

## GEORGIA

“Leaving Tbilisi behind, we began the drive north to the High Caucasus mountains, making a few stops along the way. As we gained height we found ourselves surrounded by pristine snow fields and, as we crested the high pass, we encountered our first proper raptor passage with Black Kites and Steppe Buzzards moving through in good numbers, along with a few Steppe Eagles. Dropping down towards Kazbegi it became clear that there was not much snow around on the valley floor or the lower slopes, raising concerns that perhaps our main target birds had already retreated back up to their high-level breeding grounds. These concerns were soon dispelled however when we encountered first a male Caucasian Black Grouse close to our lunch stop, then up to 15 *Güldenstädt's Redstarts* feeding along the roadside. We devoted the next morning to looking for the other special birds of the region. Great Rosefinch is never an easy bird to find, especially when there is not much snow around, so we could not believe our luck when 3 large passerines swooped down from the tops to land in bushes right in front of us – 2 females and a fine male Great Rosefinch that sat and posed for the cameras. These were followed by Caucasian Snowcocks, the Curlew-like calls of which we had been hearing for some time. Eventually, careful searching of the slopes produced several birds, both feeding and in flight. Along with them came more and better sightings of Caucasian Black Grouse including some ‘leaping’ males displaying to females, and over the next few days we had more sightings of these two game birds.

Our time around Kazbegi was blessed with fine weather, giving us fantastic views of the dramatic valley and the impressive Mt Kazbegi. We also enjoyed great views of the many other birds to be found in this region. These included some close encounters with both Lammergeier and Wallcreepers, along with lots of the local race of Ring Ouzel and Twite, Water Pipits, Red-fronted Serins, Alpine and Red-billed Chough, ‘red-bellied’ Black-Redstarts, and some good looks at Caucasian Chiffchaff. The fine weather however did not help our search for migrants. Ortolan Bunting, normally a common bird migrating through the valley, was scarce with only a couple of sightings. There were quite a few Yellow Wagtails around of various races, joined at one time by a group of Red-throated Pipits plus Tree and Meadow Pipits, and we found a few Red-breasted Flycatchers, although the one Semi-collared Flycatcher we located soon vanished before everyone got to see it.

Retracing our steps towards the pass, we still needed to find Snowfinch and Alpine Accentor, both of which came in quick succession, along with more Wallcreepers in the form of a pair apparently nest-building. Our few days in the south-east of the country were in very different habitat. Our drive there across the open steppe provided us with some good raptor sightings including Imperial, Short-toed, and Booted Eagles, Black Vulture, Long-legged Buzzard, and Montagu's Harriers. White-tailed Eagle and Osprey were other raptors to join the list at Chachuna, and, along with displaying Lesser Spotted Eagles on the way back, adding to our total count for the tour of 21 raptor species. The open steppe held other birds – Calandra and Short-toed Larks, Siberian Stonechat, Rock Thrush, Rock Sparrow, Pied Wheatear, and Woodchat Shrike to name some of the notable species. Around Chachuna smart Black-eared Wheatears sang from the roof tops and Spanish Sparrows fed around the buildings. In the surrounding countryside we found plenty of *Ménétries's Warblers*, Moustached Warblers showing well, and eventually a few Eastern Orphean Warblers.

Although we were thwarted in our attempts to reach the site for Western Rock Nuthatch, a very obliging Scops Owl and a Black-headed Bunting more than made up for it, and with the fine weather there was a nice selection of butterflies to puzzle over. We returned to Tbilisi for our last night, and a last chance to enjoy some khachapuri and Georgian wine at a city restaurant before the flight back to London.” – *Steve Rooke*

## GEORGIA: Bird List...2

### Bird List:

Column A = Number of tours 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	
2	Great Crested Grebe	1	2	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
3	Little Grebe	1	1	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
1	Slavonian Grebe			<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
2	Black-necked grebe	1	1	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
1	Great Cormorant			<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
1	Pygmy Cormorant			<i>Phalacrocorax pygmaeus</i>
1	Black-crowned Night Heron			<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
1	Little Bittern			<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>
1	Squacco Heron			<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
1	Cattle Egret			<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
1	Little Egret			<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
3	Grey Heron	1	5	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
2	Purple Heron			<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
1	Black Stork			<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
1	Glossy Ibis			<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
2	Ruddy Shelduck	2	10	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
2	Mallard			<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
2	Northern Shoveler	1	2	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
1	Common Teal			<i>Anas crecca</i>
1	Tufted Duck			<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
2	White-tailed Eagle	2	2	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
2	Honey Buzzard			<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
3	Black Kite	4	100	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
3	Lammergeier	3	4	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
3	Egyptian Vulture	2	3	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
3	Griffon Vulture	7	20	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
2	Black Vulture	3	2	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>
3	Short-toed Eagle	2	2	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
3	Marsh Harrier	4	3	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
1	Pallid Harrier			<i>Circus macrourus</i>
3	Montagu's Harrier	4	4	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
2	Goshawk			<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
3	Sparrowhawk	5	4	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
2	Levant Sparrowhawk			<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>
3	Common (Steppe) Buzzard	6	'00s	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>
3	Long-legged Buzzard	2	4	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
3	Lesser Spotted Eagle	2	4	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>
3	Steppe Eagle	3	1	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
2	Imperial Eagle	3	2	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
3	Golden Eagle	1	3	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
3	Booted Eagle	2	1	<i>Hieraeetus pennatus</i>

