

Georgia in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

16th – 24th April 2026



Great Rosefinch



Wallcreeper



Krüper's Nuthatch



Bearded Vulture

Tour report by Chris Griffin



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Summary

Over the course of the trip, we had enjoyed a remarkable diversity of wildlife and habitats, with highlights including Caucasian Snowcock, Wallcreeper, Great Rosefinch, Demoiselle Crane, Menetries's Warbler, Finsch's Wheatear, Saker Falcon and countless other memorable species. Combined with spectacular scenery, extremes of weather, excellent food and warm Georgian hospitality, the tour provided a truly unforgettable experience.

Day 1

Thursday 16th April

Our tour began with an overnight flight from London Heathrow, and we arrived in Georgia in the early hours of Friday morning.

Day 2

Friday 17th April

After collecting our luggage, we were met by Nika, our local guide for the tour, and transferred into Tbilisi. With a few hours available to us before continuing north, we checked into a hotel where everyone had the opportunity to rest, freshen up, and recover from the overnight journey. The break was much appreciated, and allowed us to start the tour a little more refreshed and ready for the days ahead.

Following breakfast, we loaded the bus and began our journey north towards Stepantsminda. Before long, we made a brief stop at a roadside shop to stock up on water and other essentials. Even this short break produced our first exciting sightings of the tour, with a small passage of raptors moving overhead. Egyptian Vulture, and Booted and Steppe Eagles were seen drifting northwards, providing an excellent introduction to the birds of the Caucasus.

Continuing along the Georgian Military Highway, we made our first dedicated birding stop near Ananuri. The weather remained pleasantly cool, though bright sunshine was beginning to warm the woodland. Our primary target here was Semi-collared Flycatcher, a species which can often prove elusive. Initially the woodland appeared rather quiet, with only a handful of Willow Warblers and a small party of Long-tailed Tits moving through the trees. After a patient search, however, Nika picked up some movement on the wooded slope below the track. Moments later, a female Semi-collared Flycatcher emerged and showed well, allowing everyone good views of our first major target species of the trip.

As we climbed higher into the mountains, evidence of recent road closures became increasingly apparent. Long lines of lorries were parked along the roadside, waiting for access to the mountain pass after several days of disruption. Despite the traffic, the scenery became steadily more impressive, and a number of Alpine Choughs were noted perched on the roofs of ski chalets overlooking the valley.

Our next stop was at the Gudauri Panorama, where deep snow still covered much of the surrounding landscape. The views from the viewpoint were spectacular, stretching across rugged peaks and snow-covered slopes. More Alpine Choughs wheeled around the cliffs, while an interesting set of tracks visible through the telescope on the opposite hillside attracted our attention. Nika suggested these most likely belonged to a Brown Bear, and appeared to lead towards a small cave which may have served as a winter den.

Mindful of the increasing traffic through the tunnels ahead, we pressed on and arrived at the Kazbegi Gold Hotel during the early afternoon. After an excellent lunch and some time to settle into our rooms, we headed out for our first birding excursion around Stepantsminda. Our destination was the local refuse tip, a site well-known to visiting birders. The area immediately proved productive, with our first White-winged Redstarts and Ring Ouzels of the tour showing well on the rough ground and among the scattered bushes.

The highlight of the afternoon soon followed, when a large finch appeared atop a bush nearby. A quick look through the telescope confirmed it as a female Great Rosefinch. This species has become increasingly difficult to locate in recent years, and has been missed by many visiting groups, making the sighting particularly welcome. The bird remained in view for several minutes, allowing everyone to enjoy excellent scope views.

As if that was not enough, Nika soon drew our attention to the slopes above the woodland on the far side of the valley. Careful scanning through the telescope revealed a sizeable gathering of Caucasian Black Grouse assembling along a ridge, seemingly preparing for an evening lek. Although distant, the distinctive lyre-shaped tails of the males were clearly visible. More birds continued to arrive, and by the end of the watch over forty individuals had gathered on the hillside.

With the light beginning to fade, we returned to the hotel for a short break before dinner. After completing the day's checklist and reflecting on an excellent first day in the mountains, everyone headed to bed in anticipation of an early start and further exploration of the Caucasus the following morning.

Day 3

Saturday 18th April

The following morning began before dawn, with tea and coffee available before we boarded the bus for the short drive up the slopes of Mount Kuro. Winding our way through the narrow streets of Stepantsminda, we noted several Ring Ouzels along the roadside, before beginning the final ascent via a series of steep switchbacks, towards the famous and charming Icon of Elias of Stepantsminda chapel.

After arriving at the monastery, we faced a short but surprisingly strenuous climb through calf-deep snow to reach a rocky viewpoint overlooking the surrounding valleys. Here, we set up our telescopes and began scanning the towering cliffs, listening for our principal target of the morning: Caucasian Snowcock.

It was not long before the first haunting calls echoed around the mountainsides, the eerie whistles carrying across the valleys. Although we could hear several birds calling, locating them among the vast expanses of rock proved far more challenging. Fortunately, there was plenty to keep us occupied while we searched. Numerous Water Pipits and Northern Wheatears were feeding on the exposed slopes, while a magnificent Bearded Vulture drifted across the valley, providing excellent views as it cruised effortlessly along the ridges.

