

A Z E R B A I J A N

25-30 October 2015



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Following the last years of birders exploration in Azerbaijan and especially the sensational coverage of the migration bottle-neck site of Besh Barmag, the idea for this tour grew forth. We wanted to combine exciting bird watching with contributing to migration studies and also meeting up with local young naturalists and see what we could plan for the future. We also wanted to explore the possibility of accommodation near Besh Barmag (until now it has been either camping on site or hotel in Baku, 90 km away) and ended up in an old-style private homestay in a village, complete with a Russian samovar, fresh pomegrenades and howling Jackals 😊

Some 150 species and well over a quarter of a million birds during just four field days in late October indicates the variety and richness of species in Azerbaijan which continues to prove itself a v-e-r-y exciting birders destination!

Arrangements and logistics

This was an arrangement by me leading a group from the youth committee of BirdLife Sweden and in co-operation with our tour operator AviFauna. The logistics and service on site was well co-ordinated by the Baku-based travel agency Caspian Tour. We were ten Swedish birders and travelled in a 17-seat coach with a safe and friendly driver who even spoke a little English.

The price level is still fair from a Western perspective and we could keep this tour at a v-e-r-y cheap level, using simple accommodation, no guide needed and buying food along the way. Return tickets with Turkish Airlines from Scandinavia to Baku at just over 300 euro, we booked this individually online. 3-4 hours transit in Istanbul. A visa is needed and some paper work in connection with that, Caspian Tour took care of this as well. We collected all documents and sent it via email to them.



Just 90 minutes from Baku airport finds you on spot at Besh Barmag. Photo Tomas Axén Haraldsson.

After lots of searching on our request for local accommodation, Caspian Tour finally came up with a place to stay near (or at least near-ish) Besh Barmag. It was a private rural homestay in the village of Qala Alty, in the foothills of the Caucasus some 30km/30 min driving northwest of Besh Barmag. We drove north to the town of Siyazan, 10km from Besh Barmag, and after stocking up at a supermarket (left side as you enter the town), turned back and followed the signs westwards to Qala Alty. There is a new luxurious spa resort above the village, follow the signs. Our bus had to park at the spa entrance and we were shuttled from the main road to the house in the village along muddy alleyways.

The house itself was very basic but charming – rough concrete walls, hanging light bulbs and with heating coming from old-style wood fired stoves – and our hosts did their utmost for us to have a good time. Generous amounts of tea for example. The Chirax castle ruin is perched on a hilltop within sight from the house and makes for a scenic backdrop.



The ever present cups of hot tea – essential part of birding in Azerbaijan. Photo: Tomas Axén Haraldson

In Baku we used Araz Hotel on Yousef Safarov Street in the outskirts of the city center, along the airport road. A decent middle class hotel that we have used before. They can prepare breakfast for early departure (or as take away package) and also lunch package for field trips.

Bird locations

Besh Barmag

As recent years of studies by German ornithologists have shown, the narrow coastal plain below the scared rock of Besh Barmag (visible from the highway, a famous landmark) acts as a "bottle neck" for mainly autumn bird migration. Well over a million birds pass each autumn and less

so in spring time. As other migration sites it seems a bit sensitive to weather – a fine spring day can be poor in birds but northerly winds and even light drizzle in October can give hundreds of thousands of birds.

The place is readily accessible since the main highway runs through here and the site is 90km, or 90min driving time, north of Baku.

The perhaps best observation point is on the low coastal ridge just inland from the beach about 5km north of the last café/rest house at the Besh Barmag resting place for motorists and buses. About 600m north of the last café (at the viaduct/road split), turn right off the highway and follow the rough gravel road towards northeast and the coast. After a few kilometers a fine patch of low grass steppe will appear on your right and across that is the low ridge before the land slopes down to the beach, lagoon and bush land. A dirt track crosses the steppe here and look for a z-shaped rusty metal pipe that is near the observation point.

From here you can cover the migration corridor (that seems several kilometers wide, from the foothills inland to far out at sea), the Caspian Sea, the coastline, the steppe that attracts resting larks, pipits and bustards and also keep an eye north towards the rubbish dump (about 2km from the observation post) that attracts vultures, eagles, pelicans, kites and much more. It is also easy to walk down into the bush land and lagoon area. Such a rich area and always something to look for.