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2	Osprey	1	1		<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
3	Common Kestrel	7	4		<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
1	Merlin				<i>Falco columbarius</i>
1	Hobby	1	1		<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
3	Peregrine	1	1		<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
3	Caucasian Black Grouse	4	7		<i>Tetrao mlokosiewiczi</i>
3	Caucasian Snowcock	3	7		<i>Tetraogallus caucasicus</i>
2	Black Francolin	1	2	H	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>
3	Chukar	1	2		<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
1	Pheasant				<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
2	Quail	1	1	H	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
2	Moorhen	2	1		<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
3	Coot	1	4		<i>Fulica atra</i>
1	Water Rail	1	2	H	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
1	Common Crane				<i>Grus grus</i>
1	Demoiselle Crane	1	40		<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>
1	Little Bustard				<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>
2	Black-winged Stilt	2	12		<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
3	Little Ringed Plover	2	4		<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
1	Northern Lapwing				<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
1	Little Stint				<i>Calidris minuta</i>
1	Wood Sandpiper				<i>Tringa glareola</i>
1	Green Sandpiper	1	2		<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
1	Redshank				<i>Tringa totanus</i>
1	Spotted Redshank				<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
1	Common Snipe				<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
3	Common Sandpiper	5	2		<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
1	Red-necked Phalarope				<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
1	Stone Curlew				<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
1	Caspian Gull				<i>Larus cacchinnans</i>
2	Armenian Gull	2	10		<i>Larus armenicus</i>
1	Heuglin's Gull	1	1		<i>Larus heuglini</i>
1	Gull-billed Tern				<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
2	Common Tern	1	1		<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
1	Little Tern				<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
2	Whiskered Tern				<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
3	White-winged Black Tern	1	1		<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
3	Rock/Feral Pigeon	7	20		<i>Columba livia</i>
2	Wood Pigeon	3	50		<i>Columba palumbus</i>
2	Stock Dove	3	3		<i>Columba oenas</i>
2	Collared Dove	2	4		<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
1	Turtle Dove				<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
1	Laughing Dove	3	4		<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
3	Cuckoo	3	3		<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
2	Scops owl	1	1		<i>Otus scops</i>
3	Little Owl	2	1		<i>Athene noctua</i>
1	Tawny Owl				<i>Strix aluco</i>
3	Alpine Swift	1	10		<i>Apus melba</i>
3	Common Swift	4	'00s		<i>Apus apus</i>

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3	European Bee-eater	3	4		<i>Merops apiaster</i>
2	Roller				<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
3	Hoopoe	4	4		<i>Upupa epops</i>
1	Eurasian Kingfisher	2	1		<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
1	Wryneck				<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
1	Black Woodpecker				<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
3	Green Woodpecker	1	1	H	<i>Picus viridis</i>
3	Great Spotted Woodpecker	2	1		<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
2	Syrian Woodpecker	3	1		<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>
1	Middle Spotted Woodpecker				<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>
3	Calandra Lark	2	100		<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>
2	Short-toed Lark	1	6		<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
3	Crested Lark	3	20		<i>Galerida cristata</i>
2	Woodlark	1	2		<i>Lullula arborea</i>
3	Skylark	2	20		<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
3	Shorelark	2	1		<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
1	Sand Martin				<i>Riparia riparia</i>
2	Crag Martin				<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
3	Barn Swallow	7	'00s		<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
1	Red-rumped Swallow				<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
3	House Martin	4	200		<i>Delichon urbica</i>
3	Tawny Pipit	3	6		<i>Anthus campestris</i>
3	Tree Pipit	3	8		<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
2	Meadow Pipit	1	1		<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
3	Red-throated Pipit	3	8		<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
3	Water Pipit	4	'00s		<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
3	Yellow Wagtail ssp	1	5		<i>Motacilla flava ssp</i>
3	Yellow Wagtail	3	20		<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>
1	Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed)				<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>
1	Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed)	2	3		<i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i>
2	Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's)	2	3		<i>Motacilla flava beema</i>
1	Citrine Wagtail				<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
3	Grey Wagtail	4	6		<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
3	White Wagtail	7	30		<i>Motacilla alba</i>
3	Dipper	3	3		<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
3	Wren	1	1		<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
3	Dunnock	4	4		<i>Prunella modularis</i>
3	Alpine Accentor	1	1		<i>Prunella collaris</i>
3	Robin	2	2		<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
3	Nightingale	2	1		<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
1	Bluethroat				<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
3	Black Redstart	5	20		<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
3	Redstart	5	6		<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
3	Güldenstädt's Redstart	3	15		<i>Phoenicurus erythrogaster</i>
3	Whinchat	2	6		<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
3	Siberian Stonechat	2	3		<i>Saxicola torquata armenica</i>
1	Siberian Stonechat				<i>Saxicola torquata variegatus</i>
3	Isabelline Wheatear	2	10		<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
3	Northern Wheatear	5	12		<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>