Eventually, an adult Caucasian Snowcock was located on a rocky slope to our right. The bird showed exceptionally well through the telescope, although it disappeared behind a ridge before everyone in the group had managed to get onto it. We continued searching and were rewarded when it reappeared, alongside a second bird, presumably its mate. Both birds remained in view for several minutes, before flying across the valley and disappearing among the boulders on a distant slope. A handful of Caucasian Black Grouse were also seen during the morning, adding further interest, before we eventually returned to the hotel for a well-earned breakfast.

After refuelling and enjoying a much-needed coffee, we headed towards Sno Lake, an area well known for attracting migrant birds, thanks to its extensive stands of sea buckthorn. Upon arrival, our attention was immediately drawn to a colourful gathering of Yellow Wagtails feeding along the lakeshore. Many of the birds were in full breeding plumage, creating a striking display against the mountain backdrop. We had barely started walking along the track when another migrant appeared in the form of a Greater Short-toed Lark, feeding on the path ahead of us. Nearby, several Common Sandpipers were feeding around the lake margins, while a smart Steppe Buzzard drifted overhead. Further along the river, we encountered both White-throated Dipper and Eurasian Hoopoe feeding along the banks. The surrounding vegetation held a good variety of smaller migrants, including Common Chiffchaff, Mountain Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and several Long-tailed Tits of the Caucasian race.

One of the highlights of the morning came when a female Bluethroat was found feeding along the edge of the track. Initially some distance away, the bird gradually worked closer and closer, until it was feeding only a few metres from the group. Its confiding behaviour allowed prolonged views, and provided excellent photographic opportunities for those carrying cameras.

Continuing through the woodland, we added Blue and Coal Tits before beginning our return towards the bus. Along the way, we encountered a superb male Rock Bunting perched prominently in the bushes. Shortly afterwards, another migrant appeared, in the form of a Wryneck. The bird showed remarkably well in the open, frequently dropping to the ground to feed, allowing everyone to appreciate its intricate, camouflaged plumage. As we returned towards Stepantsminda, several European Bee-eaters passed overhead; we boarded the bus and headed for our afternoon destination at the Stepantsminda Dam.

Our primary target here was Wallcreeper, another of the region's most sought-after species. After crossing the dam itself, we began scanning the surrounding cliffs and listening for calls. A Grey Wagtail feeding below the dam provided some initial interest, but there was no immediate sign of our quarry. After searching several promising sections of rock face without success, Chris happened to glance over the wall of the dam and spotted a stunning male Wallcreeper almost directly below us! The bird soon flew up onto the cliff face, where its crimson wings flashed brilliantly against the grey rock. The views through the telescope were outstanding, and as the afternoon progressed it became apparent that several individuals were present. Nika estimated that there may have been as many as four birds in the area, possibly representing two breeding pairs.

While searching for another Wallcreeper, which had disappeared among the dam structures, we also found a very attractive Siberian Stonechat, possibly of the Caspian form. The bird showed beautifully as it sheltered from the wind and hunted for insects along the rocky embankments. To round off the afternoon, we took a short walk to an area of sea buckthorn where Great Rosefinch can occasionally be found. Although we were unable to relocate the species, the excursion was still memorable thanks to an enormous flock of Alpine Choughs numbering around 150 birds, which swept overhead in a swirling mass.

With the day's birding complete, we returned to the hotel for dinner and the evening checklist. It had been another excellent day in the Caucasus, the highlights being superb views of both Caucasian Snowcock and Wallcreeper, two of the region's most iconic species.

Day 4

Sunday 19th April

With excellent views of Caucasian Snowcock already secured the previous day, we opted for a more relaxed start to the morning, and headed instead for the sea buckthorn plains near Stepantsminda before breakfast. Leaving the hotel shortly after dawn, we crossed the road and wandered out through the fields, hoping to connect with Great Rosefinch and any migrants that might have dropped in overnight. The first birds of the morning included several Greater Short-toed Larks moving through the fields, while a stunning male Whinchat briefly perched atop a fence near one of the houses. The bird showed beautifully through the telescope before dropping back into cover. As we continued our walk, most of the birds encountered were familiar species, such as Water Pipit, Ring Ouzel and Northern Wheatear, and the occasional overhead migrant. With sunny conditions and relatively light winds, however, we remained optimistic that further discoveries awaited.

We spent time carefully scanning the tops of bushes and listening for birds moving overhead, and our persistence was eventually rewarded when Nika located a female Great Rosefinch perched on top of a sea buckthorn bush. Although somewhat distant, the bird showed well through the telescope before dropping back into cover. Hoping for improved views, we continued further up the slope and soon discovered a small clearing, where a magnificent male Great Rosefinch suddenly appeared. Its beautifully spotted plumage glowed in the morning sunshine as it perched briefly in full view, before flying deeper into the vegetation.

