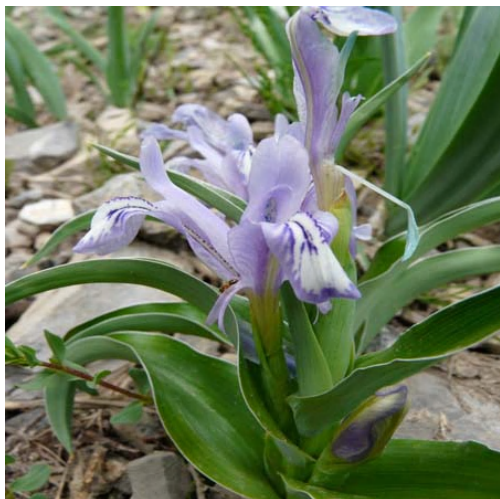


Alpine Flowers of the Tien Shan

Naturetrek Tour Report

20 June - 2 July 2009



Juno caeruleum



Tulipa kaufmanniana



Macrotoma ugamensis



Himalayan Rubythroat on *Juniperus sibirica*

Report and images courtesy of David Newman



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Day 1

Saturday 20th June

Fly to Almaty

We all departed from Heathrow Terminal One at 10am, and met up at the departure gate of Frankfurt Airport, where the destination and Naturetrek labels gave the clues! The whole flight was very smooth and comfortable. Below us, cultivated fields of central Europe gave way to increasingly large expanses of forest as we headed over Byelorussia and Russia, becoming grassy steppe and very flat. Then ripples at the southern end of the Ural Mountains indicated we were now over Kazakhstan, and the landscape became much drier but faded into purple gloom and the night. Lights below us indicated that Almaty was quite a large spread out city. The airport was smart and straight-forward, and we were met by Zhanara, our interpreter and assistant leader for the trip. A minibus took us along wide tree-lined streets to our international class hotel, Otrara where we checked in and headed straight for bed.

Day 2

Sunday 21st June

Medua and Chimbulak, Almaty

Breakfast had been agreed for 8am. I drew my curtains to bright sunshine, blue sky and a view of the park opposite, through the trees which gleamed the golden spire of the Orthodox Cathedral, and in the distance the snowy peaks of the Tien Shan. It was a good omen. The breakfast was a buffet, but with a selection of hot meats with sauces and potato, rice and pancake dishes that we were to recognise as distinctly Kazakh. Afterwards some of us wandered across the road to explore the park and cathedral, both of which were very busy on a Sunday morning. Blackbird, Great Tit, Magpie and Common Mynah (an introduced species and one which seems to have become very frequent around habitation in southern Kazakhstan) were the only birds.

At 9.30am we met Anna Ivashenko our expert botanist, and indeed very good all round naturalist, and set off in our minibus up the Malaya Almatinka valley past the ice rink of Medua and stopped on the large dam built in the 1970s to protect the winter sports facilities and city below from avalanches. Large yellow spikes of *Ferula karatavica*, *Erysium coccineum*, *Roemeria refracta*, spikes of *Eremus fuscus*, Grey-headed Goldfinches and the calls of Common Rosefinch from many of the surrounding Tien Shan spruces gave the hint that the natural history was different.

We continued to the ski resort of Chimbulak, where mountain biking down the ski slopes was clearly popular, and it was nice to see throughout this valley how many citizens of Almaty clearly appreciated this area, with groups, walking, cycling and just out for the day. The road ended in a rough car park in light forest. *Anenome protracta* grew in delightful drifts, *Cortusa brotheri* in damper spots, several species of shrubby *Lonicera*, *Aquilegia atrosanguinea* – always a gem on this trip, and clambering drifts of white *Clematis sibirica*. Greenish Warblers sang in the spruces.

A picnic table and chairs were laid out and we enjoyed a very hearty picnic. Some more botanising and photography, and we had to set off back down into Almaty. We arrived in good time, giving an hour to look around the Central State Museum in a very imposing building with lots of space and some impressive displays giving plenty to think about.

We proceeded to the railway station, which seemed a little chaotic, but the trains are all labelled (fine if you read Cyrillic script!), and ran on time. Our only problem of the whole trip occurred here as Zhanara was placed miles down one end of the train, and we found young men sleeping in the ladies' compartment. Eventually their number was reduced to one, and we were left a little frustrated with the language barrier and ticketing arrangements. However, views of the well wooded and frequent houses of Almaty gave way to steppe, lines of trees along the railway line (to protect it from drifting snow we later learnt) and the constant presence of the mountains in the distance occupied our thoughts. Rollers and both European and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters were common on the wires, occasional Black Kites. The most common birds were corvines with belts of trees only 15 feet high and sometimes thick with their nests. It is the planting of the trees allowing these huge populations of egg-predating corvines to develop which has caused many of the steppe birds and especially the Sociable Lapwing to be decimated.

Day 3

Monday 22nd June

Zhabaghley Village and Kok Sai Gorge

Sleep was difficult with the need for an open window for cool air, the noise of the train – especially when it had to stop, bright flood-lights in depots and stations, all adding to a sense of atmosphere. The toilets were clean of a fascinating massive construction of thick aluminium and a heavy-engineering approach to flushing. A samovar heated by wood bubbled at the end of the carriage. We were all awake with daylight for our 5.30am arrival at the station close to Zhabaghley.

We were met by Lammert and his family and taken to the family home-stay, a delightful house in a beautiful friendly village. The breakfast table was groaning with food – we were especially intrigued with the tiered cake-stands of dried apricots, a beautiful blue seedless raisin, almonds and pistachios, and the gaudily wrapped sweets which when unwrapped revealed very nice natural chocolates and toffees. A wander around the village, revealed stunning views of the hills behind running up to the snowy peaks towering over the village. Indian Golden Orioles were singing and chasing each other, Long-tailed and Lesser Grey Shrikes perched on wires. In the garden, Turkestan Tits called and fed – evidently very different from the Great Tits of Almaty. Outside the village Corn Buntings and Red-headed Buntings sang from the bushes.

