

MONGOLIA

'There is something so exciting about birding in Mongolia, first and foremost it really feels like no birder has visited any of the sites since our visit last year and that always adds to the anticipation. The tour really was an adventure although it started in somewhat leisurely fashion close to Ulaan Baataar where we saw Black Woodpeckers feeding chicks, extremely close up views of White-backed Woodpecker, Spotted Nutcracker, Brown Shrikes, Northern Goshawk, Demoiselle Crane and the ever popular Azure Tits in addition to a small passage of *phylloscopus* warblers including several Arctics, Two-barred Greenish and Dusky Warblers.

Our flight to the Gobi went very smoothly and after a first night's camping in the rain we were on the move towards Boon Tsagaan Nuur. During the morning we 'bumped' into displaying Oriental Plover (a species we saw on 4 days, twice displaying with their amazing stiff winged rocking action) and a Kozlow's Accentor. By mid-afternoon we had already seen Pallas's Fish Eagle, Swan and Bar-headed Geese but our evenings birding was cut short by more poor weather. The only upside of all this was to witness how well our Swedish tents cope with the wind and rain.

A full day around the lake produced a great selection of birds with Long-toed, Temminck's, Red-necked and Little Stints all offering nice comparisons in addition to Greater Sand Plover, Baillon's Crake, Oriental Reed and Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers, Lesser Kestrels, Red-crested Pochards, Ferruginous Ducks and Garganey.

Our real adventure started the next day where the heavy rain meant we had an extra 2 hours added to a leg stretch break. The beauty of this happening was never more evident than when an Oriental Honey Buzzard flew over, our only one of the trip! The next day we quite literally passed through the Gobi Altai, which not only showed the incredible resourcefulness of our driver (and chef and translator) but allowed us extra looks at Henderson's Ground Jay, Saker Falcon chicks on a nest and spectacular views of Golden Eagles. The saxaul scrub played host to Asian Desert Warblers and our first Saxaul Sparrows (later on we were to see several pairs visiting nest holes although rusty pipes aren't as aesthetically pleasing as nests in saxaul bushes!). Having said that the backdrop of sand dunes and that evenings sand storm, not to mention over 1000 Pallas's Sandgrouse wasn't too bad!

Driving towards our next Ger camp (everyone different but offering nice beds, fires if needed and space to spread out) we saw more Lammergeiers, Mongolian Finches and Black Vultures.

Over several visits we scoured the camps trees for migrants. No new birds for Mongolia this year but still some surprises like Eye-browed Thrush, Chestnut-eared Bunting, 2 Hawfinches looking very out of place sat on the sandy desert floor, a couple of Amur Falcons among a small group of Lesser Kestrels, a dark-morph Booted Eagle that spent 2 days around the camp, a second calendar year Daurian Jackdaw, 2 Carrion Crows, 6 Common Rosefinches, Asian Brown Flycatcher as well as the usual Dusky, Pallas's and Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers. It's always worth checking those trees as birds seem to change every few hours!

Yolyn Am is always a treat and during two full days we not only enjoyed terrific weather, but an early start rewarded us with 3 Altai Snowcock. In fact on one day we saw Altai Snowcock, Oriental Plover, Lammergeier, Wallcreeper, Great and Beautiful Rosefinches, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Himalayan and Black Vultures, Steppe Eagle, Golden Oriole, Kozlow's and Brown Accentors and Blyth's Pipit, does it get any better than that?

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Leaving the Gobi behind we headed to the north where forest fires to the east created some strange weather and cloudy days. This didn't deter us though and even if the birding was described (by the leader!) as dire one afternoon it soon warmed up the next day with Oriental Cuckoo, Red-throated Thrush, Red-throated Flycatcher, Olive-backed Pipits, Black-faced Buntings, Siberian Stonechats and Grey-headed Woodpecker. The following day we had brief encounters with Hazel Hen and a very obliging Chinese Bush Warbler.

Our ground agent's camp at Jalman meadows was also hard with the wind but we still saw some interesting species including Siberian Rubythroat, more Azure Tits, Grey-headed Woodpecker, more Red-throated Thrushes, Oriental Cuckoos, Two-barred Greenish Warblers and Yellow-breasted Buntings. Before we had enjoyed all of those we had been treated to the most amazing display by half a dozen Amur Falcons. Not only did it win bird of the trip but personally it was one of the highlights of my birding, ever! To see a male Amur against blue sky, so close I couldn't focus my binoculars was breathtaking!

