

Kyrgyzia

Flowers of the Silk Road

A Greentours Trip Report

5th - 26th June 2013

Led by Chris Gardner

Day 1 5th June Turkey to Osh

I had just completed a successful tour in Lake Van and such was the airline timing that I had to go immediately onto Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan to reccy a new area.

Day 2 6th June Taldyk Pass

My plane had in fact arrived at 2am and by the time I'd arrived at my guesthouse it was 3.30, but there was ground to cover so after a few hours sleep I was off with my driver and guide and heading further south into the Pamir Alay towards Sary-Tash. I was still a bit bleary-eyed it has to be said and scarcely noticed the fine stands of pink *Salvia sclarea* as we left town. However, altogether larger spikes of pink flowers caught my eye an hour on and they belonged to the magnificent *Eremurus robustus*. They were in a graveyard but I surmised that the real wild plants must be nearby and sure enough a short distance on I saw some of a hillside growing among a scrub of yellow flowered roses. We climbed up to see the impressive spires, which looked superb against the clear blue sky as Common Rosefinches whistled and at least a dozen Himalayan Griffons circled in the sky and afterwards the local who owned this patch of hillside invited us back for tea and fermented mare's milk (rather you than me!). Moving on there were wonderful bushes of white *Rosa albertii*, the blooms so abundant that they seemed to weight the bushes down, and on the slopes above were many yellowish *Eremurus fuscus*. We had lunch and then afterwards as we began to climb towards the pass I saw a few reddish bells of the lovely *Fritillaria walujewii* growing on a slope. The pass proper was not much further and here on the turf and near snow patches was a decent selection of alpinines with drifts of *Pulsatilla campanella*, *Tulipa dasystemon*, a few *Colchicum kesselringianum*, *Primula algida* and *Ranunculus albertii*. On the stony flats were *Chorispora bungeana* and a fine *Erysimum sp.* From another viewpoint there were masses of a silver leaved *Potentilla sp* and a few annual *Gentiana karelinii*. Driving back there were stops for flowering *Atraphaxis* shrubs and then a wonderful area full of flowering honeysuckle *Lonicera tartarica* and two species of yellow rose, one being *Rosa kokanica*. Back in Osh we polished off a tasty dinner and looked forward to catching up on all that lost shut-eye.

Day 3 7th June Kyrgyz-Ata National Park and Arslanbob

Sleep was good and I was ready for another long day beginning with the drive to Kyrgyz-Ata National Park, which lay to the west of Osh. There was some interesting habitat on the way with large expanses of tall grass steppe that was liberally coloured with stands of golden *Achillea filipendulina* and a smaller cousin *Achillea sp.*, as well as tall pinkish *Salvia sclarea*, *Centaurea depressa* and *Anchusa azurea*. Bushy plants of *Otostegia olgae* sprouted from bare banks and slopes and the many holes in the same banks were home to Bee-eaters and Rollers which were really rather common. Further on a large rock slab was criss-crossed with large cracks and this was home to a colony of Rose-coloured Starlings. Various directions were sought and taken and eventually we were on the right road slowly gaining height and passing large stands of *Eremurus fuscus*, poppy fields and then many yellow rose bushes *Rosa sp.* Entering the park there were large flowering shrubs of *Berberis sphaerocarpa* and many shrubs and tree had *Clematis alpina* subsp *sibirica* scrambling over them in full flower. Close to the river were large colonies of magenta-purple *Dactylorhiza umbrosa*, deep golden yellow *Trollius dzungaricus*. Grey Wagtail, Dipper and then Blue Rock Thrush all put in appearances.

On the other side of town the steppe was just as rich if not more so and new species appeared including the unusual blue belled *Lindelofia macrostyla* and *Haplophyllum perforatum*. However, the visual feast of the day came late on as we turned towards Arslanbob and encountered simply vast populations of *Eremurus tianshanicus* that went on for miles. In addition these were merged with the more delicate *Eremurus sogdianus* especially on steeper slopes and this latter species took over the baton as we continued up forming equally dense pure stands for miles along the road. We arrived at the pleasant tree-filled valley of Arslanbob with a steep rampart of the Tien Shan rearing up behind and found our little guest house tucked away in a side street.

Day 4 8th June Dashman Forest Reserve

A day filled with walnuts beckoned, for Dashman Forest Reserve is the world's largest tract of walnut forest. The track up to the woods was in an uncompromising ex-Soviet jeep along a road that certainly demanded something robust and the vehicle got us to where we needed to go entering a wonderful green oasis filled predominantly with large walnut trees, but also with many other fruit trees. The ground beneath the trees was swathed in the tall buttercup *Ranunculus polyanthemos*(?), drifts of balsam and stands of tall *Ligularia thomsonii* and *Euphorbia lamprocarpa*. Suddenly a huge spire of white flowers appeared beside the road. It was *Eremurus robustus* and as we continued these outsize spikes grew in number (along with smaller *Eremurus fuscus*). There were some fine stands of these most impressive of fox-tail lilies which were actually slightly pinkish in colour (but less so than the population near Osh) and in one area they had the backdrop of a crystal clear snowy Tien Shan. Great Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher and the melodic song of the Nightingale (the latter had sung all night long in the village too) filled the

forest which was a delight. Even so the floral content was limited so we back tracked and then headed for another area of more open slopes on an equally bad road. There were more stands of *Eremurus robustus*, shrubs of *Rosa canina*, tall *Euphorbia lamprocarpa* as Red-headed Bunting sang away and various fritillaries cruised about. Then rounding a bend there was stunning slope bedecked in big clumps of *Dictamnus albus* in perfect flower, alongside a scattering of *Eremurus robustus* with the Tien Shan in the background.