After breakfast we headed for a 2hour journey to Kok Sai Gorge. We had a number of stops that Anna arranged where she showed us beautiful flowers. The first was a field edge just after a railway crossing, but *Salvia aethiopica*, *Helichryson*, *Prangos*, *Cousinia*, and a mass of assorted butterflies showed just how rich this area was in natural history. A second stop gave breath-taking views of a former field now abandoned covered in flowering *Tragopodon turkestanica* and then the wall of snowy mountains.

As we approached Kok Sai Gorge we put up a Long-legged Buzzard, and flocks of Rosy Starling hurried past. Calandra Larks were frequent, Hobbies over-head, and a Roller seen well. Glimpses into the gorge revealed amazing rock formations in the conglomerate deposits reminding us of Cappadocia in Turkey.

Drifts of *Gentiana oliveri*, *Allium barszczewskii*, *Hypericum* and *Prangos* added to the beauty. We pitched our table and chairs by one of the look-outs and had a hearty picnic. As we made our way higher, we put up a pair of Little Bustards, a rare bird now in this area, and as we explored into the canyon, we disturbed a nesting Nightjar which feigned injury and gave great views. Quail called, and flocks of Oriental Turtle Doves passed through the gorge to the wide valley below us. At the bottom of the gorge, carpets of moss supported *Dactylorhiza umbrosa* and *Cortusa brotheri*. *Rosa albeti* (white) and *R. kokanica* (yellow) dotted the gorge sides in full bloom, spikes of *Eremus fuscus* and *E. reglii* in full flower were as tall as us, *Campula glomerata* and *C. alberti*, *Hypericum elongatum* and *H. scabrum* added to the colour. With thundery showers, enough to be dramatic but not a nuisance, the scenery was spectacular and a photographer's delight.

On the way back to our homestay, we stopped to look at a fine stand of wild white hollyhock, *Alcea nudiflora*, and the tall blue *Lindolophia tianshanica*. Yellow-breasted Tits were in the line of poplars behind. Later we spotted a Hoopoe by the roadside.

Day 4

Tuesday 23rd June

Zhabaghly to Kshi-Kaindy, then Ulken-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhagly Nature Reserve.

After a comfortable night and another good breakfast, many of the party went to the local museum which is about the Aksu-Dzhagly Reserve and only 100m down the road. The staff there were very helpful; one spoke a little English, and the displays were good in this newly built building. A short drive up the hill to the end of the road, put us in touch with our mounts, and we sent off up horse-trails, usually avoiding the track taken by our 4WD and baggage. We had some heavy thundery rain, the worst of it once we were in the lunch-stop of Kshi-Kaindy – a little rest-house, where we ate our picnic lunch in the dry. It brightened up and we continued by horse until we reached a stream crossing and a beautiful marsh of moss, *Cortusa brotheri*, *Dactylorhiza umbrosa* and *Pedicularis*, and *Iris sogdiana*. Some of our horses were reluctant to walk and preferred to browse, and some of us preferred to admire the carpets of wonderful flowers that kept changing at a slower pace on foot.

Our mountain home for the next three nights, Ulken-Kaindy was dwarfed by mountains all around. *Lonicera nummularia* provided cover for Nightgales that sang, Red-headed Buntings, Common Whitethroats also busy sorting out territories, and a White-crowned Penduline Tit was building its nest on a willow twig over the stream where we collected water for washing. Two students who camped out in a tent did the cooking which was excellent. One of the home-stay family members tended to the hot water and sorted out supplies and rubbish. Our horse-man tended the horses and had a little house with chimney of his own. No electricity meant we had to be careful with batteries especially for cameras, so we tended to go to bed at dusk and get up at dawn. It was clean, comfortable and a great escape from the modern world.

Day 5

Wednesday 24th June

Ulken-Kaindy Valley

After breakfast we followed the main river up the valley to the south towards the snowy peaks. Tall mixed flowery meadows gave way to stream gravel and a different flora, then we began exploring up a lateral snow-gully where compacted snow remained in patches. The fine weather clouded over, but rain remained very light until we got back to the house in the evening.

Alpine Choughs wheeled around above us, Chukars called high above, and as we ascended we met a few late flowering *Tulipa greigii*, one *T. tukestanica* and a few *T. kaufmaniana*. A few plants of *Lindopholia macrostyla* and of *Junio caerulea* were also very striking.

We descended and found the horseman had brought us our picnic lunch, complete with hot water for tea and coffee and a cloth to lay it all out on. He cleared it all up for us, whilst we ascended the main valley. *Trollius altaicus* was frequent with *Anemone protracta*, and we admired *Macrotoma ugamensis* new to us. For two of our party, the altitude and steep terrain proved too much at this point and they returned with a relaxing and enjoyable walk back to the house, whilst the rest of us explored the outcrops of rock finding the Kazakhstan RDD species *Primula minkwitziae*. *Androsace sericea*, *Scrophularia incisa*, and *Pyrethrum tianschianica* were among the many other new things found here.

Day 6

Thursday 25th June

Ulken-Kaindy to Bajdaksay

The day began cloudless, and remained so until around 6pm when we were all back and had a thundery shower. We took the horses today up to Bajdaksay, where we admired wonderful views, pteroglyphs of a variety of ages of Ibex and other wild animals. Some fine new plants included *Astragalus anaulgensis*, *Onobrychis echidna*, and *Eremostachus speciosa* in full flower (previously in seed), and in an area of land-slip and small lakes, some carpets of *Tulipa kaufmaniana*. More tulips were to be found alongside the melt-lines of runnels of compacted snow. As we were used to finding various tulip seed heads in great abundance amongst the herbage, this reinforced what it must all look like in early May.

We climbed on up to be besides one of these high snow runnels and ate another excellent picnic. Anna cut footholds in the ice so we could cross to the other side to admire *Primula algida*, *Gagea filiformis*, *G. dschungarica*, *G. minutiflora*, and *Saxifraga sibirica*. Most of the party wished to return by horse-back, but Anna and I walked back following the stream valleys. Her knowledge and keen eyesight revealed the lost horn of a Big Horn Sheep, pieces of *Tulipa kaufmaniana* around a flat rock by a hole made by the rodent *Alticola argentata* which feeds on the tulip bulbs. She had pointed out to us the past few days the ploughing action of wild pigs, *Sus scrofula* which eat the roots of certain umbellifers, Tulipa and other plants over these alpine meadows. Bears also feed on these plant roots, and we found several instances of fresh dung. The previous day the horsemen had seen bears and wild sheep up in this area, but we could not spot them today. The high-light of this walk however, was undoubtedly *Leontice alberti* ("Berbilodopsis") and *Corydalis ledebouriana* coming up together – sometimes through the ice of a compacted snow runnel, only a little way above the house.