As we watched, more birds began to appear. What initially seemed to be a single sighting quickly developed into one of the highlights of the trip, with at least six Great Rosefinches present, comprising three males and three females, and possibly a seventh bird hidden among the bushes. The birds spent considerable time feeding on the ground, allowing prolonged telescope views and excellent photographic opportunities. Given the species' reputation as a notoriously difficult bird to observe well, everyone was delighted with the encounter.

Eventually we returned to the hotel for breakfast, before setting out again, this time exploring the opposite side of the river. After driving a short distance into town, we crossed a small bridge and began walking along a riverside track. Almost immediately, we encountered another Wryneck, perched openly in a tree at eye level, before flying overhead and disappearing into woodland behind us.

The riverside vegetation held a selection of migrants, including Mountain Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler, while a superb Camberwell Beauty butterfly proved an unexpected bonus and a new species for some members of the group. Common Sandpipers fed along the river margins, and although bird activity was generally rather subdued, a singing Blackcap provided additional interest. At one point, Nika heard a brief call of a Penduline Tit from riverside trees, although despite our efforts the bird remained hidden from view. A second Camberwell Beauty drifting along the valley was a welcome consolation.

Continuing along the track, we passed several horse paddocks and searched the surrounding bushes for migrants and rosefinches. Although initially quiet, the area proved far more productive on our return journey. After spending some time exploring the vegetation and enjoying brief views of another Wallcreeper, a thin call attracted the attention of Chris and Nika. A short search revealed a pair of Rock Buntings, which eventually showed well through the telescope. Shortly afterwards, a small flock of Red-fronted Serins arrived and gave superb views.

Late in the morning, we returned to the bus and headed north towards Dariali Monastery, situated close to the Georgian-Russian border. Before reaching the monastery itself, we stopped briefly to explore a nearby track, where

another Rock Bunting was found feeding openly beside the road. Several Chiffchaffs were also present, while Alpine Choughs could be seen soaring around the higher peaks.

Upon arrival at the monastery, some members of the group explored the historic building, while others focused their attention on the surrounding mountainsides. Griffon Vultures were immediately evident, drifting across the ridges in impressive numbers, while several Jays moved back and forth across the valley. Nika then directed the telescope towards a distant Golden Eagle eyrie, situated high on a remote cliff face. The nest itself was difficult to discern, but after some patient waiting an adult Golden Eagle appeared and circled above the ridge, before disappearing from view.



Bluethroat



Montagu's Harrier



Red-breasted Flycatcher



Yellow Wagtail

The excitement continued when a Bearded Vulture entered the valley and began drifting slowly across the cliffs opposite the monastery. The bird provided outstanding views through the telescope, both in flight and when perched on the rocks, although it was continually harassed by local Jackdaws. Watching this iconic species at such close range was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the day.

Following lunch and a short rest back at the hotel, we spent the afternoon exploring the Sno Valley once again. Our first stop was one of Nika's ringing sites, where we searched for White-winged Redstart and additional Great Rosefinches. Bird activity was rather limited, with only a handful of Willow Warblers present, but a pair of White-winged Redstarts eventually showed at the back of the site.

We continued up the valley towards the open plains. Several Griffon Vultures were again encountered overhead, but our principal target was Horned Lark. Nika suspected that many birds had already moved higher up the slopes as the snowline retreated, although this remained the most recent location from which the species had been reported. Scanning the plains, we initially found a distant bird perched on a rock which, through the telescope,

proved to be our first Mistle Thrushes of the tour. Several Northern Wheatears were also scattered across the open ground. As we continued our search, a Horned Lark was suddenly located, feeding among a group of Water Pipits. The bird showed exceptionally well through the telescope, and provided a fitting finale to our final afternoon in the Caucasus.

With evening approaching, we returned to the bus and made our way back to the hotel. The day had delivered a wonderful combination of sought-after regional specialities and migrants, with prolonged views of Great Rosefinch, Bearded Vulture and Horned Lark among the many highlights, before our journey back towards Tbilisi the following morning.

Day 5

Monday 20th April

Our final morning in Stepantsminda began under dramatically different conditions. Overnight, a heavy snowfall had occurred, and we awoke to blizzard conditions sweeping across the valley. Plans for another early excursion in search of Great Rosefinch were quickly abandoned, but rather than remain indoors, we decided to take advantage of a sheltered seating area at the hotel, and to watch the weather unfold. What initially seemed like a compromise soon developed into one of the most remarkable migration spectacles of the entire tour.

We settled beneath the shelter and immediately noticed birds moving through the snowstorm. Water Pipits streamed continuously across the valley, often appearing suddenly from the swirling snow before disappearing once more into the whiteout. Common Redstarts, Willow Warblers and other migrants appeared almost constantly, dropping out of the sky to seek temporary refuge in the hotel grounds and surrounding bushes. As the morning progressed, the scale of the movement became increasingly apparent. Flocks of Black-headed Gulls and Gull-billed Terns were forced low by the weather, drifting through the valley in conditions that clearly made migration difficult. An immature Eurasian Goshawk added further excitement when it was found perched in nearby trees, providing excellent telescope views before eventually disappearing into the snowfall.