Finally we ended our tour at Gun Galuut where not only did we see Asiatic White-winged Scoters, flocks of Marsh Sandpipers, Citrine Wagtails, Red-necked Phalaropes, Brown-headed Gulls, White-winged Black Terns, White-naped Cranes and both Slavonian and Black-necked Grebes we also pulled an 11th hour Relict Gull out of the bag. What a bird, and it almost turned bird of the trip on its head!

For all this to run so smoothly special mention has to be made of our ground crew. The driver in the Gobi was once again excellent, the chef fed us, and barely did we leave anything on our plates! Our translator was always on hand to offer up his boundless knowledge of all things Mongolian, and all in all they made our adventure as comfortable as any to Mongolia could be.' James Lidster

Bird List:

Column A = Number of tours on which this species has been recorded.

Column B = Number of days this species was seen on the last tour.

Column C = Maximum daily count for this species on the last tour.

H = Heard only

A	B	C	
1			<i>Gavia arctica</i>
4	5	200	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
3	2	7	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
4	3	5	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
4	4	400	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
1			<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
1			<i>Ixobrychus sp</i>
1			<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>
4	1	1	<i>Egretta alba</i>
1			<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
4	5	100	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
4	2	1	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
4	6	17	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
3	2	5	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
4	6	10	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
1			<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
2			<i>Anser fabalis</i>

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4	Greylag Goose	3	200	<i>Anser anser</i>
4	Bar-headed Goose	3	15	<i>Anser indicus</i>
4	Swan Goose	6	50	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>
4	Ruddy Shelduck	11	80	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
4	Common Shelduck	6	20	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
4	Eurasian Wigeon	5	30	<i>Anas penelope</i>
4	Gadwall	6	50	<i>Anas strepera</i>
4	Common Teal	4	20	<i>Anas crecca</i>
4	Mallard	6	20	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
4	Northern Pintail	4	20	<i>Anas acuta</i>
4	Garganey	4	100	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
4	Northern Shoveler	5	10	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
4	Red-crested Pochard	3	100	<i>Netta rufina</i>
4	Common Pochard	4	30	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
4	Ferruginous Duck	1	3	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>
1	Baer's Pochard			<i>Aythya baeri</i>
4	Tufted Duck	5	50	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
3	Asiatic White-winged Scoter	2	7	<i>Melanitta deglandi/stejnegeri</i>
3	Common Goldeneye	4	30	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
4	Goosander	6	12	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
1	Smew			<i>Mergellus albellus</i>
4	Oriental Honey Buzzard	1	1	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
4	Black Kite	15	10	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>
2	White-tailed Eagle			<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
4	Pallas's Fish Eagle	3	4	<i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>
3	Lammergeier	5	3	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
3	Himalayan Griffon Vulture	2	2	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
3	Eurasian Griffon Vulture	2	6	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
4	Black Vulture	12	6	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>
1	Eastern Marsh Harrier	2	1	<i>Circus spilonotus</i>
3	Western Marsh Harrier	3	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
1	Hen Harrier			<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
3	Northern Goshawk	3	1	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
4	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	1	1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
4	Upland Buzzard	10	5	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>
4	Steppe Eagle	7	4	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
4	Golden Eagle	3	2	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
4	Booted Eagle	7	3	<i>Aquila pennatus</i>
4	Lesser Kestrel	3	7	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
4	Common Kestrel	9	6	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
4	Amur Falcon	6	7	<i>Falco amurensis</i>
4	Eurasian Hobby	5	2	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
4	Saker Falcon	7	3	<i>Falco cherrug</i>
2	Altai Snowcock	1	3	<i>Tetraogallus altaicus</i>
1	Hazelhen	1	2	<i>Tetrastes bonasia</i>
1	Black Grouse	1	1	<i>Tetrao tetrix</i>
2	Chukar	2	2	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
3	Daurian Partridge	2	2	<i>Perdix dauuricae</i>
1	Common Quail			<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
1	Water Rail			<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>