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3	Pied Wheatear	1	2		<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>
3	(Eastern) Black-eared Wheatear	3	3		<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>
3	Rock Thrush	1	1		<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
2	Blue Rock Thrush				<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
3	Ring Ouzel	4	12		<i>Turdus torquatus</i>
3	Blackbird	7	12		<i>Turdus merula</i>
2	Song Thrush	1	2	H	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
1	Fieldfare				<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
1	Redwing				<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
3	Mistle Thrush	2	2		<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
2	Cetti's Warbler	2	1	H	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
1	Sedge Warbler				<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
1	Moustached Warbler	1	3		<i>Acrocephalus</i>
1	Reed Warbler	1	1		<i>Acrocephalus</i>
3	Great Reed Warbler	2	1	H	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
1	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler				<i>Hippolais pallida</i>
3	Eastern Orphean Warbler	2	2		<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>
2	Ménétries's Warbler	3	20		<i>Sylvia mystacea</i>
1	Barred Warbler				<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>
3	Lesser Whitethroat	5	6		<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
3	Whitethroat	1	1		<i>Sylvia communis</i>
2	Garden Warbler				<i>Sylvia borin</i>
3	Blackcap	4	4		<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
3	Green Warbler	2	1		<i>Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus</i>
3	Caucasian Chiffchaff	3	2		<i>Phylloscopus lorenzii</i>
3	Chiffchaff	2	2		<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
3	Willow Warbler	5	30		<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
2	Semi-collared Flycatcher	1	1		<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>
1	Collared Flycatcher				<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>
2	Spotted Flycatcher				<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
3	Red-breasted Flycatcher	3	2		<i>Ficedula parva</i>
3	Long-tailed Tit	2	4		<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
3	Coal Tit	3	6		<i>Parus ater</i>
3	Blue Tit	4	2		<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
3	Great Tit	7	10		<i>Parus major</i>
2	Nuthatch	1	1		<i>Sitta europea</i>
1	Western Rock Nuthatch				<i>Sitta neumayer</i>
3	Wallcreeper	3	2		<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
2	Eurasian Treecreeper				<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
2	Penduline Tit	1	2		<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
2	Red-backed Shrike				<i>Lanius collurio</i>
2	Lesser Grey Shrike				<i>Lanius minor</i>
2	Woodchat Shrike	2	2		<i>Lanius senator</i>
1	Golden Oriole				<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
3	Jay	5	6		<i>Garrulus glandarius krynica</i>
3	Magpie	5	30		<i>Pica pica</i>
3	Alpine Chough	2	300		<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>
3	Red-billed Chough	4	100		<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
3	Jackdaw	3	40		<i>Corvus monedula</i>

## GEORGIA: Bird List...6

3	Rook	2	1		<i>Corvus frugeligus</i>
3	Hooded Crow	7	20		<i>Corvus cornix</i>
3	Raven	7	15		<i>Corvus corax</i>
3	Starling	3	50		<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
3	House Sparrow	7	8		<i>Passer domesticus</i>
2	Spanish Sparrow	3	40		<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
3	Tree Sparrow	3	6		<i>Passer montanus</i>
3	Rock Sparrow	2	3		<i>Petronia petronia</i>
3	Snowfinch	1	1		<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>
3	Chaffinch	5	12		<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
3	Red-fronted Serin	3	20		<i>Serinus pusillus</i>
3	Greenfinch	5	6		<i>Carduelis chloris</i>
3	Goldfinch	7	50		<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
1	Siskin				<i>Carduelis spinus</i>
3	Linnet	3	3		<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
3	Twite	3	150		<i>Carduelis flavirostris brevirostris</i>
2	Common Rosefinch	1	1	H	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
3	Great Rosefinch	1	3		<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>
3	Bullfinch	2	2		<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
1	Hawfinch				<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
3	Rock Bunting	4	3		<i>Emberiza cia</i>
3	Ortolan Bunting	3	4		<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
3	Black-headed Bunting	1	1		<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>
3	Corn Bunting	4	30		<i>Miliaria calandra</i>

### Mammals:

3	East Caucasian Taur	2	30		<i>Capra cylindricornis</i>
2	Chamois				<i>Rubicapra rubicapra</i>
3	Red Squirrel	2	1		<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
3	Red Fox	1	1		<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
2	European Hare	1	1		<i>Lepus europaeus</i>