The most memorable sighting, however, came in the form of Great Rosefinches. Throughout the morning, birds appeared intermittently on the tops of distant bushes, and by the end of the watch we had counted at least fourteen individuals. Several showed remarkably well, despite the weather, their colourful plumage standing out against the snow-covered landscape. Watching these sought-after birds feeding and sheltering among the drifting snow was a truly unforgettable experience.

The migrants continued to arrive throughout the watch. Wood Warbler, Mountain Chiffchaff, Ring Ouzel, Whinchat and Tree Pipit were all recorded, while impressive numbers of Skylarks and Greater Short-toed Larks moved through the valley. By the end of the session, we estimated that between four and five hundred Water Pipits had passed the hotel, accompanied by around one-hundred-and-fifty Tree Pipits, approximately a hundred Skylarks and over thirty Greater Short-toed Larks. Even a Hawfinch was noted flying through the storm. The spectacle provided a fitting farewell to the Caucasus mountains, and demonstrated perfectly how weather conditions can concentrate migrants in extraordinary numbers.

Despite the excitement, the worsening weather reminded us that it was time to begin our journey back towards Tbilisi. Conscious that further snowfall could potentially close the pass, we packed our luggage, said goodbye to our hosts at the Kazbegi Hotel, and began the drive south.

After successfully crossing the pass, we stopped for lunch at a roadside restaurant, and took the opportunity to explore the surrounding area. The stop proved surprisingly productive. A Montagu's Harrier drifted overhead, followed shortly afterwards by a Purple Heron heading along the valley. A flock of Common Swifts moved through, while a beautiful singing Common Redstart performed in gardens opposite the restaurant. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker provided another welcome addition, and showed well before disappearing into nearby trees.

Continuing south, we revisited the woodland at Ananuri in the hope of locating Semi-collared Flycatcher, or perhaps Red-breasted Flycatcher. Unfortunately, the woods proved exceptionally quiet, and despite considerable searching there was little sign of migrant activity. We therefore continued to an area known locally as Lami, a mosaic of agricultural fields, orchards and wetland habitat situated north of Tbilisi. The site immediately looked promising and before we had even begun exploring properly, a singing Red-breasted Flycatcher was heard from an adjacent orchard. Although we had to view through a chain-link fence, the bird showed beautifully among blossoming apple trees, allowing prolonged telescope views of what was a superb adult male in breeding plumage.

Encouraged by this success, we set off across the fields. Purple Herons were regularly encountered moving overhead, while the hedgerows held numerous Whinchats and Common Redstarts. Large numbers of Swallows, and Sand and House Martins were feeding over the fields, accompanied by both European and Siberian Stonechats.

As we explored further, a sudden burst of excitement came when a stunning male Citrine Wagtail landed almost at our feet. The bird appeared so unexpectedly that both bird and observers seemed momentarily startled: it quickly flew overhead and disappeared across the fields. Nearby, a pair of Tree Sparrows showed particularly well.

Although the bushes themselves proved quieter than expected, more Purple Herons continued to pass overhead and one bird flushed from cover almost directly in front of us, before drifting away across the wetlands. As we began making our way back, our attention was drawn skywards by a Short-toed Snake Eagle circling above the fields. Soon, a second appeared, followed by a third, and then a fourth, resulting in the remarkable sight of four Short-toed Snake Eagles soaring together over the landscape. We spent considerable time watching these impressive raptors hunting over the open countryside. The day's final surprise came as a group of large birds appeared overhead and were quickly identified as Black Storks. The flock descended into the wetland area beyond the fields, but despite searching from higher ground, we were unable to relocate them among the network of channels and vegetation.

With evening approaching, we finally departed for Tbilisi. Upon arrival at our hotel, we gathered for dinner in the panoramic restaurant overlooking the city. An enormous feast of traditional Georgian dishes awaited us, providing a memorable conclusion to another excellent day in the field. From the extraordinary snowstorm migration watch in Stepantsminda to the raptors, flycatchers and wetland birds encountered on our journey south, it had been a fascinating and highly varied day, bringing our time in the Greater Caucasus to a fitting close.

Day 6

Tuesday 21st April

After breakfast on the rooftop terrace overlooking Tbilisi, we packed our luggage and prepared for the next stage of the tour. The morning was noticeably cooler than previous days, with overcast skies and occasional drizzle hanging over the city. Today marked our departure from the capital and the beginning of our journey towards the remote south-eastern corner of Georgia, and the remarkable landscapes of Vashlovani National Park.

Better to negotiate the rougher roads ahead, we transferred into a convoy of four-wheel-drive vehicles, and headed south out of Tbilisi. Although the drive to Vashlovani would occupy much of the day, there were several key birding stops planned along the route.

Our first destination was the forested hills of Kvemo Kartli, an area of pine woodland renowned for another of Georgia's most sought-after speciality species: Krüper's Nuthatch. Light drizzle was still falling as we arrived, but almost immediately after stepping from the vehicles we heard the distinctive calls of our target echoing from the trees below. A brief period of patient searching quickly paid off, when a Krüper's Nuthatch appeared at close range, giving superb views as it worked its way through the pines. We followed the bird into the woodland for even better looks before returning to the roadside, where a second individual responded and perched obligingly in the open. The species showed exceptionally well and provided an excellent start to the day.