Day 7

Friday 26th June

Ulken-Kaindy to Kshi-Kaindy to Zhabaghly.

Another fine day! Before breakfast a Golden Eagle appeared briefly around the peaks towards the head of the valley and the snows. The Penduline Tit was nearing completion of his nest for his mate. A Blue-headed Redstart appeared on top of a juniper, posing in the sun for a few minutes above the house. Siberian Stonechats tacked alongside Red-headed Buntings singing, and the Nightingales kept up their song from the *Lonicera nummularia*. It was now time to leave and return to Zhabaghly.

Two of our party were not feeling very well; one with a flu-like virus, the other with arthritis for which horse-riding is not comfortable if not accustomed to it, and they were given a lift on the 4WD. They were intrigued how at every stream crossing, the driver had to pour water over the engine to cool it down. The rest of us decided to accompany Anna down the mountain to Kshi-Kaindy rest-house where we were to meet the horseman with the picnic lunch.

We descended through the beautiful meadows, re-acquainting ourselves with the ever-changing patchwork of flowers – *Delphinium* was especially evident in its various colour forms. We entered juniper forest with the three different species of tree like juniper (prostate Juniper sibirica was much higher) – *Juniperus semiglobosa*, *J. turkestanica*, and *J. seravschanica* which is confined to the Aksu-Dhabagly reserve. Growing up it as a climber was *Euonymus koopmanii* also confined to this reserve; the two plants found nowhere else in the world. An Ascalaphid close to *Libelloides* sunned itself, butterflies were numerous and varied, and in general there was a wealth of insect life often large and bright on the many flowers.

As we got into the wetter valley bottom we saw Rufous-naped Tit which is rare, Yellow-breasted Tit, and where a stream descended amongst *Betula tallassica* and *B. turkestanica*, a pair of Paradise Flycatchers with a nest suspended from a birch twig hanging in space over the stream and containing a single chick. Although Anna and I hid ourselves, her skills were better than mine and the parents were not to be fooled in going to the nest so after 10mins we left, and found that so long had we all taken to descend that the horseman had brought the horses to us! We thus rode over the gorge and water-fall and came to Kshi-Kaindy. Today being fine, we botanised after our picnic finding *Morina kokanica* in both its typical pink and a much deeper red form, and some *Aconitum leucostomum* supported in tall herbage. The White-capped Bunting pair was still hanging around the stream by the *Aconitum* as when we first came up this way. Our horses brought us down with increasing speed as they neared their home, and cars took us back to our comfortable home-stay.

Day 8

Saturday 27th June

Aksu Gorge

Another fine morning...again I was out, enjoying birds which I only saw in Zhabagly – Red-rumped Swallows, Laughing Doves, as well as the Golden Orioles already mentioned. The Central Asian Biodiversity Project from the museum provided the minibus and driver and guide to visit this part of the reserve. We ascended a plateau on a rough track, giving great views across the wide vale to the Karatau Mountains to the north. Suddenly we were looking at a great chain of snow-capped peaks to the south stretching as far as the eye could see from east to west. With the green grassy plateau and thinly scattered farms it was an unforgettable sight, begging a photo stop.

At the rim of the gorge we reported to the authorities in their rather smart compound, and descended a little way into the gorge to admire some of the special plants. Clumps of the blue Campanula, *Sergja sewersonii* bloomed on the conglomerate bare rocks. *Allium eriocoleum* was an especially fine Allium in a holiday notable for its many fine Alliums – pale yellow with a purple heart to the ball of flowers. *Eremus robustus* was in seed but this attracted some fine big green caterpillars. We drove to the far eastern end of the gorge where a shelter kept the sun off us whilst we ate lunch. A walk afterwards disturbed a nightjar and Anna found the nest with two quite large chicks their feathers in quills. Quail, Red-headed Buntings, and Calandra Larks sang. We returned a different route, putting up a large covey of young Grey Partridges.

After shower and dinner, including a magnificent birthday cake for one of our group, we caught the sleeper back to Almaty. This time the arrangements were better; we had air conditioning so the closed windows reduced the sound, and everyone slept better.

Day 9

Sunday 28th June

Almaty to Tien Shan Observatory

We arrived at the old Almaty station at 9am, and only a short distance from the Otrara Hotel where we went for breakfast. One British family of 3 young girls and their parents taking three months to travel the breadth of northern Asia reminded us how we had seen no other tourists and how off-the-beaten track Kazakhstan still is. Our bus this time looked like an ex-Afghan army bus – very rugged and with a high wheel-base and low gearing. It needed to be for the rough boulder-littered road we took on entering Almaty NP and began to ascend the mountain. A huge water pipe coming from Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake to the hydro-electric station accompanied us much of the way, and near the top, we could see many Sunday trippers using it to walk the journey to the dam. As our road rose above the lake, the views were superb.

Our base, the abandoned astronomical observatory which Kazakhs are trying in part to restore provides centrally heated accommodation, comfortable albeit spartan rooms and good food. The rusting structures against the dramatic mountain and snow skyline made for some interesting photos.

After lunch, we explored the mountain pasture and gullies beyond the observatory entrance. Sheets of *Myosotis* and *Ranunculus fraternis* lay on the plain. Alongside the stream gully two new dwarf honeysuckle, *Lonicera semenovi* and *L. humilis* were flowering, and the amazing large, hairy, prickly balls of *Schmalhausenia nidulans* (RDD of Kazakhstan) not yet in flower, forming. The short grassy slopes were dotted with *Viola altaica* in both its blue and yellow forms, *Primula algida* and *Allium atosanguineum* were also very widespread. At the base of the slope covered in Juniper sibirica, Plain Mountain Finches were feeding, and amongst them a pair of Himalayan Rubythroats – the male taking some time to see well. Red Pika's hopped around the rocks, and kept us entertained with their antics.

