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Gluschenko Yu.N.*, **Kalnitskaya I.N.**, **Katin I.O.**, **Korobov D.V.** and **Liu Huajin (2012)** Faunistic notes on the birds of Primorye and adjacent areas of Northeast China // *Far East. J. Orn.* 3: 53–60.

SUMMARY

This article presents data of avifaunistic interest collected in 2004–2012 in different regions of Primorye (primarily on the Khankaisko-Razdol'nenskaya Plain) and some adjacent areas of the Northeast China (Heilongjiang Province). One species (red-billed starling) is introduced into the avifauna of the Russian Federation for the first time, three species (green-winged teal, red-crested pochard, and blackbird) are added to the checklist of birds of Primorye, and the record of Baird's sandpiper here was first documented.

The referred figures and tables are in the original article in Russian, pp. 53–60

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Japanese night heron — *Gorsachius goisagi* (Temminck, 1835). For the Lake Khanka basin, two records of vagrant Japanese night herons were known, one of which was met on the Gaivoron Hill (Spasskii district) on May 2, 1975, and the other was encountered on the outskirts of the Gaivoron Village in the second half of August 1968 (Glushchenko et al., 1992). Active vocalisation of Japanese night heron, when the bird was making a long series consisting of 50–90 short monotonous

droning sounds, was recorded in late dusk on April 24, 2008, in the basin of the upper reaches of the Ilistaya River in the vicinities of the Tigrovyi Village (Mikhailovskii district). During the examination of this site once again on May 21–22, 2011, Japanese night herons were not found here. This may be due to the dramatic transformation of the river valley and change in water turbidity caused by recent laying a pipeline and power line.

Chinese pond heron — *Ardeola bacchus* (Bonaparte, 1855). A regular vagrant, repeatedly recorded in the basin of Lake Khanka (Johansen, 1927; Shul'pin, 1936; Glushchenko, Shibnev, Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova, 2006; Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova, 2009). However, there is no evidence that it breeds here. In recent years, records of this species have become much more frequent. In autumn, young birds were observed twice—on September 28, 2006, in the vicinity of the Vostochny cordon and on September 30, 2011, in the Chinese sector of the Prikhankayskaya Lowland, in the channel of a rice field off the northwest shore of Lake Khanka). On June 5, 2011, an adult bird in nuptial plumage was first observed in nesting colonies of different heron species located in the Ilistaya River delta.

Cackling goose — *Branta hutchinsii* (Richardson, 1832). A vagrant species. In Primorye, only one record of this species was reported: two birds were observed and photographed by Yu.B. Shibnev in a mixed group of greater white-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*) and bean geese

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(*A. fabalis*) in the estuarine part of the Ilistaya River (southern shore of Lake Khanka) on March 29, 1993 (Glushchenko and Shibnev, 1993). One cackling goose was recorded by American zoologist Dale Miquelle in a flock of greater White-fronted geese on Lake Blagodatnoe (Terneiskii District) on October 23, 2011.

Green-winged teal – *Anas carolinensis* (J.F. Gmelin, 1789). Breeding range of this species occupies a large part of North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Stepanyan, 2003). In Russia, the Green-winged teal is known as a vagrant species so far encountered only in Chukotka (Konyukhov and Zubakin, 1988; Koblik et al., 2006). A male in nuptial plumage was observed and photographed on April 11, 2011, on Berezovye lakes near the eastern shore of Lake Khanka (Spasskii district). For a long time, this bird stayed in the thawed shallow part of the lake in a small group of the European teals (*Anas crecca*), Baikal teals (*A. formosa*), and other dabbling ducks; however, the next morning it was not found. The characteristic elements of feathers on the back and sides of the crown made the identification of this species unambiguous.

Red-crested pochard – *Netta rufina* (Pallas, 1773). A rare vagrant species, first met in Lake Khanka. An adult male was caught in a fishing net in the head of the Sungacha River on April 4, 2005. It should be noted that numerous cases of vagrancy of this species were recorded on various islands of the Japanese archipelago (Checklist ..., 2000).

Eastern Imperial eagle – *Aquila heliaca* (Savigny, 1809). A rare vagrant (wintering?) species in Primorie, thus far recorded on the Khankaisko-Razdol'nenskaya Plain only once, in the vicinities of Ussuriisk (Glushchenko et al, 1986). An adult bird was encountered in the Chinese sector of the Khanka Lowland at the head of the Sungacha River on March 27, 2004.

Saker falcon – *Falco cherrug* (J. E. Gray, 1834). This species has not been recorded earlier in the Lake Khanka basin. One bird of this species was met in the vicinities of the Novoselishche Village (Khankaiskii district) on December 1, 2010. Later almost throughout the winter of 2010/2011, another adult bird with a very light plumage color,

was periodically seen and photographed (fig. 1). Both birds, when hunting rodents, were confined to the same area and used the same perches located a few hundred meters from one another. One yearling saker falcon was encountered on May 19, 2011, and two adult birds were recorded on May 20, 2011, near the eastern shore of Lake Khanka (near lakes Berezovye).