Continuing south-eastwards through the rolling hills, we encountered our first Isabelline Wheatears of the trip, while a Hoopoe perched on a low boulder beside the road appeared to have been grounded temporarily by the damp weather. A little later, while travelling towards Kumisi Reservoir, we stopped briefly to investigate a bird which had crossed the track ahead of us, although it unfortunately remained elusive. The stop was not without reward however, producing a Common Redstart in nearby bushes, a passing Montagu's Harrier, and a Levant Sparrowhawk circling overhead, presumably one of the later migrants moving north through the region.

Arriving at Kumisi Reservoir, we found the area teeming with birdlife. Recent flooding had rendered parts of the access track impassable, but from the edge of the inundated meadows we enjoyed excellent views across a landscape alive with migrants and waterbirds. Yellow Wagtails were abundant throughout the flooded fields, and were accompanied by several striking Citrine Wagtails. Along the wet margins we found Common Shelducks, a handsome flock of Garganeys, and an impressive selection of waders including Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Greenshank and Ruff. A nearby gull flock contained our first Armenian Gull of the tour, alongside Slender-billed Gulls, a Mediterranean Gull and Black-headed Gulls, while several Gull-billed Terns drifted across the reservoir.

The wetlands also held numerous Great and Cattle Egrets, and a wandering Glossy Ibis, while Great Cormorants passed overhead throughout our visit. Raptors were well represented, with several Marsh Harriers quartering the reedbeds and an Osprey perched prominently on one of the posts near the water's edge. We spent nearly two hours enjoying the remarkable diversity of birds present. One particularly productive area produced three Little Stints and a superb Terek Sandpiper, whose distinctive upturned bill and bright orange legs were admired through the telescopes. Shortly afterwards, another exciting bird appeared on the shoreline. Initial debate centred on whether it was a Black-winged or a Collared Pratincole, but after it took flight, the rich underwing colouration and white trailing edge to the wing confirmed it as a Collared.

Eventually we began making our way back towards the main road, but not before another excellent stop. Chris located a male Collared Flycatcher feeding in bushes beside a field, and after a little searching, everyone enjoyed wonderful views of this exquisite black-and-white migrant. A couple of Red-breasted Flycatchers were also present, while a pair of Penduline Tits finally gave excellent views, having proved frustratingly elusive earlier in the tour.

We found a sheltered spot beside a small pool and enjoyed the packed lunches prepared by the hotel. The weather remained unsettled, encouraging a relatively brief stop, but there was still time to enjoy the chorus of *Pelophylax* frogs calling from the water's edge, and a Purple Heron standing motionless among the reeds.

The afternoon was dominated by the long drive towards south-eastern Georgia and the Azerbaijani border. As we approached the famous David Gareja Monastery complex, we left the main road and explored a series of rough tracks crossing the semi-arid hills. Here, Nika suddenly called the vehicles to a halt, having spotted two birds feeding in a sparsely vegetated field. To our delight they proved to be Dotterels: this was a superb and unexpected record. The birds showed exceptionally well, and represented one of the most memorable sightings of the day. The surrounding steppe habitat held numerous other species, including Greater Short-toed Larks, our first Calandra Larks, several Crested Larks and multiple Montagu's Harriers. An Egyptian Vulture drifting overhead provided another welcome addition.

Arriving at David Gareja later in the afternoon, we spent time exploring this remarkable monastery complex, which is built directly into the sandstone cliffs close to the Azerbaijani border. The setting itself was extraordinary, and proved to be one of the most atmospheric locations visited during the tour.

Birders, however, were naturally drawn to another attraction. Western Rock Nuthatches were quickly located around the monastery buildings and surrounding cliffs, providing superb views and allowing everyone to appreciate one of the region's most characteristic species. The combination of spectacular scenery, ancient architecture and excellent birding made this a particularly memorable stop. As we returned towards the vehicles, a pair of Pied Wheatears showed beautifully among the rocky slopes, while several Tree Pipits were also encountered nearby.

Our final birding stop of the day took us to a series of shallow saline lakes on the opposite side of the valley. Although we were unable to locate the hoped-for Demoiselle Cranes or Red-necked Phalaropes, the wetlands still proved productive. Little Stints, Curlew and Marsh Sandpipers and Curlews were all present, while several Turkestan Short-toed Larks were heard singing and eventually located on the ground, allowing useful comparisons with the more familiar Greater Short-toed Larks. A stunning male Montagu's Harrier drifting below our viewpoint provided a fitting final sighting before we resumed the journey to Dedoplistskaro, our base for the next few nights.

By the time we arrived at the hotel, the light was fading and everyone was ready for a well-earned rest. It had been a long but immensely rewarding day, taking us from the pine forests of central Georgia to the semi-desert landscapes of the south-east, with highlights including Krüper's Nuthatch, Eurasian Dotterel, Collared Flycatcher and Western Rock Nuthatch, alongside an impressive diversity of wetland birds and migrants.

