

# KYRGYZSTAN

## 1-DAY BIRDWATCHING TOUR

- birds and pristine beautiful landscapes



Guiding by Danish biologist  
Michael Westerbjerg Andersen

## Birding Kyrgyzstan

If you have only one day in Bishkek, we offer a variety of single day bird watching tours.

We can offer a tailor-made bird watching tour according to the season, the time you have and the area of interest. Below are only some examples and recommendations for bird watching tours arranged by us. We operate our day tours from our base in Bishkek. We cover a radius of 100km around Bishkek which includes a great variety of habitats and many species of birds. Bishkek is situated in northern Kyrgyzstan and is ideally positioned for day tours of many scenic mountainous areas as well as steppe regions of Southern Kazakhstan. For example Ala Archa - an area of outstanding natural beauty and is within easy reach of Bishkek. We are also able to visit the former fishponds north of the city, and many more sites. There are many ideas to choose from. Typically we pick you up at the guesthouse/hotel early morning for an all day trip, including a boxed lunch and snacks, returning to the hotel by evening.

We specialize in guidance for individuals as well for groups – always with a personal touch.

We have designed the tours to maximize the experience of staying outside as much possible. Its active tours where we will make relaxed hikes in the pristine nature, and there is time enough to dwell in each traveler's special interest. We always respect and try to help and support each traveler's special wishes and projects – e.g. photographing, studying certain species. You can use the day according your wishes, and we will do our best to help in that way. We don't make any compromise to find the best birding, however we always make priority not to flush and frighten the birds. On this tour, we will watch some of the remarkable Central Asian bird species and the bird list will be impressive. If you have more time, it is highly recommended to do a 4-Day or 7-Day tour in central and eastern Kyrgyzstan (pls look at our program suggestions).

Costs depend of number of participants, route and service. Pls contact Miksture for a non-obligatory quote!

Guiding by Michael Westerbjerg Andersen

Miksture's owner Michael Westerbjerg Andersen is by profession Biologist, specialized in Birds and Nature Conservation and his lifelong passion for birds led him to work in the travel business to all seven continents during his studies. Michael's home is in Bishkek - the capital of Kyrgyzstan where at the moment he is making a full-time career in the expedition travel industry in Central Asia. Currently writing two books about the birds of Kyrgyzstan – and in prep. a book about the Snow Leopard. Since 1993 he has guided wildlife expeditions in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan is his prime destinations. He is widely acclaimed as one of the world's leading experts in Central Asian birds and his specialty: The mythic Snow Leopard. Michael has seen Snow Leopard more times than average Human Beings, and being asked "how many?" the reply is: "I don't count anymore." He has an infectious curiosity and passion for these aspects of natural history - is an REAL expedition leader, and this serves him in good stead as he leads travelers on expeditions in the Central Asian landscapes, where he constantly scouts new destinations for Miksture in the region. Michael speaks Danish (his native language), English, German, French, Russian, Swedish and Norwegian. Knows and understand Spanish (speak poor...).

Prior departure Miksture mail a detailed list of birds. We look forward to show you some of the most beautiful parts of this magnificent country and you are welcome to contact us for further information and further details of the birds you are likely to see during one of our day tours. Please don't hesitate to contact us!

We welcome any remarks and dialogue.

Miksture Expeditions

## 1- DAY BIRDWATCHING TOURS:

### A. Ala-Archa & Fish ponds:

Excursion to National park Ala-Archa. This well-known and beautiful mountain area is located app. 40 km south of Bishkek. The road to the National Park is excellent birding area and the national park itself is outstanding: Lammergeier, Himalayan Griffon, Golden Eagle, Hobby, White-tailed Rubythroat, Black-throated Accentor, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Severtzov's Tit Warbler, Blue-capped Redstart, Eversmann's Redstart, Red-fronted Serin, Common Rosefinch, Red-mantled Rosefinch, White-winged Grosbeak, Plain Mountain Finch, Brown Dipper, Dipper (White-throated Dipper ssp. *C.c.leucogaster*, Azure Tit, Oriental Turtle Dove, Common Myna, Rufous-naped Tit, Black-eared Kite *M.m.lineatus*, White Wagtail ssp. *personata*, Grey Wagtail, Mistle Thrush, Black Redstart, Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler, etc. Afternoon at the fishponds near Bishkek: Shallow lakes and the dry surroundings make the bird-watching ideal. There is always something to watch! Especially the waterfowl is presented in good numbers - The fishponds is really a hot-spot during migration and in summer, and following species have been observed: Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Sandplover, Greater Sandplover, Grey Plover, Northern Lapwing, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Ruff, Common Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Common Redshank, Eurasian Oystercatcher (rare), Pied Avocet, Collared Pratincole, Temminck's Stint, Terek Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Palla's Gull, Common Pheasant (the "real" one), Pygmy Cormorant, Great Egret, Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Gadwall, Demoiselle Cranes migrating northwards (March and April), Ruddy Shelduck, Grey Wagtail, Black-eared Kite, Azure Tit, Turkestan Shrike, Citrine Wagtail, Rose-coloured Starling, Indian Oriole, (Grey-headed) Goldfinch, Barred Warbler, Blyth Reed Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Hobby, Lesser Grey Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Red-headed Bunting, Little Bittern, Great Egret, , Pallas's Gull, Caspian Gull, Gull-billed Tern, European Bee-eater, European Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Masked Wagtail, Common Nightingale, Bluethroat, Bearded Reedling, White-winged Tern, Barbary Falcon, Shikra, etc.