Shirvan Nationalpark

An excellent day trip from Baku (110km south on fine highway) but also a vast area impossible to cover in just a day. A good introduction to steppe bird species and well known for its "flamingo lake" with a good selection of wetland and reed dwelling birds. The entrance is just along the highway (look for the column with a gazelle on top) and after the office the birding starts. Woods and bushland hold some good species and after a while it gives way to endless steppe. Continue some kilometers, cross the canal and stop at the junction near the look-out tower. Away on your right are the reed beds that surround the lake and you can also spot the lake house (with look-out platform on top) in the distance. Walk/bird your way down this track, drive or get driven by mr Hikmet ☺ Some 600-700m before the house is a little sign pointing towards the reeds – that indicates the track to the bird hide.



The viewing platform at the lake in Shirvan – great sceneries and rich in species. And yes, tea will be served. Photo Tomas Axén Haraldsson.

Be sure to arrange your entrance tickets before arrival (Caspian Tour can do this) and check in at the rangers office at the entrance. You might be asked if you need a "guide" which comes with a 10 AZN charge but not really needed for only going to the lake and back. The manager, mr Hikmet, is usually around and can also shuttle people (some tipping expected) the last bit to the lake house, this last section of dirt road can be too tough for buses or minivans. At the lake house the family usually offers tea to visitors, don't forget the tip.

Lake Haji Gaboul

Another easily accessible place within a day trip from Baku, or even in combination with Shirvan NP. Follow the main road heading west from Äläät and the large, circular lake will appear on your right near the town with the same name, about 35-40km from the coastal highway. It dries out, or nearly so, in the summer/autumn and birds vary accordingly. In October 2013 there were at least 6.000 waders and dabbling ducks at the eastern shoreline (near the decrepit buildings along the road) but in October 2015 it was basically dry with one tight flock of birds huddled in the center of the lake.

There are also ponds and reeds near the lake that is good birding (White-tailed Lapwing, Purple Swamphen etc.) in spring/breeding time but I haven't visited them yet.



The Haji Gaboul lake was d-r-y this time. Photo Tomas Axén Haraldsson.

More from the trip!

* Guest blogging with a trip summary and pics at THE website for birdwatching in Azerbaijan <http://www.birdingaze.blogspot.se/2015/11/autumn-migration-at-besh-barmag.html>

* Photo galleries from the trip at the personal web sites of

Ivan Sjögren <http://www.ivansjogren.com/2015--besh-barmag-azerbaijan.html>

August Thomasson <http://augustthomasson.weebly.com/latest-pictures-ii.html>

and Emil Lundahl <http://kungsfiskare.jalbum.net/Azerbaijan%202015/index.html> .

* video clips from this and other birding tours to Azerbaijan and the Middle East at the YouTube site of Tomas Axén Haraldsson <https://www.youtube.com/user/Tomas06560656>

Youtube Video by Harald Ris: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeUo1Dwu4dQ>

* more trip reports from Azerbaijan and the Middle East at my web www.tomasharaldsson.se

Itinerary

- 25 October evening departure around 5:30pm from Scandinavia, meeting up and transit in Istanbul for 3.5 hours then on to Baku at 2am.
- 26 October arrival at 5:30 am in Baku, heading straight for Besh Barmag (90 min drive from Baku), full day there
- 27 October full day at Besh Barmag
- 28 October full day at Besh Barmag, back to Baku in the late afternoon
- 29 October day trip to Shirvan Nationalpark and Haji Gaboul.
- 30 October return flight at 8am, back in Scandinavia mid-afternoon

Species list (birds)

1. Greater White-fronted Goose Bläsgås *Anser albifrons*

A total of 22 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 28 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

2. Greylag Grågås *Anser anser*

A total of 490 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 80 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

3. Mute Swan Knölsvan *Cygnus olor*

1 migrating at Besh Barmag 26/10.

4. Tundra Swan Mindre sångsvan *Cygnus columbianus*

9 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10

5. Whooper Swan Sångsvan *Cygnus cygnus*

1 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

6. Ruddy Shelduck Rostand *Tadorna ferruginea*

A total of 268 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 18 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

7. Shelduck Gravand *Tadorna tadorna*

12 migrating at Besh Barmag 27/10.