Day 7

Wednesday 22nd April

Our first full day in Vashlovani National Park began well before dawn. After an early breakfast, we boarded our fleet of four-wheel-drive vehicles and headed out into one of the most remote and distinctive landscapes in Georgia. It quickly became apparent why the use of off-road vehicles was essential, as we left the main roads behind and ventured onto a network of rough tracks crossing the vast grasslands and semi-desert habitats of the park.

Even during the drive, birdlife was abundant. Calandra, Greater Short-toed and Turkestan Short-toed Larks, as well as more familiar Skylarks filled the morning air with song, while numerous birds flushed from the tracks ahead of the vehicles as we progressed deeper into the reserve.

Our first stop was at an abandoned airfield, complete with derelict hangars and open expanses of steppe habitat. The area was dominated by Corn Buntings, which seemed to occupy every available perch. Their jangling songs

accompanied us throughout the stop, while Calandra Larks perched conspicuously on fences and scattered bushes. Scanning the surrounding landscape produced a steady stream of birds. Several Gull-billed Terns passed overhead on migration, accompanied by Montagu's Harriers, Black Kites, Bee-eaters and Rollers. It was a productive introduction to the open habitats which would characterise much of the day.

As we continued through the park, we made numerous short stops whenever interesting birds appeared. A brief comfort stop in a small village proved unexpectedly rewarding. House Sparrows were abundant around the buildings, while several Rosy Starlings passed overhead. A Purple Heron showed particularly well nearby and, while some of the group attempted to obtain closer views, attention was briefly diverted by a beautiful Purple-shot Copper butterfly, which provided a welcome non-avian highlight.



Common Rock Thrush



Roller



Wryneck



Turkestan Short-toed Lark

Shortly afterwards came one of the defining moments of the tour. As we crested a gentle rise, Nika suddenly braked sharply and announced over the radio that there were Demoiselle Cranes ahead. Two adult birds were calmly feeding beside the track, allowing everyone excellent views from the vehicles. Once the birds had moved to a comfortable distance, we carefully exited and enjoyed prolonged telescope views as the pair wandered across the grassland, almost completely unconcerned by our presence. The elegant cranes proved to be one of the most memorable sightings of the trip and we spent considerable time admiring them before eventually moving on. The surrounding bushes held further treasures. A scratchy song emanating from a patch of scrub led us to a superb male Menetries's Warbler, which eventually climbed into view and sang from the top of a bush. The bird showed exceptionally well.

Throughout the morning, we continued exploring the vast steppe landscape. Raptors were regularly encountered, including several Pallid Harriers which drifted low over the grasslands, often providing excellent views. A brief Little Owl perched atop a concrete structure before disappearing from sight, while Isabelline and Eastern Black-

eared Wheatears were regularly encountered along the tracks. Woodchat Shrike proved surprisingly scarce, with only a single individual recorded during the day, while distant Griffon Vultures occasionally drifted across the horizon. Rollers remained a constant feature of the landscape and frequently perched beside the tracks, allowing close views from the vehicles.

As we approached our lunch stop, a pair of Alpine Swifts appeared over a series of ponds and provided excellent views. Their immense size was particularly striking as they swept low overhead. We then enjoyed a relaxing lunch beneath the shade of trees at a small lodge, a welcome respite from the increasingly warm conditions. With temperatures approaching 20°C, the shade, coffee and an opportunity to sit down for a while were greatly appreciated.

After lunch, we ventured even deeper into Vashlovani National Park, passing through a series of security checkpoints close to the Azerbaijani border. The scenery became increasingly dramatic, with vast open plains stretching towards distant ridges and escarpments. Goitered Gazelles were seen on several occasions, often appearing in small groups running across the distant grasslands. These elegant mammals added another dimension to the steppe experience, and highlighted the unique character of the region.

Earlier in the day, we had paused at a site which formerly held an Eastern Imperial Eagle nest. Although the nest itself had collapsed, our visit was still highly successful, producing two eagles soaring overhead. A particularly striking wheatear also attracted considerable attention. Careful study eventually confirmed the bird as a Finsch's Wheatear, a much-wanted target species, whose extensive white rump and back pattern were clearly visible through the telescope.

The raptor list continued to grow throughout the afternoon, with a Lesser Spotted Eagle added as we travelled through the borderlands. Later, we explored an escarpment and a small valley system, where a brief but welcome Eastern Orphean Warbler was seen moving through the vegetation. Nearby, a distant rock nuthatch perched on the cliffs. Although views were challenging, its large bill suggested that it was most likely an Eastern Rock Nuthatch.

The latter part of the afternoon was spent exploring an extraordinary landscape dominated by a vast eroded basin surrounded by cliffs and wooded valleys. The area has long been associated with reports of Persian Leopard, although the species has not been reliably seen here for many years. Wolves are still known to patrol the region, adding to the sense of wilderness that permeates the landscape. We eventually stopped on a high ridge overlooking the basin, where spectacular views stretched across the park. Alpine Swifts swept past at close range, Bee-eaters drifted overhead, and a remarkably confiding Tawny Pipit allowed excellent views nearby. The combination of dramatic scenery and excellent wildlife made for a memorable conclusion to the day's exploration.

