

# Observations of Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* and Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus* in south-central Uzbekistan (with records of three additional species from the study area)

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In a previous issue of *Sandgrouse* we reported a species inventory of 270 avian species in our study area in south-central Uzbekistan (Martin *et al* 2014). Ornithological surveys within this study area (and within a second area in the Kyzylkum desert north of Uchkaduk city) remain ongoing. Five further species are reported here.

## **WALLCREEPER** *Tichodroma muraria*

A single individual perched on a concrete irrigation canal (Plate 1) was observed along the eastern shore of lake Tudakul 39° 47.59' N, 064° 57.21' E, Navoi province, south-central Uzbekistan on 8 March 2014. Presently, this species is coarsely mapped as resident across much of eastern Uzbekistan by global species distribution databases (BirdLife International 2017a, Löhrl & Wilson 2017), the nearest location being c190 km east of lake Tudakul. A more fine-grained map provided by Ayé *et al* (2012) indicates the species as wintering within the Nuratau mountains, c100 km northeast of our record. The species is not reported as occurring in the vicinity of lake Tudakul by other consulted sources (Mitropolsky *et al* 1987, 1990, Turaev & Shernazarov 2006, BirdLife International 2017b). Wallcreeper



**Plate 1.** Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* observed perched on a concrete irrigation canal leading into the eastern shore of lake Tudakul, Navoi province, Uzbekistan, 8 March 2014. © Maxime Passerault

could be a regular winter visitor or a rare vagrant to the study area (our survey efforts have a strong bias towards the spring and early summer months, Martin *et al* 2014). This record at lake Tudakul followed the coldest winter in central Uzbekistan over a 12-year period 2005–2016 (mean February temperature  $-2.85^{\circ}\text{C}$  compared to the average February temperature of  $4.13^{\circ}\text{C}$  for this period, Rodell & Beaudoin 2017). Possibly the species is only displaced from the region's mountains and into adjacent steppe and semi-desert during particularly harsh winters.

## **EURASIAN SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

Eurasian Siskin has been observed in the study area three times since our observations started in 2010. A flock of 5–10 birds was sighted in the Karnabchul steppe 39° 56' N, 65° 09' E 17 October 2016 (Plate 2). Three flocks (each of 5–10 birds) were seen near Yuzkaduk, 42 km northeast of Uchkaduk city, 20 October 2016 and a flock of 5 birds was seen in Bukhara city 26 March 2017. The status of Eurasian Siskin in Uzbekistan seems ambiguous. IUCN (2017) does not map it as occurring in Uzbekistan at all, while the coarse-grained map in



**Plate 2.** A Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*, one of a flock of 5–10 birds observed on the edge of the Karnabchul steppe, Navoi province, Uzbekistan, 17 October 2016. © Tom Martin

Clement (2017), and accounts in Mitropolsky *et al* (1987, 1990) both indicate it occurs only as a passage migrant (breeding in northern Kazakhstan and Russia and wintering in southern Turkmenistan and Iran). Maps produced by BirdLife International (2017c) and Ayé *et al* (2012) suggest that the species does winter in localized areas within Uzbekistan, including the Fergana valley, the Tashkent area and around the shores of lake Aydarkul. Our records confirm that it occurs in our study area at least as a passage migrant, and possibly as a winter visitor, at least on an irruptive basis.

### **ADDITIONAL RECORDS**

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*. On 13 March 2017 a single individual observed at lake Tudakul was presumably on passage to breeding grounds further north. The species is mapped as occurring in the area by global databases (IUCN 2017), and has been previously reported specifically from Tudakul in biodiversity summaries of the area (BirdLife International 2017b).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*. In early March 2016 a flock of 10–15 individuals was observed migrating over lake Tudakul. The species has been previously mapped as occurring in the area (eg Ayé *et al* 2012, BirdLife International 2017d).

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*. A flock of three individuals was seen on a metal pylon within the Karnabchul steppe, 3 March 2017. The species is a known winter visitor to the area (eg Ayé *et al* 2012, BirdLife International 2017e).

Our inventory of the avifauna of south-central Uzbekistan is now 275 species. We consider all our additions reported here to be rare species regionally, following the relative abundance categories defined in Martin *et al* (2014).

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