Trekking according your wishes, but usually Ala Archa is a place where the mountainous birds demand some effort in order to get up in higher altitude; however it's by no way impossible task, and nobody needs be fit as Superman to join. No heavy backpacks are needed and we carry food and supplies. Emphasis will be on seeing the birds, not on covering as many kilometers as possible on foot.

This tour is recommended from May – September.

## B. Region west of Bishkek

Another option for 1-day birdwatching is the area west of Bishkek in the steppe-like landscapes typically for this part of Kyrgyzstan. We will make an early start travel toward the west, will birdwatching all day till evening and will return to the center after dark. Of course, an afternoon break and lunch is in the schedule. The region west of Bishkek is mostly extensive agricultural landscape (former steppe) with ponds, small lakes and lush bush- and tree-vegetation. This varied habitats is a heaven for birds, and it's an perfect introduction to lowland-species of northern Kyrgyzstan: Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Common Pheasant (the "real" one), Demoiselle Cranes migrating northwards (March and April), Black-eared Kite, Azure Tit, Turkestan Shrike, European Roller, Citrine Wagtail, Rose-coloured Starling, Indian Oriole, (Grey-headed) Goldfinch, Barred Warbler, Blyth Reed Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Hobby, Lesser Grey Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Red-headed Bunting, Pallas's Gull, Caspian Gull, Gull-billed Tern, European Bee-eater, European Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Common Kingfisher, Masked Wagtail, Common Nightingale, Bluethroat, Bearded Reedling, White-winged Tern, etc. In April the migrating Black-throated Thrushes (sometimes in hundreds...) makes birding extraordinary!

Trekking is restricted to few kilometers distances from the car according where the birds are: emphasis will be on seeing the birds, not on covering as many kilometers as possible on foot.

This tour is recommended from April – September.



## C. Tokmok and Chui-valley east of Bishkek

Near Tokmok 60 km from Bishkek, we make a longer stop in a little gem of a nature reserve; actually the presidents hunting residence – though rarely used nowadays. As a curiosum it should be mentioned this was one of the favorite haunts for the long-time gone Russian president Brezhnev. Nowadays it's possible to see his little hunting hut that function as a museum. It's kind of bizarre, but an interesting glimpse of the past for those remembering Brezhnev and former days of USSR. Much more interesting is the Azure Tits in the bushes near the houses, and the calling Penduline Tits in the willow trees. Usually there is a good selection of waterfowl and raptors. After some hours we leave Tokmok which means "hammer" in Kyrgyz, and continue east along the Chui Valley with the river on our left-hand; the river that mark the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This road is actual-

ly a part of the Silk Road, this ancient way that branched across Central Asia linking west to East. Our destination is the Burana-area near Tokmok and the "Shrike-boulevard" where dozens of shrikes – Lesser Grey Shrike and Long-tailed occurs in good numbers. We arrive to Bishkek in the evening depending on our pace. Tour concludes in Bishkek at your accommodation.

Trekking is restricted to few kilometers in easy terrain from the car according where the birds are: emphasis will be on seeing the birds, not on covering as many kilometers as possible on foot.

This tour is recommended from April – September.

### C. Winter birding

Wintertime is not the most prolific time of birding here; however it's possible to get some interesting birds on the list for the visitor having a day in the city. Of course the birding improves if you move out of the city and spend time in locations like Issyk Kul, Ala Archa, the fishponds near Bishkek etc. The onset of the winter change and is less defined in these years. Usually snow covers the city from ultimo November to February – at least so it used to be. This winter there were snow in December, but the majority came around 1. January. The temperatures were mostly around zero Celsius degrees or thereabout, with some (but few) days around minus ten. In general it was cloudy and misty. Very often foggy in the city – however just few kilometers outside the city, it's clear and sunny many days. It has something to do with the location of the city.