Baird's sandpiper – *Calidris bairdii* (Coeus, 1861). A single bird, judging by the plumage color, size, and proportions, presumably belonging to this view, was encountered on the Spasskii Cape of Lake Khanka on September 1, 1974 (Glushchenko, Shibnev, Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova, 2006). Records of this species in the vicinities of the Sikhote-Alin Reserve (Lake Blagodatnoe) were reported: on October 27 and 28, 1975, these birds were recorded visually, and on October 31, 1975, a bird identified as a female Baird's sandpiper, was hunted (Elsukov, 1977). Later, this birds was redefined by Ya.A. Red'kin as *Calidris melanotos*. Today, the only documented proof of recording the Baird's sandpiper in Primorskii Krai is the photo of a young bird made on the same lake by American zoologist John Goodrich on August 25, 2004 (fig. 2).

Glaucous-winged gull – *Larus glaucescens* (J.F. Naumann, 1840). An accidental vagrant species of the Khankaisko-Razdol'nenskaya Plain. In the vicinity of Ussuriisk, one bird of this species in the second winter plumage was seen flying over the Razdolnaya River to the south on March 25, 2007.

Saunders's gull – *Larus saundersi* (Swinhoe, 1871). A vagrant species of the Khankaisko-Razdol'nenskaya Plain. An adult bird was observed on April 18, 2006, in a transit flock of black-headed gulls (*Larus ridibundus*) on the Razdolnaya River in the vicinities of Ussuriisk (Glushchenko, Lipatov, Martynenko, 2006). In the period from April 26 to May 14, 2011, three to five Saunders's gulls (maximum two adult birds and three yearlings) were regularly recorded by us in the apical part of the Amur Bay near the Shmidtovka River estuary. Usually they stayed separately in a large dispersed group of Black-headed gulls, with which they could apparently

migrate to more northern areas of the Far East.

Eastern rock dove — *Columba rupestris* (Pallas, 1811). In 2000 and 2008, birds with transitional features between this species and the Blue rock dove (*Columba livia*) were recorded in large flocks of rock doves in the extreme southwestern Primorye, which were regarded as hybrids (Glushchenko and Korobov, 2008). Within the Khankaiskaya Lowland, the population of the Eastern rock dove has started to grow since from the beginning of the 21st century (Glushchenko, Shibnev, Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova, 2006). Periodic records of the blue rock dove in the flocks of the Eastern rock dove indirectly indicate the process of hybridization in the area. A documentary proof of this assumption is the photo of the bird with entirely white primaries, made on December 1, 2010, in the vicinity of the Novoselishche Village (Khankaiskii district).

Eurasian collared dove — *Streptopelia decaocto* (Frivaldszky, 1838). In Primorye, this species was not reliably identified. Its inclusion in the avifaunistic checklist of species of Primorskii Krai (Nechaev, 1998; Bocharnikov et al, 2004) with reference to L. Shul'pin (1936), who mentioned the sample of a male Eurasian collared dove stored at the Zoological Institute, killed on September 5, 1855, on Lake Kizi, should be considered a mistake, because this area belongs to the Khabarovsk rather than Primorskii Krai.

At the same time, vagrancy of the Eurasian collared dove in Primorye is possible. We recorded one such case on August 14, 2009, in northeastern China on the outskirts of Suyfunhe, located several kilometers from the western borders of the Primorsky Krai.

Red collared dove — *Streptopelia tranquebarica* (Hermann, 1804). A rare vagrant subspecies. The first sample of this species in Primorye, a young female, was hunted in autumn 1876 on the Askold Island (Shul'pin, 1936). In the vicinity of the Sikhote-Alin Reserve, six cases of vagrancy of this species were reported (Elsukov, 1977, 1999), including a female hunted on September 30, 1975, which was erroneously identified as the laughing dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) (Yelsukov, 1977). According to

zoologists Jonathan Slaght and A.S. Mukhacheva, a male red collard dove stayed in October 21–31, 2011, in the Terney Village, periodically visiting the same site. We saw this bird in the same place on November 3, 2011.

Asian short-toed lark — *Calandrella cheleensis* (Swinhoe, 1871). A rare species in Primorye, which so far has been recorded only twice in the coastal areas in cold seasons (Elsukov, 1974; Medvedev, 1984). We met a single bird of this species and photographed it on a rice field in the vicinity of the Lebedinoe Village (Spasskii district) on November 6, 2009 (fig. 4).

White wagtail — *Motacilla alba* (Linnaeus, 1758). In nature, there is limited hybridization between the white wagtail and the Kamchatka wagtail (*Motacilla (alba) lugens*, Gloger, 1829) (Nazarenko, 1968; Panov, 1973). On May 6, 2009, we observed and photographed several species of wagtails on the shore of the Ussuriisky Bay, which, judging by the color, had a hybrid origin. It is noteworthy that phenotypically pure Chinese white wagtails (*M. a. leucopsis* Gould, 1838) and birds of a hybrid origin were strongly associated with human constructions (were found only in the vicinity of buildings), whereas the Kamchatka wagtails stayed both in the vicinity of buildings and in natural habitats.