(Dabbling ducks simand sp. *Anas sp.*)

(A total of at least 3.000 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 but too distant to separate into species.)

8. Gadwall Snatterand *Anas strepera*

25 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

9. Eurasian Wigeon Bläsand *Anas penelope*

A total of 242 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 20 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.



Marbled Teals with Teals and Mallards in Shirvan NP. Photo: Emil Lundahl

10. Mallard Gräsand *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 68 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10, 150 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10 and 220 at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

11. Northern Shoveler Skedand *Anas clypeata*

A total of 45 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 40 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

12. Northern Pintail Stjärtand *Anas acuta*

A total of 796 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 4 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

13. Eurasian Teal Kricka *Anas crecca*

A total of 28 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10, 250 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10 and 250 at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

14. Marbled Teal Marmorand *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

63 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

15. Red-crested Pochard Rödhuvad dykand *Netta rufina*

A male at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

16. Common Pochard Brunand *Aythya ferina*

15 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

17. Ferruginous Duck Vitögd dykand *Aythya nyroca*

18 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

18. Tufted Duck Vigg *Aythya fuligula*

10 migrating at Besh Barmag 27/10 and 2 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

19. Common Quail Vaktel *Coturnix coturnix*

1 flushed at Besh Barmag 27/10 and 2 there 28/10.

20. Black Francolin Svart frankolin *Francolinus francolinus*

10 at Shirvan NP 29/10.



Black Francolin at the steppe of Shirvan NP. Photo: August Thomasson

21. Little Grebe Smådopping *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

6 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

22. Great Crested Grebe Skäggdopping *Podiceps cristatus*

1 at Besh Barmag 27/10.

23. Greater Flamingo Större flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

1 along the road Baku – Besh Barmag 26/10 and 1 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

24. Great Cormorant Storskarv *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common and numerous at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with hundreds moving along the coast, at least 2.000 counted going south on 28/10, migration or local movements.

25. Pygmy Cormorant Dvärgskarv *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*

A total of 2.893 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 (of which 2.750 on 26/10) and also 15 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10

26. Dalmatian Pelican Krushuvad pelikan *Pelecanus crispus*

1 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

27. Great Bittern Rördrom *Botaurus stellaris*

1 at Besh Barmag 28/10 (hiding in reeds at the dried-out lagoon) and 1-2 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

28. Grey Heron Gråhäger *Ardea cinerea*

A total of 104 migrating at Besh Barmag, often mixed with Great Egrets, 26-28/10 and 15 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.



Great Egrets in the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP. Photo: Ivan Sjögren

29. Purple Heron Purpurhäger *Ardea purpurea*

1 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

30. Great Egret Ägretthäger *Ardea alba*

A total of 252 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 240 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

31. Little Egret Silkeshäger *Egretta garzetta*

Some singles along the road Baku – Besh Barmag 26 and 28/10 and 4 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

32. Black-crowned Night Heron Natthäger *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 adult at Besh Barmag 28/10.

33. Eurasian Spoonbill Skedstork *Platalea leucorodia*

2 migrating at Besh Barmag 26/10 and 4 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.



Two Spoonbills migrating together with Greylag Geese and Greater (and Lesser?) White-fronted Geese. Photo: August Thomasson

34. Cinereous Vulture Grågam *Aegypius monachus*

Up to 43 at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

35. Eurasian Griffon Vulture Gåsgam *Gyps fulvus*

Up to 5 with Black Vultures and eagles at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

36. Short-toed Eagle Ormörn *Circaetus gallicus*

1 migrating at Besh Barmag 26/10.

37. Steppe Eagle Stäppörn *Aquila nipalensis*

Only one seen, a 1cy bird at the rubbish tip at Besh Barmag 28/10 together with other eagles and vultures.

38. Imperial Eagle Kejsarörn *Aquila heliaca*

Up to 5 birds resident at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

39. Eurasian Marsh Harrier Brun kärrhök *Circus aeruginosus*

A total of 213 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 15 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.



Cinereous Vulture at Besh Barmag. Photo: August Thomasson

40. Hen Harrier Blå kärrhök *Circus cyaneus*

A total of 11 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 9 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

41. Eurasian Sparrowhawk Sparvhök *Accipiter nisus*

A total of 38 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 4 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

42. Black Kite Brun glada *Milvus migrans*

Up to 50 resident at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

43. White-tailed Eagle Havsörn *Haliaeetus albicilla*

One adult and two younger birds at Besh Barmag 27-28/10.