On such a winter-tour we typically drives out of the city direction east and include the Tokmok-area 60 km away: Mallard, Little Grebe, Great White Egret, Pygmy Cormorant, Grey Heron, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard, Golden Eagle, Common Buzzard, Hen Harrier, Common Kestrel, Moorhen, Common Coot, Common Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Caspian Gull, Laughing Dove, Common Kingfisher, White-winged Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Common Blackbird, Black-throated Thrush, Azure Tit, Great Tit, Eurasian Magpie ssp bactriana, Western Jackdaw ssp soemmerringii, Rook, Carrion Crow, Hooded Crow, Common Myna, House Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Brambling, Red-fronted Serin, European Greenfinch ssp turkestanicus, European Goldfinch ssp parapanisi,

Long-tailed Rosefinch (scarce winter visitor, and very localized), Yellowhammer, Pine Bunting, etc.

Trekking is restricted to few kilometers distances from the car according where the birds are: emphasis will be on seeing the birds, not on covering as many kilometers as possible on foot.

This tour is recommended from November – February.

### KYRGYZSTAN:

Situated in the northern Himalayas with over 80% of the country straddling the fabled Tien Shan and Pamir Mountains, Kyrgyzstan's intact and undisturbed alpine nature makes it among the world's most unique mountainous places. Kyrgyzstan is one of the Central Asian ex-Soviet states achieving independence in 1991 and since then continues to develop and flower making it to the most peaceful and beautiful of the Central Asian countries. It's wedged between Kazakhstan in North, Uzbekistan in west, Tadjikistan in South and the huge China in east. Without any ocean (however the worlds next-biggest mountain lake Issyk Kul) and palm-coral beaches Kyrgyzstan is luckily still visited by few tourists and those coming here does it to marvel the magnificent nature. Kyrgyzstan is a poor country compared to Kazakhstan – no oil & gas makes life here more problematic, but the population – both ethnic Kyrgyz and Russians are incredible hospitable and friendly. Here too the Silk Road in centuries formed the civilizations and even today travelers are welcomed. The summer months in Kyrgyzstan provides some of the most interesting and rewarding birding. All the non-resident migrants is long time arrived and fully busy feeding juveniles which makes otherwise shy and difficult seen birds more straightforward to observe. This is also the time of year where birds gather in the wetlands and the shorebirds migrate between their summer and the winter areas south of the Himalayas. So

there is lots of interesting birds in Kyrgyzstan in summertime. Also it's a time of year where most people have the possibility making holiday – and when this is combined with the best season for birding in Kyrgyzstan, its ideal. The weather is as in southern Europe – sunny – sometimes hot in the lowland but comfortable and warm during the day. In the mountains it's cooler, however pleasant and with a wonderful summer freshness and beauty smell of flowers and herbs. Visiting the pristine mountains of Kyrgyzstan, watching its birds and meet the hospitable friendly Kyrgyz people is the best experience and holiday one can make.

## Tour Fact Sheet

Key Species	NOTE! The list varies according time of season. Before the tour, Miksture sends a detailed list of birds. Himalayan Snowcock, Lammergeier, Himalaya Griffon Vulture, Long-legged Buzzard, Black-eared Kite, Pallid Harrier, Montague's Harrier, Eurasian Hobby, Barbary Falcon, Common Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, Chukar, Common Quail, Common Pheasant, Little Bittern, Great Egret, Demoiselle Crane, Lesser Sand Plover, Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Pallas's Gull, Caspian Gull, Oriental Turtle Dove, Hill Pigeon, Laughing Dove, Alpine Swift, European Bee-eater, European Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, White-winged Woodpecker, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Water Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Black-headed Wagtail. Masked Wagtail, Brown Dipper, White-throated Dipper, Black-throated Accentor, Brown Accentor, Common Nightingale, Bluethroat, White-tailed Rubythroat, Eversmann's Redstart, Blue-capped Redstart, Black Redstart, Siberian Stonechat, Isabelleine Wheatear, Pied Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Blue Whistling Thrush, Cetti's Warbler, Paddyfield Warbler, Common Grasshopper Warbler, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Hume's Leaf Warbler, Barred Warbler, Hume's Whitethroat, Greenish Warbler, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Bearded Reedling, Azure Tit, Yellow-breasted Tit, Rufous-naped Tit, Songar Tit, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Indian Oriole, Turkestan Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Rose-coloured Starling, Red-fronted Serin, Red-mantled Rosefinch, White-winged Grosbeak, Red-headed Bunting, Pine Bunting, Alpine Chough, Red-billed Chough, Carrion Crow, Spanish Sparrow, Common Rosefinch, Rock Bunting, etc.
When to go!	All-year round
Number of participants	From 1 to 25 pax. All are welcome!
Ease of Birding & Tour Pace	Brisk but fair; early up. Birding all day with lunch-break - many birds to watch & long stretches and areas to cover.
Habitats Covered	Agricultural and Mountains; Northern Himalayas (Kyrgyzstan)
Climate	Summer – variable; the weather is as in southern Europe – sunny – sometimes hot in the lowland but comfortable and warm during the day. In the mountains it's cooler, however pleasant and with a wonderful summer freshness and beauty smell of flowers and herbs. Winter – cold!
Photographic Opportunities	Good – excellent
Other Attractions	Beautiful landscapes, butterflies, flora, mountains and culture