Day 10

Monday 29th June

Tien Shan Observatory

Dawn glimmered in slowly revealing thick fog and heavy rain, becoming sleet at times. It was not a day to venture out. Richard had begun sessions, with his laptop in the Aksu-Dhagabhy mountain house, of looking at people's photos in the evening. Now with plenty of power he took this forward. Using the excellent Light-box software on Richard's computer and a little tuition, David prepared a selection of Fabaceae photos – there having been many with similar and confusing names, but many of them dramatic, very photogenic plants. Anna continued her review and tuition of the list that she had started in the mountain-house. Thus whilst it was an awful day, and our venture out at 1pm was curtailed as sleet recommenced with more fog, another saunter before dinner gave dry and slightly clearer conditions. It was actually a useful day to consolidate all that we had seen and learnt.

Day 11

Tuesday 30th June

Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake and Cosmostation

The foul weather had cleared giving another glorious day; locked in ice first thing, but melting once the sun got up. My pre-breakfast walk revealed White-winged Grosbeak pairs (at least 3) around the observatory, at least two singing Black-throated Accentors, Water Pipits singing, Himalayan Rubythroats – at least 2 pairs close to the observatory, and Red-fronted Serins, Grey-headed Goldfinches, Greenish Warblers, Common Mynah, Magpie and Carrion Crows. Later Red-mantled Rosefinches were around in pairs feeding on dandelion seeds around the observatory.

We made our way by bus to the dam of the lake, and walked around the shore, coming across a wealth of flowers, many now familiar but as ever new ones such as the striking *Primula nivalis* – only 3 plants in flower, and the diminutive and striking *Gentiana karelinii* in dark and light forms. The majority of the gravel flats behind the lake are out-of bounds as the nesting site of Ibisbill. Anna hoped we might see them. As we walked back up the hillside to get better views, it seemed to big an area. Then calls from the most distant corner where some crows were messing around. A little later, and suddenly we saw two of them wading around the edge of the rivulets as they run into the lake. We watched them for some time before they flew off back to that most distant corner of the lake. When we got back to the bus, a beautiful male Eversmann's Redstart was feeding in the dam over-flow channel.

The cloud was now descending; the upper slopes white with yesterday's snow. The rumour as we went into lunch was that Anna would perhaps due to the snow not go ahead with the planned trip to the Cosmostation for the highest ground that supports any plants, and the last ecosystem for us to explore. However, during lunch she decided to risk it. The bus rattled and bumped its way slowly up there. The morning's sun had cleared most areas of snow, but it was cold. Those with hats, gloves, and thick layers of clothing were much happier than others who got chilled and went back to the bus. Admittedly the trip up the ridge to the high rocks above the hut was steep, slippery and the air thin, but *Sibbaldia tetrandra* in beautiful carpets, *Saxifraga macrocalyx*, *Saxifraga hirculus* (in bud only), *Trollius lilacinus*, *Pedicularis oederi*, *Oxygraphis glacialis*, *Oxytropus chionobia*, *Androsace lehmanniana*, *Chrysosplenium nudicaule*, *Smelowskia calycina*, *Choriospora bungeana*, and *Taphrospermum altaicum* were clinging close to the ground and wonderful to see. As we ascended this ridge, in the sheltered pockets of rock we saw *Saxifraga oppositifolia* rare in the Tien Shan, although familiar in Europe, and in the cracks of the vertical rocks the final triumph, *Paraquila anemonoides*. Hunting around these plants, we found Himalyan Snowcock droppings. Anna imitated their call – rather like a curlew - which Joy and I had heard whilst out on our pre-breakfast ramblings, but impossible to locate. This sowed the seed for plans for my final morning.

Day 12

Wednesday 1st July

Tien Shan Observatory and return to Almaty

The sky began lightening at 4am. Venus glowed bright above the eastern mountain ridge from my bedroom window. The sky was clear; a perfect morning. By 5am, I was out and setting off back up the track to the Cosmostation. The ground was rock hard; *Radiola heterodonta* was curved and frozen solid; melting snow drifts on the track had frozen into sheets of ice. The sun rose quickly, blazing off the snowy peaks and casting harsh shadows – how lucky we were to have cloud and mist to appreciate the flowers and enhance our photographs yesterday afternoon. Short cuts were not short in this thin air!

Nearing the Cosmostation, Plain Mountain Finches cheeped a greeting, a pair of Northern Wheatears hopped together. At least three Guldenstadt's males chased and hopped around. At 7.15am the first calls began of the Snowcock, eerie and brief, and then at least five minutes before they came again; impossible to locate. It was time to descend for 8am breakfast. As I did so I looked at a ridge and there against the sun was a Snowcock doing his stuff! Further down and around the corner with the sun more behind me, I looked again – at least 7 birds, seemingly in turns climbing up to a ridge of rocks, giving their call and then descending and moving over a snow covered patch to a higher area of the mountain. I understood that the birds lived in pairs and the males gave their call to defend a territory; but this looked more like a group of birds, mutually advertising their territory to other groups.

I was back for breakfast by 8.10am, and then we were out and exploring the area behind the observatory. The bus took us a short distance across a dried up stony river bed, and we descended slowly down grassy meadows occupied by marmot burrows. Although Anna had removed snares from the burrows nearer the observatory on our first day, these marmots seemed quite tame, and inquisitive, coming out of their burrows when she whistled to them, and giving us some lovely photos. *Dracocephalum grandiflorum* in flower, *Viola acutiflora* (yellow in the Spruce forest) and *Aconitum nemorosum* in bud were new plants, but there was much else of interest and many butterflies. White Winged Grosbeaks called, at least two Himalayan Rubythroats sang posing beautifully in the light, and a party of Severtsov's Tit-warbler (aka White-browed Tit-warbler (*Leptopoeile sophiae*)) which Anna hoped we might get passed through, the male beautifully coloured albeit never pausing long enough for a photo.

After lunch we loaded the bus, and began a slow careful descent. We did not stop until almost at the park gates to see *Aconitum nemorosum*; the rest of the vegetation was strikingly familiar to that in England, but just outside, Anna led us through the gate of a patch on the edge of some development where *Inula grandiflora* flourished in abundance and amongst it *Eremus lactiflorus* and *E. tianshanicus*, *Lathyrus tuberosus* and *Aconitum nemorosum* – it was a fitting final stop. We left Anna at the bus stop in the busy evening traffic. Hotel rooms were ready for us to shower, change, rest and prepare for the flight. Dinner was in the ballroom; only one other table was occupied although the hotel itself seemed busy. Zhanara returned at 11pm with a modern bus and took us to Almaty airport. The plane was delayed an hour, but Zhanara kindly waited and helped us through security. Her first week ever in this type of work, and she had done brilliantly. We shall miss her and Anna. We hope more tourists will come to see this wonderful country and its fantastic flowers and wildlife.