Bull-headed shrike — *Lanius bucephalus* (Temminck et Schlegel, 1847). A rare and highly sporadically spread breeding migratory species in Primorye, whose abundance has been steadily declining over the past three decades (Nazarenko, 2005). At the same time, several cases of wintering of this species here are currently known. For example, on the Khankaisko-Razdol'nenskaya Plain, a male was observed in the vicinities of the Mikhaylovka Village on December 19, 1998 (Glushchenko et al, 2001), and a female was met not farther than 400 m from this place on February 3, 2002 (Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova and Kurdyukov, 2003). Another male was observed in the outskirts of Beijing on December 6, 2004 (Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova and Kurdyukov, 2010). A female was photographed by zoologist D.N. Kochetkov on the margin of a floodplain forest in the lower reach of the Kedrovaya River, near the eastern border of

the Kedrovaya Pad' Reserve on February 7, 2011.

Red-billed starling - *Sturnus sericeus* (J.F. Gmelin, 1788). Published ornithological data on the records of this species in the Russian Federation are missing. We observed a female of this species on the Bol'shoi Pelis Island (Peter the Great Bay) in the period from April 20 to May 2, 2011 (fig. 5). The bird periodically flew to feed to the cordon of the Far Eastern Marine Reserve, located on the island, behaving with a great caution.

A male red-billed starling was encountered on November 2, 2011, in the center of the Terney Village, where it stayed on a low-grass wasteland in a group with four Gray starlings (*Sturnus cineraceus*). Zoologist Jonathan Slaght reported that «a large starling with white patches on the wings» was seen on October 31 about 200 m from this place in a group consisting of nine Gray starlings. Apparently, this was the same bird that we saw two days later.

Brown-headed thrush — *Turdus chrysolaus* (Temminck, 1831). The only reliable record of this species in Primorye was made on April 29, 2010, in the eastern part of the Prikhankayskaya Lowland in the vicinities of the Lebedinoe Village (Volkovskaya-Kurdyukova and Kurdyukov, 2010). We encountered a single bird of this species (male, as judged by the color of the head) on the Bol'shoi Pelis Island on May 15, 2012.

Blackbird — *Turdus merula mandarinus* (Bonaparte, 1850). A male Blackbird was met on the Bol'shoi Pelis Island in the vicinities of the cordon of the Far Eastern Marine Reserve on 30 March, 2011, in a migratory flock of Gray starlings. When the flock left the island, this bird stayed for some time here alone. The second male Blackbird (possibly the same one) was observed on April 17, 2011, on the Stenin Island.

Blue whistling thrush — *Myophonus caeruleus* (Scopoli, 1786). A single bird of this species was observed on the Khankaiskaya Lowland on the outskirts of the Gaivoron Village (Spasskii District) on July 1, 2012. Earlier, this species was observed in Primorye only twice: in the Kedrovaya Pad' Reserve in September 24–26, 1982 (Glushchenko and Shibnev, 1984) and on the outskirts of Vladivostok (Akademgorodok)

on November 14, 1988 (Gafitskii and Kurenkov, 1991).

Marsh grassbird — *Megalurus pryeri* (Seebohm, 1884). The status of this species in Primorye is still unclear. For the first time, an active singing male with enlarged testes was obtained in the Prikhankayskaya Lowland in the vicinities of Lake Lebedinoe on July 25, 1975 (Glushchenko, 1981). A singing bird was met in the same place on April 30, 2012; however, during our next visit to this place on May 29, 2012, it has not been recorded here.

Another single marsh grassbird was observed on June 5, 2011, on the southern shore of Lake Khanka in the vicinities of the Luzanova Hills in a sedge marsh with sparse reeds. This bird showed no singing activity or signs of nesting behavior.

Common crossbill — *Loxia curvirosta* (L., 1758). Earlier in Primorye, the Common crossbill was regarded as a species irregularly nesting in spruce–fir forests and sparse peatmoss bog larch forests of Sikhote-Alin and its spurs. Breeding of this species was reported for the Bikin River basin (Polivanov and Glushchenko, 1977; Mikhailov et al, 1998; Pukinskii, 2003), the upper reaches of the Great Ussurka River (Flint et al., 1959), and the Sikhote-Alin Reserve (Elsukov, 1999).

On March 24, 2012, several groups of crossbills were encountered in the pine forests in the upper reaches of the Ilistaya River basin, in the vicinities of the Nikolaevka Village (Mikhailovskii District), including an entire brood consisting of males, females, and young birds in downy plumage with a slightly curved beak. This finding indicates the nesting of this species in this specific type of habitats, locally represented in the southern half of Primorye. In such habitats, groups of crossbills were repeatedly recorded by us in the middle reaches of the Komissarovka River (Pogranichnyi district) in summer 2007 and 2012.

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