**Transport:** Comfortable van.

**Photography:** We'll spend our time trying to see birds, but the keen photographer will find plenty of opportunity to make use of the often excellent light.

**Health:** Problems aggravated by altitude is as good as non-existing. We take very good care of our clients and we travel careful to reduce risks and uncomfoting and, anyone in general good health and reasonably fit should find pleasure going along.

**Meals:** When we are in the field we bring lunch-boxes; good, healthy and delicious food! We provide mineral water during the tour, and serve tea and coffee.

**Essential equipment:** Summer - cloth for warm weather; Rainproof jacket & ditto over trousers; hiking boots or good shoes; hat; sun glasses; sunscreen lotion & ditto lip balm. Winter – warm cloth! However prior departure we will provide information about this matters.

**Mammals:** Though its birds we go for, there is an excellent range of mammals to be seen in the region, and good bird sites usually are good places for other animals... During the years we have made these tours we have seen a long list of mammals (and insects, butterflies, flowers, etc.): Deer, Wild Pigs, Ibex, Tolai Hare, Red Pika, Corsac Fox, Long-tailed Marmot, Red Squirrel, etc.

### **What to bring...?**

Prior departure we send a detailed packing list and information about what to bring. Miksture are of course always prepared to assist and explain, so please feel free to ask us about every matter...

**Price include:** Guiding by Miksture/Michael Westerbjerg Andersen • Transportation according program in comfortable van • Lunch & snacks during the tour • Local entrees and fees according day-to-day program

**Price does NOT include** Alcoholic drinks • Personal expenses for eventual extra arrangements not mentioned in the program • arrangements not mentioned in the program • anything strictly personal (e.g. phone calls).

Welcome!

Miksture/Michael Westerbjerg Andersen

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*Miksture provide information about travelling in the region and specific ornithological information. My team and I can be hired for birding in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Southern Siberia and Western China. We are able to "tailor-make" the journey according your wishes – destinations & species as well as duration. It's possible to book me as leader or co-leader for your journey in the region. We use our own vehicles, own gear – tents, kitchen-team, etc. Everything to increase your birding experience and your safety. In addition our prices are reasonable for everyone. We have an excellent team by whom I have travelled and worked together with for more than ten years. They are some of my very best friends and in combination; we know thoroughly the areas and the birds. Usually we arrange tours for 4-16 pax – best group's size for birding is 5-12 participants; but we are flexible. Fair prices, security, honesty and great birding are keywords – try us! Please contact me for further information. Programs can be studied on our websites. You are welcome to contact me for further information and I welcome any remarks and dialogue.*

*Miksture was established with the purpose of encourage and combine Eco-tourism and biological scientific research in Central Asia; mainly Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The approach of combining Eco-tourism and Nature Conservation is in many ways opposite activities, but in Kyrgyzstan we have done it without severe compromises for the visitors and the environment. Our tours are the result of friendship and strange ideas and our carefully planned itineraries and intensive approach have since 1994 given those who travel with us an unusually experience.*

*Miksture is an independent company, established and owned by Michael Westerbjerg Andersen. You will always be in contact with Michael when you contact us. All itineraries are accompanied by the staff of local agencies that possesses the knowledge and experience to make the tour wholly successful. We know the areas thoroughly and take pride in showing those who travel the local hotspots, confidently coping with any problems that may arise and so greatly increasing the chance that everything will run smoothly. Leading a tour in Europe or North America is one thing, leading one in Central Asia where logistical problems are a fact of life is quite another! Where practicable and necessary we obtain the assistance of local leaders who have both an intimate knowledge of their home areas and the ability to look after the group to the required standard.*

*Miksture/MWA/Bishkek/June 2011*