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3	Baillon's Crake	1	1	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>
4	Common Coot	2	10	<i>Fulica atra</i>
2	Common Crane	2	3	<i>Grus grus</i>
3	White-naped Crane	2	6	<i>Grus vipio</i>
4	Demoiselle Crane	13	60	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>
4	Black-winged Stilt	2	14	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
4	Avocet	4	30	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
4	Little Ringed Plover	8	10	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
4	Kentish Plover	4	30	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
4	Greater Sand Plover	3	8	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>
3	Oriental Plover	5	3	<i>Charadrius veredus</i>
4	Pacific Golden Plover	1	4	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
2	Grey Plover	1	4	<i>Pluvialis squatorola</i>
1	Grey-headed Lapwing			<i>Vanellus cinereus</i>
4	Northern Lapwing	6	30	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
2	Red-necked Stint	1	3	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>
3	Little Stint	1	6	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
2	Temminck's Stint	1	1	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
2	Long-toed Stint	1	1	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>
1	Curlew Sandpiper			<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
1	Dunlin			<i>Calidris alpina</i>
2	Sanderling	1	30	<i>Calidris alba</i>
1	Broad-billed Sandpiper			<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>
1	Ruff			<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
4	Common Snipe	4	10	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
2	Asiatic Dowitcher			<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>
4	Black-tailed Godwit	4	10	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
2	Whimbrel			<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
2	Eurasian Curlew	1	1	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
1	Spotted Redshank			<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
4	Common Redshank	5	20	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
4	Marsh Sandpiper	3	60	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
3	Common Greenshank			<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
3	Wood Sandpiper	1	2	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
1	Green Sandpiper	1	1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
4	Common Sandpiper	2	3	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
3	Ruddy Turnstone	1	8	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
2	Red-necked Phalarope	2	1	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
4	Pallas's Gull	3	30	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>
4	Relict Gull	1	1	<i>Larus relictus</i>
2	Little Gull			<i>Larus minutus</i>
2	Brown-headed Gull	1	3	<i>Larus brunicephalus</i>
4	Black-headed Gull	5	50	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
4	Mongolian Gull	4	50	<i>Larus mongolicus</i>
4	Gull-billed Tern	4	4	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
4	Caspian Tern	3	150	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
4	Common Tern	8	500	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
3	Little Tern			<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
2	Whiskered Tern	3	3	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>
2	Black Tern	1	5	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>

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4	White-winged Black Tern	6	100	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
4	Pallas's Sandgrouse	10	1000	<i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i>
4	Rock Dove	11	30	<i>Columba livia</i>
4	Hill Pigeon	4	2	<i>Columba rupestris</i>
4	Eurasian Collared Dove	4	9	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
1	Oriental Turtle Dove			<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
1	Red Collared Dove			<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
4	Common Cuckoo	10	4	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
4	Oriental Cuckoo	7	2	<i>Cuculus saturatus</i>
1	Eurasian Eagle Owl			<i>Bubo bubo</i>
3	Little Owl	1	5	<i>Athene noctua</i>
3	Long-eared Owl			<i>Asio otus</i>
1	Eurasian Scops Owl			<i>Otus scops</i>
2	Grey Nightjar			<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>
1	European Nightjar	1	1	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
4	Common Swift	5	100	<i>Apus apus</i>
4	Pacific Swift	13	100	<i>Apus pacificus</i>
4	Hoopoe	10	4	<i>Upupa epops</i>
4	Eurasian Wryneck	2	2	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
4	Grey-headed Woodpecker	2	1	<i>Picus canus</i>
4	Black Woodpecker	3	4	<i>Dryocopus maritus</i>
3	White-backed Woodpecker	1	1	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>
1	Great spotted Woodpecker	1	2	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
4	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	2	2	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>
1	Three-toed Woodpecker			<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>
4	Mongolian Lark	5	10	<i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i>
4	Lesser Short-toed Lark	11	80	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>
4	Crested Lark	1	4	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
4	Skylark	7	10	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
4	Horned Lark	13	100	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
4	Plain'? Sand Martin	4	20	<i>Riparia riparia 'diluta?'</i>
4	Eurasian Crag Martin	4	10	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
4	Barn Swallow	6	5	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
4	House Martin	5	5	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
4	Richard's Pipit	5	5	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
4	Blyth's Pipit	4	4	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>
1	Tawny Pipit			<i>Anthus campestris</i>
4	Olive-backed Pipit	5	6	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
1	Tree Pipit			<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
3	Water Pipit	1	1	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
3	Yellow Wagtail			<i>Motacilla flava</i>
1	Yellow Wagtail			<i>Motacilla flava leucocephala</i>
4	Citrine Wagtail	9	4	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
4	Grey Wagtail	4	2	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
3	White Wagtail			<i>Motacilla alba</i>
4	Baikal' White Wagtail	8	2	<i>Motacilla alba baicalensis</i>
3	Amur' White Wagtail	4	1	<i>Motacilla alba leucopsis</i>
1	Masked' White Wagtail			<i>Motacilla alba personata</i>
3	Alpine Accentor	1	2	<i>Prunella collaris</i>
4	Brown Accentor	2	6	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>