[Note: Place names are taken from 2007 edition of the Lonely Planet Guide to Central Asia]

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Species Lists

Plants

Alliaceae

Allium amblyophyllum (*A. platyspathum*)

A. atrosanguineum.

A. barszczewskii

A. caesium

A. caeruleum

A. drobovii

A. eriocoleum

A. fedtschenkoana

A. fetissovii

A. hymalorhizum

A. karataviense

A. kokanicum

A. longicuspis

A. oreophilum

A. pallasii

A. polyphyllum

A. sewerzowii

A. schoenoprasoides

A. turkestanicum

Amaryllidaceae

Ungernia sewerzowii

Asphodelaceae

Eremurus altaicus

E. fuscus

E. lactiflorus

E. regelii

E. robustus

E. tianschanicus

Colchicaceae

Colchicum luteum

Convallariaceae

Polygonatum roseum

P. sewerzowii

Iridaceae

Iris alberti

I. sogdiana

Juno caeruleum

Ixioliriaceae

Ixiolirion tataricum

Liliaceae

Fritillaria stenanthera

Kokolkomia sewerzowii

Gagea dschungarica

G. emarginata

G. filiformis

G. minutiflora

G. weolenskyi

Lloydia serotina

Tulipa daystemon

Tulipa dasystemonoides

T. greigii

T. heterophylla

T. kaufmanniana

T. turkestanica

Orchidaceae

Coeloglossum viride (=*D. viridis*)

Dactylorhiza rosea

D. umbrosa

Epipactis latifolia

Goodyera repens

DICOTS

Aceraceae

Acer negundo

A. semonovii

Adoxaceae*Adoxa moscatelliana***Apiaceae***Aegopodium alpestre**A. tadschikorum**Anaclopernum simplex**Angelica brevicaulis**A. decurrens**Bupleurum tianschanicum**Carum carvi**Conium maculatum**Daucus carota**Ferula karatavica**F. penninervis**F. pseudoceoselinum**F. renardii**F. samarkandica**F. skaetaviensis**F. tenuisecta**Filopleura kosopolyanskii**Heracleum dissectum**Libanotis talassica**Oedibasis apiculata**O. platycarpa**Paraligusticum discolor**Mediasia macrophylla**Muretia transitoria**Oedibasis platycarpa**Pachypleurum alpinum**Prangos pabularia**P. uloptera**Scaligera alliodes**S. setacea**Scandix stellata**Schrenkia congesta**S. golickeana**Schtschurowskia meifolia**Selinum coriaceum**Semonovia transiliensis**Seseli condensatum**S. schrenkiana**Torilis leptophylla**Tugernia latifolia***Asteraceae***Achillea fillipendula**A. micrantha (A. biebersteinia)**A. millefolium**Acroptilon australis**Alphredia nivalis**Anaphalis racemifera**Arctium tomentosum**A. leiospermium**Artemisia absinthium**A. aschurulajevii**A. dracunculus**A. junceum**A. persica**A. rutifolia**A. santolinifolia**A. serotina**Aster alpinus**A. canescens**Carthamus lanatus**C. tinctoria**Centaurea depressa**C. iberica**C. ruthenica**E. tschinganicus**Erigeron aurantiacus**E. cabulicus**E. heterochaeta**E. lachnocephalus**E. pallidus**E. pseudoseravschanicus**E. seravschanicus**Galatella chromopappus**Handelia trichophylla**Helichrysum samarkandica**Hieracium auriculatum**H. echiodes**H. virosum**Inula cephalorhiza**I. helenium**I. macrophylla**I. rhizocephala**Jurinea algida**Leontopodium**fedtschenkoanum**L. ochroleucum**Ligularia macrophylla*

C. squarrosa
C. turkestanica
Chardenia orientalis
Cichorium intybus

Cirsium seminovii

C. turkestanicum
Cousinia caespitosa
C. fetissovii
C. karatavica
C. microcarpa
C. minkevitziae

C. sewersowii

C. syrdariensis.

C. tianschanicus

C. turkestanica
C. umbrosa
Doronicum turkestanicum
Echinops chantaricus
E. karatavicus

Balsminaceae

Impatiens noli-tangere
I. parviflora

Berberidaceae

Berberis oblonga

Betulaceae

Betula talassica

Boraginaceae

Anchusa azurea
Echium vulgare
Eritrichium tianschanicum

Lappula microcarpa
L. tianschanicum
Lindeli stylosa
Lindelophia macrostyla
L. tschimganica

Brassicaceae

Barbarea arcuata
Chorispora integrifolia

Crambe orientalis
Draba alpina

L. songorica
Olgaea pectinata

Onopordum acanthium
Picris hieracioides
Pyrethrum tianschanicum
P. transiliense
Saussurea schanginii
S. sordida
S. gnaphaloides
Schmalhausenia nidulans
Scorzonera inconspicua
S. petrovii
Solidago dahurica
Tanacetum pseudoachillea
T. turkamicum
Taraxacum montanum
Taraxacum officinale agg
Taraxacum pseudoroeseum
Tragopodon pseudomajor
T. turkestanica
T. vredenskyii
Tripleurospermum inodorum
Tussilago farfara
Waldheimia tridactylites
Xeranthemum longipapposa

B. sphaerocarpa
Leontice alberti

B. turkestanica

Macrotoma euchroma
M. ugamensis
Myosotis alpestris
M. asiaticus
Onosma dicrananthum