As evening approached, we began the journey back towards Dedoplistskaro. The return drive offered further opportunities to enjoy the abundant birdlife of the steppe, including countless Corn Buntings and several Ortolan Buntings perched on roadside wires. Everyone had enjoyed a long but immensely rewarding day in one of Georgia's most remarkable protected areas. Highlights included the unforgettable pair of Demoiselle Cranes, Menetries's Warbler, Finsch's Wheatear, Eastern Imperial Eagle and the spectacular landscapes of Vashlovani itself, all of which combined to make this one of the standout days of the tour.

Day 8

Thursday 23rd April

Our final full day in Georgia began with another early departure into the remarkable landscapes of Vashlovani National Park. With clear skies and warm conditions forecast, we were keen to make the most of our last opportunity to explore this unique corner of the country. Not far into the park, we made our first stop beside a series of roadside wires. Several male Ortolan Buntings were perched prominently in the morning light. Sharing the same wires were a number of stunning Common Rock Thrushes in full breeding plumage, their rich colours glowing in the early sunshine. While we admired these birds, the beautiful song of a Woodlark drifted across the valley from somewhere high above us. After some searching, we eventually managed to locate the bird singing high overhead: it provided both excellent views and a memorable soundtrack to the morning.

As we continued through the vast grassland landscapes, familiar species from the previous day were encountered regularly. Corn Buntings remained abundant, while Isabelline and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears, and numerous larks occupied the open terrain. We made several short stops throughout the morning to enjoy closer views of Calandra and Turkestan Short-toed Larks, while Montagu's and Marsh Harriers drifted across the grasslands in search of prey. Further along the route we paused to watch a small group of Chukar Partridges walking across a ridge, providing much better views than many members of the group had previously enjoyed. The surrounding habitat gradually changed as we entered areas of open woodland, which bore a striking resemblance to the cork oak landscapes of central Spain. Here, we encountered additional Woodchat Shrikes, Turkestan Short-toed Larks and a scattering of migrants, including Common Redstarts and Whinchats.

Birds of prey continued to feature prominently throughout the morning. Egyptian Vultures and Eastern Imperial Eagles were encountered intermittently, while a particularly obliging Steppe Eagle perched in the open and allowed prolonged study. The bird showed exceptionally well, enabling everyone to appreciate the distinctive features of this impressive species, including the characteristic gape line, extending back beyond the eye.

By midday, the temperature had risen considerably, and we welcomed the opportunity to stop for lunch in the shade of a group of trees near the reservoir. The setting proved memorable for reasons beyond the birding, as a large flock of goats and sheep was driven down to the water to drink, briefly surrounding our lunch stop and providing a fascinating glimpse into local pastoral life.

After lunch, we descended into a partially-flooded valley below the dam, where extensive bushes and reedbeds offered suitable habitat for one of the day's principal targets: Black Francolin. The species proved every bit as elusive as expected. Although several birds could be heard calling from dense cover, obtaining views was far more challenging. Eventually, persistence paid off, and we managed a number of brief but satisfying glimpses of male francolins moving through the vegetation. The area also produced several additional highlights. A pair of White-tailed Eagles circled overhead, while Menetries's Warblers sang from the surrounding scrub, and occasionally climbed into view. A Penduline Tit was also seen briefly along one of the drainage channels.

We crossed the dam and explored the open grasslands beyond. Rollers were particularly active, and several birds were watched displaying, vividly demonstrating how the species earned its name. Bee-eaters remained a constant presence overhead, while a single Lesser Kestrel was noted around a building that formerly supported a breeding colony. Unfortunately, recent renovation work appeared to have rendered the site unsuitable, and only one bird remained in the area.

Our final major stop of the day proved to be one of the most rewarding of the entire tour. Reaching an open hillside dominated by towering cliffs, Nika and Chris immediately began scanning the escarpment for one of Georgia's rarest breeding raptors. Initial observations produced an Egyptian Vulture at its nest site, along with several Griffon Vultures soaring above the cliffs, but there was no immediate sign of our principal target.

Eventually Chris located the bird, perched quietly on a distant rocky ledge. Through the telescopes, it resolved into a magnificent Saker Falcon. This scarce breeder remains one of Georgia's rarest raptors, with only a handful of known breeding pairs in the country, and the site we were visiting is regarded as one of the few reliable locations for the species. The prolonged views we enjoyed represented a genuine privilege, and provided a fitting highlight for our final day in the field.

With the afternoon drawing on, we reluctantly began the journey back towards civilisation. Leaving the vast landscapes of Vashlovani behind, we returned to Dedoplistskaro to collect our luggage before beginning the drive back to Tbilisi. Arriving in the capital during the evening, we gathered for a final celebratory meal. It provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on the many highlights of the tour, and to thank Nika for his outstanding expertise, enthusiasm and knowledge throughout our time in Georgia.

