. Today we turned right at the reservoir, along a very rough track past a hillside monastery. The surface had been of tarmac, but it had crumbled and decayed now. Black-headed Buntings were super abundant along here. An Egyptian Vulture passed close by and a very white Short-toed Snake Eagle forsook hovering and elected to stand on the hillside, peering down for any movement of a reptile. It was a surprise when two Little Bustards flew across the road to land in coarse vegetation. Only one of them was located, walking slowly and deliberately through the grass.

At the point where we stopped for coffee and snacks, Spur-thighed Tortoises were plodding about and Isabelline Wheatears were displaying with ardour. A flock of the Russian race of Jackdaw was attracted to abandoned stanchions. Another Menetries's Warbler was discovered here. Short-toed Larks put in an appearance and were later found to be very common. Any opportunities to drink and bathe would be seized upon by birds in this arid environment. A flock of 70 Rose-coloured Starlings was dropping from a shrub into a muddy roadside puddle giving breath-taking views and wonderful photographic opportunities. Two more Ortolan Buntings and a Tawny Pipit were discovered here.

Gradually we bumped and jostled our way to the dam wall of Lake Dali where we stopped for lunch. Black Francolins were issuing their loud challenge continuously; but not one could be located. The bulky nest of a White-tailed Eagle stood out in the distance among the trees. One adult flew towards us and out over the lake to do some plundering of the fish stocks. A Red Fox trotted along at the base of the dam. Later we discovered a fox's earth with two cubs outside grooming. Two or three rodents were swimming in a dyke below us. At that distance it was too difficult to ascertain whether they were Muskrats or Coypu. A derelict building on the lakeside by the causeway had been adopted as home by a small colony of Lesser Kestrels. They showed well eventually.

We moved on up the riverine forest trail and stopped on a rise overlooking the trees. We could just make out the nest of a pair of Imperial Eagles with birds in attendance. An absolutely fabulous male Pallid Harrier sailed into view, and three Chukar were finally seen. As we were about to leave the steppes, a final stop by some bushes produced another Red-breasted Flycatcher. It was a long drive back up to Tbilisi and we only just made it for our farewell buffet meal at the hotel at 9.30pm.

Day 9

Sunday 7 May

A bus took us to the airport in time to complete comfortably all of the security checks before boarding our flight to Istanbul. The connecting flight was delayed somewhat, but time was made up and we reached Gatwick just 15 minutes late.

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Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H=heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	April/May							
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>				6	3			
2	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			5					
3	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>			12					
4	Caucasian Grouse	<i>Lyrurus mlokosiewiczi</i>	2	4	✓					
5	Caucasian Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus caucasicus</i>		3	H					
6	Chukar Partridge	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>						2	5	
7	Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>							H	
8	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>					H	H		
9	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>					2	2		
10	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>					4			
11	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>					4			
12	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					3			
13	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>					15			
14	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>					20			
15	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>					2			
16	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					2			
17	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>					✓			
18	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>					1			
19	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>					3			
20	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>							1	
21	Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	2	2						
22	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>					1		1	
23	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>					1	12		
24	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	1	5			1	✓	✓	
25	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>						2		
26	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>						1	2	
27	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>					1			
28	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>								
29	Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	1				1	4	3	
30	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	2	2						
31	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	4	3	1		1	2		
32	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>						1		
33	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>						4	2	
34	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>					1	2	2	
35	Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>							1	
36	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	1						1	
37	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>					1		1	
38	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
39	Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>	40+	5	2	1	1	4		
40	Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>							2	
41	Corn Crane	<i>Crex crex</i>						H		
42	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					5			
43	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>					4	2		
44	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					2			
45	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					4			
46	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			1					
47	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>						1		

	Common name	Scientific name	April/May							
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	3		1		3			
49	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					✓			
50	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>							7	
51	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>					✓			
52	Armenian Gull	<i>Larus armenicus</i>					10			
53	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>					2			
54	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>					4			
55	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>					2			
56	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>					20			
57	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>					10			
58	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>					6			
59	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>							6	
61	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			1		2		3	
62	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>						1	4	
63	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓		
64	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	✓			✓				
65	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		H	H		2	2	2	
66	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>						1	2	
67	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>			1					
68	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>		6					2	
69	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
70	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>							7	
71	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				1	1			
72	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>					✓	✓	✓	
73	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					1	1	2	
74	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>				1				
75	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>							H	
76	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>							3	
77	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
78	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>					1	2		
79	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>			1					
80	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		3						
81	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	1		✓	✓	✓			
82	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>			3	1	1			
83	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>						4	2	
84	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>						3	1	
85	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		3	6	2		✓	✓	
86	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
87	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
88	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>							✓	
89	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>					✓			
90	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
91	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
92	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	✓	✓						
93	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓					
94	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
95	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				✓		✓		
96	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>						✓		
97	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>					✓	✓	✓	
98	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	3							

	Common name	Scientific name	April/May							
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
99	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>						✓	✓	
100	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>					✓	✓	✓	
101	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>					1			
102	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>								
103	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			5	4				
104	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
105	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			H					
106	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓			✓				
107	Mountain Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus sindianus</i>	✓		✓					
108	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				2				
109	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	✓					✓		
110	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>						3		
111	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		✓	✓			✓		
112	Menetries's Warbler	<i>Sylvia mystacea</i>						2		
113	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		H		H				
114	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H		H				
115	Krüper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>				H				
116	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>					2			
117	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	1				2			
118	Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>					✓	✓	45	
119	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
120	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	✓	✓	✓					
121	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
122	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓		✓				
123	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>				H	H	H	H	
124	Semi-collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	1							
125	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>						1	1	
126	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	3	✓	✓				
127	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		3		1				
128	Güldenstädt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogastrus</i>	3		1	1				
129	Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>			4					
130	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>					1			
131	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maura</i>						2		
132	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	1	1	2	1		1		
133	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	2	3	✓	✓		✓		
134	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>					✓		✓	
135	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>					✓		✓	
136	Finsch's Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>					2			
137	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	1	1	4					
138	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
139	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>						✓	✓	
140	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>					2			
141	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓	✓				
142	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		1			✓			
143	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
144	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
145	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>					✓	✓	✓	
146	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			1	✓			✓	
147	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>						✓		
148	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
149	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				

	Common name	Scientific name	April/May							
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
150	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>			H					
151	Great Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>	2		3					
152	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓					✓		
153	Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>	12	1	45	5				
154	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>					✓	✓	✓	
155	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
156	Red-fronted Serin	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>		6	6					
157	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		6	2					
158	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>				H	✓	✓	✓	
159	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	1			2		1		
160	Oortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>						1	3	
161	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>						✓	✓	

Mammals (Number of sightings)

Red Squirrel, *Sciurus vulgaris*, 2

Eastern Caucasian Tur, *Capra caucasica*, 15

Musk rat /Coypu, 3

Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, 6

Golden Jackal, *Canes aureus*, 1

Amphibians & Reptiles

Green Toad, *Bufo viridis*, 1

Blunt-nosed Viper, *Macrovipera lebetiba*, 1

Spur-thighed Tortoise, *Testudo graeca*, ✓

Marsh Frog, *Pelophylax ridibundus*, ✓

Caucasian Agama, *Laudakia caucasica*, ✓

Invertebrates

Scorpion sp, 3