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3	Kozlov's Accentor	3	2		<i>Prunella koslowi</i>
4	Siberian Rubythroat	3	1		<i>Luscinia calliope</i>
3	Red-flanked Bluetail	1	1	H	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
4	Black Redstart	2	4		<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
4	Common Redstart	4	4		<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
4	Daurian Redstart	3	2		<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>
3	Siberian Stonechat	2	2		<i>Saxicola maurus</i>
4	Northern Wheatear	11	10		<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
4	Isabelline Wheatear	15	50		<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
4	Pied Wheatear	2	4		<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>
4	Desert Wheatear	4	10		<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>
4	Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush	3	2		<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
4	Red-throated Thrush	5	3		<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>
1	Eyebrowed Thrush	1	1		<i>Turdus obscurus</i>
1	Chinese Bush Warbler	2	1		<i>Bradypterus tacsanowskii</i>
2	Savi's Warbler	1	1		<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>
4	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	6	3		<i>Locustella certhiola</i>
1	Lanceolated Warbler				<i>Locustella lanceolata</i>
3	Paddyfield Warbler				<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>
1	Blyth's Reed Warbler				<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
4	Oriental Reed Warbler	1	1		<i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>
3	Thick-billed Warbler				<i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>
4	Asian Desert Warbler	2	2		<i>Sylvia nana</i>
1	Barred Warbler				<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>
4	Lesser Whitethroat	2	5		<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
4	Common Whitethroat	6	3		<i>Sylvia communis</i>
2	Arctic Warbler	2	3		<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>
4	Two-barred Greenish Warbler	5	6		<i>Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus</i>
4	Pallas's Leaf Warbler	5	4		<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>
4	Yellow-browed Warbler	3	1		<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
1	Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler				<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>
1	Sulphur-bellied Warbler				<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>
4	Dusky Warbler	11	10		<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
2	Dark-sided Flycatcher				<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>
4	Asian Brown Flycatcher	4	1		<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
2	Spotted Flycatcher	1	1		<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
4	Taiga Flycatcher	1	2		<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>
1	Bearded Tit				<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
1	Long-tailed Tit				<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
4	Willow Tit	4	6		<i>Parus montanus</i>
3	Coal Tit	5	6		<i>Parus ater</i>
4	Great Tit	4	4		<i>Parus major</i>
4	Azure Tit	3	3		<i>Parus cyanus</i>
4	Eurasian Nuthatch	4	2		<i>Sitta europaea</i>
3	Wallcreeper	2	1		<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
1	Eurasian Treecreeper				<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
1	White-crowned Penduline Tit				<i>Remiz coronatus</i>
4	Isabelline Shrike	7	4		<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>
4	Brown Shrike	6	3		<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
4	Steppe Grey Shrike	3	4		<i>Lanius meridionalis pallidirostris</i>

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1	Drongo sp			<i>Dicrurus sp</i>
2	Eurasian Jay			<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
4	Henderson's Ground Jay	3	7	<i>Podoces hendersoni</i>
4	Eurasian Magpie	9	25	<i>Pica pica</i>
1	Azure-winged Magpie			<i>Cyonopica cyanus</i>
3	Spotted Nutcracker	1	1	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>
4	Red-billed Chough	12	50	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
4	Daurian Jackdaw	9	50	<i>Corvus dauricus</i>
2	Rook	2	150	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
4	Carrion Crow	8	6	<i>Corvus corone</i>
4	Common Raven	16	10	<i>Corvus corax</i>
4	Golden Oriole	1	1	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
3	Common Starling			<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
4	White-cheeked Starling	5	3	<i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>
2	Rosy Starling	2	14	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>
4	House Sparrow	4	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
4	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	13	20	<i>Passer montanus</i>
4	Saxaul Sparrow	2	8	<i>Passer ammodendri</i>
4	Rock Sparrow	8	10	<i>Petronia petronia</i>
3	White-winged Snowfinch	2	20	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>
4	Père David's Snowfinch	4	3	<i>Montifringilla davidiana</i>
1	Common Chaffinch			<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
1	Eurasian Siskin			<i>Carduelis spinus</i>
3	Twite	2	10	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>
2	Common Crossbill	2	4	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
4	Mongolian Finch	2	5	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>
4	Common Rosefinch	10	7	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
3	Beautiful Rosefinch	2	4	<i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>
2	Great Rosefinch	1	2	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>
2	Long-tailed Rosefinch	1	2	<i>Uragus sibiricus</i>
2	Hawfinch	4	2	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
4	Black-faced Bunting	3	2	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>
3	Yellow-breasted Bunting	1	2	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>
4	Pine Bunting	7	10	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>
1	Ortolan Bunting			<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
2	Grey-necked Bunting	2	2	<i>Emberiza buchanani</i>
3	Pallas's Reed Bunting	1	2	<i>Emberiza pallasi</i>
1	Common Reed Bunting			<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
4	Godlewski's Bunting	2	1	<i>Emberiza godlewskii</i>
1	Chestnut-eared Bunting	2	1	<i>Emberiza fucata</i>