From Ortolan Buntings and Common Rock Thrushes, to Black Francolins, Steppe Eagle and the exceptionally rare Saker Falcon, our final day had provided a fitting conclusion to an unforgettable exploration of one of the Western Palearctic's most exciting birding destinations.

Day 9

Friday 24th April

Our final day began with an early departure for the airport. With luggage packed and the memories of the previous eight days still fresh in our minds, we said our farewells and made our way to the terminal for the journey home. The travel arrangements proceeded smoothly and, before long, we were airborne and heading back towards Heathrow. The flight provided an opportunity to reflect on an extraordinary tour, which had taken us from the snow-covered peaks of the Greater Caucasus, to the vast steppe and semi-desert landscapes of Vashlovani National Park.

Arriving back at Heathrow, we parted ways with fond memories of a wonderful country and a fantastic holiday, filled with exceptional wildlife, superb birding and great company throughout.

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Species lists

Birds

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>					✓	✓	
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>					✓		
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>					✓		
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>					✓		
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>					✓		
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				✓			
Caucasian Grouse	<i>Lyrurus mlokosiewiczi</i>	✓	✓	✓				
Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>							✓
Caucasian Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus caucasicus</i>		✓					
Chukar Partridge	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>						✓	✓
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>					✓		
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymartus melba</i>						✓	✓
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>						✓	✓
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	✓				✓		
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓		
Demoiselle Crane	<i>Grus virgo</i>						✓	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					✓		
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>					✓		
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>					✓	✓	
Eurasian Dotterel	<i>Eudromias morinellus</i>					✓		
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					✓		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					✓		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					✓		
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					✓	✓	
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>					✓		
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		✓			✓		
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>					✓		
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>					✓		
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>					✓		
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>					✓		
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓		
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>					✓	✓	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					✓		
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>					✓		
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>					✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				✓	✓		
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>					✓		
Armenian Gull	<i>Larus armenicus</i>					✓		✓
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>					✓		

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmaeus</i>					✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓			✓	✓		
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					✓		
Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>					✓		
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>				✓	✓		
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					✓		
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>					✓		
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>					✓		
Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	✓	✓	✓				
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	✓				✓		✓
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>						✓	✓
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>						✓	
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	✓				✓		
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>						✓	✓
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>			✓				
Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza brevipes</i>					✓		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>				✓			
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>						✓	✓
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>					✓		✓
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>					✓	✓	✓
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>							✓
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>					✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>					✓	✓	✓
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					✓		
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>					✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>		✓	✓				
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>				✓			
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>					✓	✓	
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>							✓
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>							✓
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓				
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>						✓	✓
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	

		April 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	✓	✓	✓				
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>						✓	✓
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓						
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>					✓		✓
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>							✓
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>					✓	✓	✓
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>			✓	✓			
Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>					✓	✓	✓
Turkestan Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala heinei</i>					✓	✓	✓
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>				✓	✓		
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mountain Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus sindianus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			✓	✓	✓		
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>							✓
Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca crassirostris</i>						✓	
Menetries's Warbler	<i>Curruca mystacea</i>						✓	✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Krüper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>					✓		
Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>						✓	
Eastern Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta tephronota</i>					✓	✓	
Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>		✓	✓				
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	✓						
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			✓	✓			
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>					✓		
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>		✓					
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>				✓	✓		
Semicollared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	✓						
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓			✓	
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Güldenstädt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogastus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>							✓

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>						✓	
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>					✓	✓	✓
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>					✓		✓
Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>						✓	✓
Finsch's Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>						✓	✓
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>						✓	✓
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				✓	✓		✓
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>						✓	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>				✓	✓		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓				
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>						✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>				✓			
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>						✓	
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>				✓			
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Great Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>			✓	✓			
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-fronted Serin	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>					✓	✓	✓
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>		✓	✓				
Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>						✓	✓

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>				✓		✓	✓
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	✓						
Goitered Gazelle	<i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>						✓	
Daghestan Tur	<i>Capra cylindricornis</i>	✓	✓	✓				
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓				✓	✓
European Mink	<i>Mustela lutreola</i>						✓	

Amphibians & reptiles

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Caucasian Wood Frog	<i>Rana macrocnemis</i>		✓					
a marsh/pool frog	<i>Pelophylax</i> sp.		✓					
Transcaucasian Steppe Runner	<i>Eremias pleskei</i>							✓
Caucasian Rock Lizard	<i>Darevskia caucasica</i>							
Caucasian Agama	<i>Laudakia caucasica</i>						✓	
Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>							✓
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>						✓	

Butterflies

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Common Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>							✓
Common Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	✓					✓	✓
Berger's Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias alfacariensis</i>							✓
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>						✓	✓
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	✓					✓	✓
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓					✓	✓
Western Dappled White	<i>Euchloe crameri</i>						✓	✓
Common Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>						✓	
Purple-shot Copper	<i>Lycaena alciphron</i>						✓	
Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>						✓	
Green-underside Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>						✓	✓
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>						✓	✓
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>							✓
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		✓	✓				
Southern Comma	<i>Polygonia egea</i>			✓				
Camberwell Beauty	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>			✓				
Great Banded Grayling	<i>Brintesia circe</i>						✓	
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>							✓