O. irritans
Solenanthus cizeinnatus
Trachelanthus korolkovii

E. diffusum
Eutrema edwardsii
Eutrema integrifolia
Parrya albida
Sisymbrium loeselii

*D. oreades**Erysimum croceum***Campanulaceae***Adenophora himalayana**Campanula alberti**C. glomerata**C. limoniana***Caprifoliaceae***Lonicera cinerea**L. hispida**L. humilis**L. karelinii**L. microphylla***Caryophyllaceae***Acanthophyllum pungens**Alloclbrusa gypsopholoides**Arenaria griffithii**Cerastium bungeanum**C. cerastioides**C. daburicum**C. inflatum**Dianthus hoeltzeri**D. karataviense**D. superbus**D. tetralaevis**D. tianschanicus**Gypsophila cephalotis***Celastraceae***Euonymus koopmannii***Chenopodiaceae***Chenopodium album**C. foliosum***Chrysopenaceae***Chrysosplenium nudicaule***Convolvulaceae***Convolvulus arvensis**C. lineatus**C. linarifolia***Crassulaceae***Pseudosedum longidentatum**Rhodiola coccinea**R. heterodonta**R. linarifolia**R. semmonavii**Smelowskia calycina**Turitis glabra**Codonopsis clematidea**Cylindrocarpa sewersonii**Phyteuma argutum**Sergia sewersonii**L. nummularifolia**L. semenovii**L. stenantha**L. tartarica**L. tianschanica**Minuartia krylovianca**Petrorhagia alpina**Silene brabuica**S. graminifolia**S. kuschakewiczii**S. mishakewiczii**S. triste**S. vulgaris**S. wolgensis**Stellaria fontana**S. graminea**Thylacospermium caespitosum**Tunica stricta**Vaccaria pyramidata**E. semenovii**Rhaphidophyton regelii**C. pseudocantabrica**Sedum alberti**S. eversii**S. hybridum*

Cuscutaceae*Cuscuta engelmannii**C. lehmanniana***Dictamnaceae***Dictamnus angustifolia***Dipsacaceae***Dipsacus azureus**Morina kokanica**Scabiosa micrantha**S. songoricus***Euphorbiaceae***Euphorbia aplaca**E. jaxartica**E. lamprocarpa**E. seravschanica***Fabaceae***Astragalus aksaricus**A. alatavicus**A. alpinus**A. alopecias**A. anaulgensis**A. aschutaria**A. atrovinosus**A. krauseanus**A. kronenburgii**A. macrotopis**A. pachyrhizus**A. platyphyllos**A. pseudomacropteris**A. semrzonii**A. schrenkianus**A. sieversianus**A. skozniakovii**A. tibbetanus**A. ugamicus**Cicer flexuosum**C. songoricum**Glycyrrhiza uralensis**Hedysarum fedtschenkoanum**H. flavescens**H. montanum**H. semonovii**H. neglectum**H. talassicum**H. taschkentianum**Lathyrus griselinii**L. pisiformis**L. pratensis**Melilotus albus**M. lupuline**M. officinalis**Medicago falcata**M. sativus**M. tianschanica**Melissitus tianschanicus**Meristotropis triphylla**Onobrychis chorossanica**O. echidna**O. sativus**Orobus luteus**Oxytropis albobullosa**O. almatensis**O. aluetensis**O. baisunensis**O. brachycarpus**O. lapponica**O. recognita**O. pilasissimia**O. talassicus**O. trachocalycina**Sophora alepocuroides**Thermopsis alpina**Trifolium pratense**T. repens**Vicia cracca**V. kokanica**V. sepium**V. tenuifolia*

L. tuberosa

Fumariaceae

Corydalis glaucescens

C. gortschakovii

C. ledebouriana

Cysticorydalis fedtschenkoana

Gentianaceae

Gentiana falcata

G. karelinii

G. kaufmaniana

G. olivieri

G. tianschanicum

G. verna

Gentianella turkestanorum

Swertia variabilis

Geraniaceae

Biebersteinia multifida

Geranium albiflorum

Geranium collinum

G. divaricatum

G. pratense

G. rectum

G. saxatile

G. transversale

Grossulariaceae

Ribes meyerii

Hypericaceae

Hypericum elongatum

H. hirsutum

H. perforatum

H. scabrum

Lamiaceae

Betonica foliosa

Dodartia orientalis

Dracocephalum bipinnatum

D. grandiflorum

D. imberbe

D. nutans

D. stamineum

Eremostachys platycalyx

E. speciosa

E. tianschanicus

Lamium album

Leonurus turkestanicus

Lophanthus schrenkii

Mentha asiaticus

Nepeta pannonica

N. mariae

N. ucrainica

Origanum tyttanthum

O. vulgare

Phlomis brachystegia

P. eriophila

P. pratensis

P. salicifolia

P. tuberosa

Pseudoeriostachys

severzonii

Salvia aethiopsis

S. deserti

S. sclarea

Scutellaria cordifrons

S. flabellulata

S. immaculate

S. kezsanovii

S. linczewskii

S. transiliensis

Stachyopsis lamiifolia

S. oblongata

Thymus karatavicus

T. seranschanicus

Ziziphora bungeana

Z. pamirealaica

Z. tunuior

Linaceae

Linum altaicum

L. pallescens

L. olgae

Malvaceae

Althaea armenaica
Alcea nudiflora

Lavatera thuringiaca
Malva neglecta
M. pusilla

Morinaceae

Morina kokanica

Onagraceae

Chamnerion angustifolium
C. latifolium

E. tianschanicum

Orobanchaceae

Orobancha kotschyi
O. sordida

O. uralensis

Papaveraceae

Glaucium squamigerum
Papaver croceum

P. tianschanica
Roemeria refracta

Plantaginaceae

Plantago arachnoidea

P. lanceolata
P. major

Plumbaginaceae

Acantholimon alberti

Polemoniaceae

Polemonium caeruleum

Polygalaceae

Polygala hybrida

Polygonaceae

Atraphaxis pyrifolia
Koenigia islandica
Oxyria digyna
Polygonum coriarianum

P. undulatum
P. viviparum
Rheum maximoviczii
R. wittrockii
Rumex acetosa
R. crispus
R. tianschanicus

P. hissaricum

P. nitens

P. songoricum

Primulaceae

Androsace arbajtalensis
A. fedtsbenkoi
A. sericea

C. turkestanica

Cortusa brotheri

Primula algida
P. minkwitziae
P. nivalis

Pyrolaceae

Moneses uniflora

Pyrola minor
P. rotundifolia

Orthilia secunda

Ranunculaceae

Adonis parviflora
Aconitum leucostomum

D. semibarbatum

A. nemorum
A. songoricum
A. rotundifolium
A. talassicum

Anemone protracta
Aquilegia atrovinosa

Atragene sibirica

Callianthemum alatavicum
Clematis altaicum
Delphinium confusum
D. iliense

Rhamnaceae

Rhamnus cathartica

Rosaceae

Agrimonia asiatica
Alchemilla sibirica

A. tianschanicus
Cotoneaster multiflorus
C. suavis

Crataegus korolkowii

C. pontica
C. sangier
C. turkestanica
Fragaria viridis
Geum rivale
G. urbanum
Malus sieversii

Orthorus kokanica
O. heterocarpus
Padus mahaleb
Potentilla asiaticus
P. desertorum
P. fedtschenkoana
P. hololenca
P. impolita
P. multifida
P. nervosa