44. "Steppe Buzzard" Stäppvråk (Ormvråk) *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Surprisingly rare with only 2-3 residents at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 3 in Shirvan 29/10.

45. Little Bustard Småtrapp *Tetrax tetrax*

A total of 65 birds seen at Besh Barmag 26-28/10, resting on the steppe. Also 45 in flight at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

46. Water Rail Vattenrall *Rallus aquaticus*

4-5 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.



Little Bustards over the steppe at Besh Barmag. Photo: August Thomasson

47. Spotted Crake Småfläckig sumphöna *Porzana porzana*

2 at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag 29/10.

48. Purple Swamphen Purpurhöna *Porphyrio porphyrio*

12 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

49. Eurasian Moorhen Rörhöna *Gallinula chloropus*

4 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

50. Eurasian Coot Sothöna *Fulica atra*

15 at the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.

51. Avocet Skärfläcka *Recurvirostra avosetta*

64 at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

52. Northern Lapwing Tofsvipa *Vanellus vanellus*

A total of 234 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 as well as 35 resting. c. 100 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

53. White-tailed Lapwing Sumpvipa *Vanellus leucurus*

2 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10.

54. Little Ringed Plover Mindre strandpipare *Charadrius dubius*

10 at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

55. Common Sandpiper Drillsnäppa *Actitis hypoleucos*

1 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

56. Green Sandpiper Skogssnäppa *Tringa ochropus*

1 near Siyazan 27/10 and 2 at Besh Barmag 28/10.

57. Spotted Redshank Svartsnäppa *Tringa erythropus*

20 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

58. Wood Sandpiper Grönbena *Tringa glareola*

1 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

59. Redshank Rödbena *Tringa totanus*

8 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

60. Eurasian Curlew Storspov *Numenius arquata*

30 at Shirvan NP 29/10.

61. Ruff Brushane *Philomachus pugnax*

1 migrating at Besh Barmag 28/10 and 2 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

62. Dunlin Kärrsnäppa *Calidris alpina*

10 at Haji Gaboul 29/10.

63. Little Stint Småsnäppa *Calidris minuta*

c. 75 small *Calidris* in the distance at Haji Gaboul 7/10 was likely this species.

64. Jack Snipe Dvärgbeckasin *Lymnocyptes minimus*

2 flushed at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag 28/10.

65. Common Snipe Enkelbeckasin *Gallinago gallinago*

Up to 4 daily at Besh Barmag 26-28/10, resident/migrating, and 3 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

66. Eurasian Woodcock Morkulla *Scolopax rusticola*

1 flushed at Besh Barmag 28/10.

67. Black-winged Pratincole Svartvingad vadarsvala *Glaerola nordmanni*

2 late birds migrating at Besh Barmag 28/10.

68. Black-headed Gull Skrattmåås *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common at Besh Barmag with a total of 174 migrating 26-28/10.

69. Little Gull Dvärgmåå *Hydrocoleus minutus*

Several flocks of 30-50 at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with up to 110 on 28/10, unclear whether migrants or local movements.

70. Pallas's Gull Svarthuvad trut *Ichtyaetus ichtyaetus*

A 1cy bird among Caspian Gulls at the beach, Besh Barmag, 28/10. Discovered by scanning the photos after the trip!



1 cy Pallas's Gull in a massive Caspian Gull-flock on the beach of the Caspian Sea. Photo: August Thomasson

71. Black-legged Kittiwake Tretåig måå *Rissa tridactyla*

Perhaps the surprise of the trip, a 1cy bird with other gulls at the near-dried out lake at Haji Gaboul 29/10. Probably 3rd Azeri record. See documentation photo.

72. Mew Gull Fiskmåå *Larus canus*

Several daily at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

73. Caspian Gull Kaspisk trut *Larus cachinnans*

At least 1500+ resident at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a few singles along the roads and in Shirvan NP 29/10.

74. Stock Dove Skogsduva *Columba oenas*

A total of 424 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 4 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

75. Common Wood Pigeon Ringduva *Columba palumbus*

A total of 14 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 6 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

76. Eurasian Collared Dove Turkduva *Streptopelia decaocto*

A total of 70 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 but some might have been local movements.