Rubiaceae

Asperula humifusa

A. karataviense
A. setosa
Callipeltis cucularis
Galium aparine

Rutaceae

Paraquilegia grandiflorum
Paropyrum anemonoides
Pulsatilla campanella
Ranunculus alberti
R. fraternus
R. grandiflorum
R. longicaulis
R. paucidentatus
R. rufosepalus
Thalictrum minus
Thalictrum simplex

Trollius altaicus
T. dschungaricus

R. coriaceus

P. orientalis
P. transcaspia
Poterium polygonatum
Prunus divaricata
P. erythrocarpa

P. tianschanicus
Ribes
Rosa alberti
R. alberti x kokanica
R. beggariana

R. fedtschenkoana
R. hissoria
R. kokanica
R. nanothamnus
R. persica
R. platycarpa
Rubus ideaus
Rubus caesius
Sanguisorba alpina
S. minor
S. officinalis
Sibbaldia tetrandra
Spiraea hypericifolia
S. lasiocarpa
S. pilosa
S. rupestris

G. septentrionale
G. tenuissimum
G. verum
G. verticillatum

Rubia regelii

Dictamnus angustifolius
Haplophyllum latifolium
H. perforatum

Saxifragaceae

Parnassia laxmannii
P. palustris
Saxifraga hirculus

S. macrocalyx
S. oppositifolia
S. sibirica

Scrophulariaceae

Dodartia orientalis
Euphrasia bajancolica
E. tatarica
Lagotis integrifolia
Pedicularis alatunica
P. dolichorhiza
P. korolokovii
P. oederii
P. macrochila
P. olgae
P. rhinanthoides
P. talassica
Rhinanthus sangoricus

Scrophularia alata

S. incisa
Verbascum songoricum
Veronica anagallis-aquatica
V. beccabunga
V. chamaedrys
V. laeta

V. porphyriana
V. spuria
V. tienshanica

Solanaceae

Hyoscyamus niger

Tamaricaceae

Myriocarpia alopeuroides
Tamarix ramosissima

Ulmaceae

Celtis caucasica

Valerianaceae

Patrinia intermedia

Valeriana fedtschenkoana

V. turkestanica
Valerianella tukestanica

Violaceae

Viola acutifolia
V. altaica
V. modesta

V. rupestris
V. tianshanica

Grasses and Sedges

Caraceae

Carex turkestanica
C. melanocarpa

Poaceae

Aegilops cylindrica
Alopecurus pratensis
A. songoricus
Anthoxanthum alpinum
Brachypodium sylvaticum
Bromopsis inermis
Bromus danthoniae

B. oxyodon
Dactylis glomerata
Elytzigia repens
E. trichophora
Festuca orientalis
F. valesiaca
Hordeum bubosum
H. leporcinum
Lasiagrostis spendens
Koeleria cristata
Melica inaequiglumis
Millium effusum
Pbleum alpinum
Pbleum paniculatum
Pb. Phleoides
Poa alpine
P. annua
P. angustifolia
P. bulbosa var vivipara
P. pratensis
P. zhalaxa
Stipa caucasica
S. kizghizorum
Taeniatherum crinitum

GYMNOSPERMS

Cupressaceae

Juniperus pseudosabina

J. seravschanica

J. sibirica

J. semiglobosa

J. turkestanica

Ephedraceae

Ephedra equisetina

E. intermedia

E. regeli

Pinaceae

Picea schrenkiana

FERNS

Botrychium lunaria

Cystopteris fragilis

Dryopteris filix-mas

Bird List

Himalayan Snowcock *Tetraogallus himalayensis*

Seven birds, with up to 4 displaying and calling in turn on ridge between Tien Shan Observatory and Cosmostation, Almaty region

Chukar *Alectoris chukar* (perhaps *kurdestanica*)

Heard and seen high in Ulken-Kaindy valley, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Heard soon after setting out on horses into the Aksu-Dzhagly NR

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Covey of around 15 birds disturbed on plateau road nr Aksu gorge.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Heard at Kok Sai Gorge, daily and widespread in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

2 pairs on Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

6 on the landslip lakes at Bajdaksay, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

2 over the Aksu Gorge

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

3 seen from the train after leaving the Almaty region

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus rufinus*

One put up from the edge of the Cokzi Gorge.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

One high in the Ulken-Kaindy valley, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve, and one begin mobbed by a Kestrel, Big Almaty Lake

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

One bird seen quite well being mobbed by a Kestrel as we approached the hydro-electric station on our descent from the Tien Shan Observatory.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus*

Almost daily

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo subbuteo*

2 seen well Kok Sai Gorge

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

2 pairs put up beside the Kok Sai Gorge.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

1 calling in damp grassland Bolshoe Almatinskoe Lake

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

A pair at Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Small numbers seen from the train around 30mins-1hour out of Almaty

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia neglecta*

Seen daily

Common Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

2 seen nr Kshi-Kaindy on our return journey, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto stoliczkae*

Zhabaghly and surrounding area.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Up to 4 in Zhabagly village

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena*

Coksi, Aksu and daily in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Heard in Akzu-Dzhabagly, Tien Shan Observatory and Bolshoe Almatinskoe Lake

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One put up in Kok Sai Gorge, one put in Kshi-Kaindy valley quite high up. Both hung around and feigned injury suggesting nests nearby. One in Aksu Gorge we found to have two large, quilled youngsters in the nest.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Seen from the train about 2 hours before Almaty

Common Swift *Apus apus*

10 over Kok Sai Gorge

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Frequent and numerous on the wires along the railway line for up to 4 hours after Almaty

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

On wires besides railway for up to 3 hours after leaving Almaty and on return – more frequent than European Bee-eater

European Roller *Coracias garrulous semenowi*

Very common on wires up to 3 miles out of Almaty on the train, around Zhabaghy and one close by the Kok Sai Gorge

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

1 roadside bird on return from Kok Sai Gorge to Zhabaghy

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

On steppe at Kok Sai and Aksu gorges.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common from the railway window, also at Zhabaghy village

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica rufula*

At least 2 pairs breeding in Zhabaghy village

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica*

At ski resort in Chimuak valley, and around the dam of the Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni*

About 10 singing males around the Tien Shan Observatory area.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Aksu-Dzhabagly in the stream valleys occasional, and around Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake.

'Masked' (White) Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) personata*

Numerous in Zhabaghy village and surrounding area.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*

One singing and seen well at the Cosmostation in the early morning

Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis*

Two singing in the Tien Shan Observatory compound

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Several singing around Ulken-Kaindy House Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve, and in areas of *Lonicera numularia* on our descent – indeed frequently heard.

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*

At least 5 pairs around the Tien Shan observatory

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*

One nice male on the Bolshoe Almatinskoe dam area.

Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus coeruleocephalus*

One male arrived our last morning at Ulken-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve.

Güldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*

3 males and 1 female around the Cosmostation.

Siberian (Common) Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*

At least 3 pairs around Ulken-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A pair seen en route to the Cosmostation

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula intermedius*

Common in the park, Zhabaghly area, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus bonapartei*

Solitary birds in mountains at Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

One singing in Lonicera and birch thicket on our descent to Kshi-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve reminded me somewhat of Blackcap (which does not occur), but was too skulking to be seen.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Numerous in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve, and at least 3 singing around the Tien Shan Observatory

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Common in Spruce forest north of Chimbulak, and on ascent to Tien Shan Observatory. Also in the juniper and spruce trees around the Observatory and Bolshoe Almatinskoe (Big Almaty) Lake

White-browed Tit Warbler *Leptopoeile sophiae*

Family of 5 including very nice male, v active in the mixed Juniper siberica and spruce trees north of Tien Shan Observatory on our last morning.

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

A pair had built there nest over the mountain stream on a pendant *Betula tianshanica* branch on our descent towards Kshi-Kaindy, in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve. One large nestling in it.

Yellow-breasted Tit *Cyanistes flavipectus*

Seen in row of poplars on stop by roadside on return from Kok Sai gorge. Also seen on our descent towards Kshi-Kaindy in the juniper forest at Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve.

Great Tit *Parus major*

In the park around the cathedral, Chimbuk valley and on the ascent to the Tien Shan Observatory

Turkestan Tit *Parus bokharensis turkestanicus*

A family in our homestay garden at Zhabaghly Vilalge

Rufous-naped Tit *Periparus rufonuchalis*

1 seen in the juniper forest on our descent from Ulken-kaindy to Kshi-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve.

White-crowned Penduline Tit *Remiz coronatus*

A nest with a bird present was hanging in a willow in a stream-bed soon after we began our horse ride in Akzu, and a pair were building a nest in a willow by the stream at the back of the Ulken-Kaindy house, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo*

At least 3 males around our home stay and a day or so later at least 2 females as well, Zhabaghly village.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach erythronotus*

A single bird was present in Zhabaghly village.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

At least 6 around Zhabaghly village; also the most frequent shrike on wires besides the railway.

Magpie *Pica pica bactriana*

Small numbers in all areas even in the mountains. Tail very much longer than the British race.

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

A flock of 50 around the crags at Ulken-Kaindy valley, and 3 feeding in the meadows around the Tien Shan Observatory on the last morning

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax centralis*

Two flew over pteroglyph area Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve, and family of 4 youngsters and parents nr the Cosmostation.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula soemmerringii*

Mixed in the huge flocks of corvines seen from the train

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Mixed in the huge flocks of corvines seen from the train; some long belts of short trees had hundreds of nests presumably of this species crowded together beside the railway.

(Eastern) Carrion Crow *Corvus (corone) orientalis*

Common every day, including flock of around 25 at the Tien Shan Observatory, and smaller numbers around the Ulken-Kaindy house in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

1 high over the Ulken-Kaindy valley towards the peaks at Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve, and one noisily calling in the Juniper siberica and spruce area north-west of the Observatory on the last morning

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris porphyronotu*)

Zhabagly village – small numbers nesting. Most seen from the train could not be distinguished from Rosy Starling

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Flocks common on the steppe to and around Kok Sai and Aksu Gorges.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Regularly encountered usually around habitations

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus domesticus*

Almaty and Zhagably.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus dilutus*

Zhabagly village – where as common as House Sparrow

Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*

Numerous around the Tien Shan Observatory and Big Almaty Lake.

'Grey-headed' (European) Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis/caniceps parapanis*

Chimbuak valley, Zhabagly and Akzu-Dzhabagly NR, Tien Shan Observatory compound

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina bella*

Heard calling from our horse farm as we passed through at the beginning of our ascent to Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Hodgson's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola altaica*

Small flocks common around the Tien Shan Observatory and up to the Cosmostation.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus ferghanensis*

Common and noisy around Chimbuak

Red-mantled Rosefinch *Carpodacus rhodochlamys*

Occasional birds on ascent and decent to Ulken-Kaindy, and a pair around the house, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve. Excellent views in the compound at the Tien Shan Observatory.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*

At least 5 pairs around the Tien Shan Observatory, but not keen to pose close enough for a photo

White-capped Bunting *Emberiza stewarti*

1pr around the stream at Kshi-Kaindy where they were when we both ascended and descended to Ulken-Kaindy, where they paused to drink, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia par*

Common high on the rocky areas above Ulken-Kaindy, and occasional in drier areas on our descent to Kshi-Kaindy, Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*

Around Zhabagly village, Kok Sai and Aksu gorges and up into the mountains in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra buturlini*

Zhabagly village outskirts and up to high alpine meadows in Aksu-Dzhabagly Nature Reserve

Total 84 species seen