Distant Black-legged Kittiwake (in flight, on the right) at Haji Gaboul. Photo: August Thomasson

77. Little Owl Minervauggla *Athene noctua*

A pair near the entrance, Shirvan NP 29/10.

78. Long-eared Owl Hornuggla *Asio otus*

4 flushed near the entrance, Shirvan NP 29/10.

79. Short-eared Owl Jorduggla *Asio flammea*

1 each at Besh Barmag 26/10 and Shirvan NP 29/10.

80. Common Kingfisher Kungsfiskare *Alcedo atthis*

3 at the "flamingo lake" and nearby canal, Shirvan NP 29/10.

81. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater Grön biätare *Merops persicus*

2 late birds migrating at Besh Barmag 28/10.

82. Great Spotted Woodpecker Större hackspett *Dendrocopos major*

1 at Qala Alty 26/10.

83. Eurasian Green Woodpecker Gröngöling *Picus viridis*

1 at Qala Alty 27/10.

84. Lesser Kestrel Rödfalk *Falco naumanni*

One late male on a wire near the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP 29/10.



Lesser Kestrel and 3 Corn Buntings on wire at Shirvan NP. Typical Azeri steppe landscape. Photo: August Thomasson

85. Eurasian Kestrel Tornfalk *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread, for example 22 counted in one "sweep" from the watch tower at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10..

86. Merlin Stenfalk *Falco columbarius*

A total of 4 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 4 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

87. Eurasian Hobby Lärkfalk *Falco subbuteo*

A total of 4 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

88. Peregrine Falcon Pilgrimsfalk *Falco peregrinus*

One adult at Besh Barmag 27-28/10.

89. Northern Shrike Varfågel *Lanius excubitor*

1 migrating at Besh Barmag 28/10 and 3 in Shirvan NP 29/10. All looking like northern/nominate subspecies.

90. Eurasian Jay Nötskrika *Garrulus glandarius*

Several in Qala Alty 27/10 and 3 at the "flamingo lake", Shirvan NP 29/10. Peculiar looking subspecies *atricapillus*.

91. Eurasian Magpie Skata *Pica pica*

Common.

92. Eurasian Jackdaw Kaja *Corvus monedula*

Common and with at least 7.000 counted on migration at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

93. Rook Råka *Corvus frugilegus*

Common and with at least 12.600 counted on migration at Besh Barmag 26-28/10. Added to that thousands of migrating corvids in the far distance over the sea or inland.

94. Hooded Crow Kråka *Corvus corone*

Common.

95. Common Raven Korp *Corvus corax*

5 at Besh Barmag 28/10.

96. Bearded Tit Skäggmes *Panurus biarmicus*

3 at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag, 28/10 and at least 35 in the reeds of the "flamingo lake" Shirvan NP

97. Calandra Lark Kalanderlärka *Melanocorypha calandra*

Very numerous migrant at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with a total of just over 16.000 counted. Also hundreds, up to 1.000 one afternoon, resting on the steppe. c. 750 in Shirvan NP 29/10

98. Greater Short-toed Lark Korttålarcka *Calandrella brachydactyla*

A total of 532 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10. The small larks were at times confusing and the given number is likely too small. Often in mixed flocks with Sky and Calandra Larks.

99. Lesser Short-toed Lark Dvärglärka *Calandrella rufescens*

30 resting on the beach at Besh Barmag 28/10 and a smaller number migration but identification tricky.

100. Crested Lark Tofslärka *Galerida cristata*

Rather common and with a total of 53 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 but local birds might have been involved.

101. Sky Lark Sånglärka *Alauda arvensis*

Very numerous migrant at Besh Barmag with a total of 8.470 counted 26-28/10, often mixed with Calandra Larks.

102. Wood Lark Trädlärka *Lullula arborea*

3 migrating at Besh Barmag 26/10.

103. Barn Swallow Ladusvala *Hirundo rustica*

A total of 203 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.



Thousands of migrating Calandra Larks over the steppe at Besh Barmag. An incredible experience! Photo: August Thomasson

104. Eurasian Blue Tit Blåmes *Parus caeruleus*

Singles or pairs seen both Besh Barmag, Qala Alty and in Shirvan NP.

105. Great Tit Talgoxe *Parus major*

Appearance like Blue Tit.

106. Eurasian Tree-creeper Trädkrypare *Certhia familiaris*

1 at Qala Alty 27/10.

107. Eurasian Penduline Tit Pungmes *Remiz pendulinus*

At least 3-4 in the reed beds of the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

108. Long-tailed Tit Stjärtmes *Aegithalos caudatus*

At least 2 at the coastal bushland, Besh Barmag, 28/10 of the pretty subspecies *alpinus*.

109. Eurasian Wren Gärdsmyg *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Several at Qala Alty 26-27/10.

110. Goldcrest Kungsfågel *Regulus regulus*

Heard at Qala Alty and at Besh Barmag.

111. Cetti's Warbler Cettisångare *Cettia cetti*

Fairly common in the coastal bushland/lagoon at Besh Barmag with c. 10 birds 28/10. 1 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

112. Willow Warbler Lövsångare *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Several at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

113. Yellow-browed Warbler Tajgasångare *Phylloscopus inornatus*

1 in the coastal bushland, Besh Barmag 28/10. Discovered by its distinctive call at noon along the bushes near the beach. Seen just briefly and calling unmistakably several series. First record for Azerbaijan!

114. Chiffchaff Gransångare *Phylloscopus collybita*

Fairly common and quite numerous in the coastal bushland, Besh Barmag 26-28/10. Most looked like *abietinus/collybita* but with a straight, weak call like *tristis*. These should have been Caucasus breeders according to the Collins guide/Lars Svensson. Two pale candidates for *tristis* were also found.



Mountain Chiffchaff in the bushes at Besh barmag. Photo: Ivan Sjögren.

115. Mountain Chiffchaff Berggransångare *Phylloscopus lorenzii*

2 identified birds at the coastal bushland, Besh Barmag 26-28/10. Plumage and calls typical and good comparison with Chiffchaffs. See documentation photos.

116. Moustached Warbler Kaveldunsångare *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Seemingly common in both reed and other wet habitat with c. 15 at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag 28/10 and 8 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

117. Eurasian Reed Warbler Rörsångare *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

1 at Besh Barmag 28/10 and 2 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

118. European Robin Rödhake *Erithacus rubecula*

Common in the coastal bushland at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and also a few in Shirvan NP 29/10.

119. Bluethroat Blåhake *Luscinia svecica*

5 at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag 28/10 and 8 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.



Moustached Warbler in the shrubs of Besh barmag. Photo: Emil Lundahl.

120. Red-breasted Flycatcher Mindre flugsnappare *Ficedula parva*

Rather common in the coastal bushland, Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with 10+ birds seen. Also several each at Qala Alty 27/10 and in Shirvan NP 29/10.

121. Common Redstart Rödstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

8-10 in the coastal bushland at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

122. Black Redstart Svart röstjärt *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Singles resting at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and also 1 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

123. Siberian Stonechat Vitgumpad buskskvätta *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*

7-8 at the coastal bushland and lagoon, Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and similar number in Shirvan NP 29/10. All seemingly hemprichii.

124. Northern Wheatear Stenskvätta *Oenanthe oenanthe*

3 at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 1 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

125. Desert Wheatear Ökenstenskvätta *Oenanthe deserti*

1 male at the beach at Besh Barmag 28/10. Probably the 5th modern time record. We had the 3rd record at the exact same spot in October 2013.



Siberian Stonechat male in Shirvan NP. Photo: Ivan Sjögren

126. Blackbird Koltrast *Turdus merula*

Singles seen at Qala Alty and Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

127. Redwing Rödvingetrast *Turdus iliacus*

1 each migrating at Besh Barmag 27/10 and at Shirvan NP 29/10.

128. Song Thrush Taltrast *Turdus philomelos*

A total of 27 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting.

129. Mistle Thrush Dubbeltrast *Turdus viscivorus*

A total of 10 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

130. Starling Stare *Sturnus vulgaris*

Spectacular migration at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with a total of 193.000 counted but with migration also going on outside our count. Some large flocks of 8-10.000 birds.

131. Dunnock Järnsparv *Prunella modularis*

3 migrating at Besh Barmag 28/10.

132. Western Yellow Wagtail Gulärta *Motacilla flava*

A total of 11 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 1 in Shirvan NP 29/10.



Desert Wheatear at the beach of Besh Barmag. Photo: Ivan Sjögren.

133. Citrine Wagtail Citronärkla *Motacilla citreola*

1 at the coastal lagoon, Besh Barmag 28/10 and 1 female seen from the hide at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

134. Grey Wagtail Forsärkla *Motacilla cinerea*

A total of 3 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 1 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

135. White Wagtail Sädesärkla *Motacilla alba*

A total of 447 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 25 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

136. Meadow Pipit Ängspiplärka *Anthus pratensis*

A total of 471 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting in the area.

137. Red-throated Pipit Rödstrupig pipilärka *Anthus cervinus*

A total of 12 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

138. Water Pipit Vattenpiplärka *Anthus spinoletta*

1 at Besh Barmag 28/10 and 3 at the “flamingo lake”, Shirvan NP 29/10.

139. Yellowhammer Gulsparv *Emberiza citrinella*

A total of 109 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting.

140. Reed Bunting Sävsparv *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A total of 1.237 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and common in the bushland. Also common in Shirvan NP 29/10.



Starlings migrating at Besh Barmag. Photo: Emil Lundahl.

141. Corn Bunting Kornsparv *Emberiza calandra*

A total of 1.239 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and c. 200 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

142. Common Chaffinch Bofink *Fringilla coelebs*

A total of 903 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting.

143. Brambling Bergfink *Fringilla montifringilla*

A total of 44 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

144. European Greenfinch Grönfink *Carduelis chloris*

A total of 990 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and also hundreds resting in smaller flocks in the area.

145. European Goldfinch Steglits *Carduelis carduelis*

A total of 259 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting.

146. Eurasian Siskin Grönsiska *Carduelis spinus*

A total of 8 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

147. Linnet Hämpling *Carduelis cannabina*

A total of 102 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and a small number resting.

148. Hawfinch Stenknäck *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A total of 17 migrating at Besh Barmag 26-28/10.

149. House Sparrow Gråsparv *Passer domesticus*

Very common.

150. Spanish Sparrow Spansk sparv *Passer hispaniolensis*

Some records at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 with at least 87 counted on migration. Also 5 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

151. Eurasian Tree Sparrow Pilfink *Passer montanus*

Singles at Besh Barmag 26-28/10 and 4 in Shirvan NP 29/10.

Species list (mammals)

1. Goitered gazelle Krävgasell *Gazella subgutturosa*

Common at Shirvan NP 29/10

2. Golden jackal Guldschakal *Canis aureus*

Several individuals heard howling at night in Qala Alty 26-28/10. One individual seen on riverbank at Flamingo Lake, Shirvan NP 29/10

3. Coypu Sumpbäver *Myocastor coypus*

One seen swimming at the Flamingo Lake, Shirvan NP 29/10

4. Jerboa sp. Ökenråtta sp. Gerbillinae sp.

One individual seen at the Dump at Besh Barmag 28/10. One of the bigger species

5. Caspian seal Kaspisk säl *Pusa caspica*

1-2 individuals seen at Besh Barmag 27-28/10

Species list (Reptiles)

1. Spur-thighed tortoise Morisk landsköldpadda *Testudo graeca iberica*

Several seen at Besh Barmag 26-28/10, both alive ones and shells from dead tortoises

2. Grass snake Vanlig snok *Tetrax Tetrax*

One found dead, half-eaten, at Shirvan Np 29/10

Species list (Insects)

1. Red-veined darter Vandrande ängstrollslända *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

5-6 seen at Besh Barmag 26-28/10

2. Migrant Hawker Höstmosaikslända *Aeshna mixta*

3-4 seen at Besh Barmag 26-28/10

3. Clouded Yellow Rödgul höfjäril *Colias croceus*

Two seen at Besh Barmag 28/10

4. Painted lady Tistelfjäril *Cynthia cardui*

One seen at Besh Barmag 28/10

5. Red admiral Amiraljäril *Vanessa atalanta*

Several individuals seen at Besh Barmag 26-28/10

6. Blackbeetle sp Svartbagge sp *Blaps sp.*

One seen at Besh Barmag 26/10