It was going to be difficult to match this and although the fox-tails tried hard with some impressive displays it seemed unlikely. That was until we started down along a different rocky stretch of road that arrived at a tufa clad spring almost concealed beneath huge clumps of *Aquilegia vicaria*, a quite delightful species with thousands of delicate pale blue flowers suspended from tall stems and looking quite spellbinding with the backlighting. Among this ravishing display were a number of *Cortusa brotheri* although they barely got a look in. Nothing was going to top this and we completed our descent to Arslanbob and a well-earned cold drink.

Day 5 9th June To Lake Sary-Chelek

Spotted Flycatchers were busy first thing before we set off descending to the hot lowlands past the incredible stands of *Eremurus tianshanicus* and *sogdianus* growing among drifts of mauve, shrubby *Perovskia scrophulariifolia*. Unfortunately quite a bit of time was wasted trying to find the location for *Ostrovskia magnifica* with some bum directions sending us to a town at the wrong end of Kyrgyzstan – Oykain Botanical Reserve it turns out is near Tajikistan close to where I'd been two days ago! However, things picked up as we drove on through dry hills with a population of the remarkable *Astragalus alopecias*. A superb triumvirate of birds followed with first four Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters perched in photographic range, but these were joined by two Rollers and then a Hoopoe. The bee-eaters and Rollers were really rather common in this dry habitat as we drove later passing through more dramatic rocky landscapes before turning off for the road to Sary-Chelek where the slopes had many *Acanthophyllum pungens* and stands of the white form of *Salvia sclarea*. As we gained height the land became increasingly green with forested hills and clear rivers. Rocky banks had the distinctive blue onion *Allium caesium* and nearing the lake there were groves of walnut, fine birches and many other trees.

Day 6 10th June Lake Sary-Chelek

Leaving the guest house at 8.30 we climbed up through lush meadows and woods towards the showpiece lake, with lots of vetches, *Pedicularis dolichorrhiza* and *Dactylorhiza umbrosa* as well as an *Asyneuma* sp and *Campanula glomerata* on the steeper banks and surprising a Red Fox that was wandering down the track. A drier slope had some fine pale yellow *Cousinia turkestanica* and a bright pink sweet pea *Lathyrus* sp. There were substantial stands of yellowish *Eremurus fuscus*, tall

Ferula tenuisecta and the cotton-wool seedpods of *Astragalus sieversianus*. Continuing on to the scenic lake there was little of interest at the lake itself except of course the lake itself. However, the slopes above looked promising so we set off along a narrow track passing through shrubberies with much *Exochorda tianshanica* and *Spirea arguta* with fine views of the blue lake waters below between the slender spruces. Common Rosefinches were singing and Hume's Lesser Whitethroats darted for cover as we pushed through the incredible lush meadows with increasing numbers of tall mauve-pink *Allium sp*, the elegant yellow umbels of *Ferula tenuisecta* and slender white bistorts all with a superb backdrop of pristine lake and mountain. Reaching a ridge there was the first lovely *Iris alberti*, but these became more numerous as we progressed, reaching a verdant depression filled with flowers with slopes clad in orange *Trollius altaicus*, a few *Tulipa kaufmanniana* and then one area smothered in hundreds of blue and white *Iris ruthenica*. The flat area held thousands of a tall pink *Allium sp* and many more *Iris alberti*. Himalayan Griffons were circling overhead and in the meadows Clouded Apollos, Large Tortoiseshells, *Coenonympha sunbecca* and Queen-of-Spain Fritillaries were common. It was a stunning setting among the mountains with the whole place to ourselves. We went some way up a rocky gully planning on investigating a higher cirque but after a while it looked decidedly unpromising flora-wise although the views back down were superb, but the clouds were gathering along the ridge so we turned around and descended seeing Rock Bunting on the way. Picking up a different easy trail we were soon back down again and then drove a short distance for a rather late shady picnic. There was not much else to stop for on the way down, it was quite warm by now and we had a relaxing late afternoon back at the guesthouse.

Day 7 11th June To Chichkan

Leaving at 8.00 we slowly made our way back to the main road seeing a variety of interesting steppe plants on the way such as the lovely *Hedysarum chaitocarpum*, abundant tufts of a *Thymus sp*, bushy white flowered *Convolvulus pseudocantabricus*, lots more of the delicate white *Consolidarugulosum* and occasional *Eryngium bungei* one with a superb wasp spider attached. There were also several attractive ascalaphids (relatives of ant-lions) with yellow and black wings perched motionless on grass stems and butterflies included Spotted Fritillary, Central Asian Marbled White, hairstreaks and a very fresh Southern Swallowtail. Rollers were as ridiculously common as they had been all week and a Lammergeier glided effortlessly across the hillside. It was warm now as we drove alongside the large reservoir stopping for a fine colony of the lovely soft yellow *Delphinium semibarbatum*. Large *Inula macrophylla* and various fennels were in flower too and fine plants of the attractive borage *Lindelofia macrostyla* with blue bells finely marked inside. I tried in vain to locate *Ostrovskia magnifica* but clearly this rare plant requires more time than I had even if it grew in this area and was indeed still in flower as it was very warm at this altitude. By now time was moving along and we drove on through the dry hills with the now familiar vast displays of *Eremurus tianshanicus* covering the steppe with many thousands of glowing backlit spires and then up to our hotel through increasingly alpine scenery with more and more pencil

spruce appearing, big birch trees and a much green landscape. A tasty big trout rounded off the day nicely.

Day 8 12th June To Bishkek via Otmok Pass

We left early enough but the boys managed to leave some important papers at the hotel so we had to backtrack all the way over the very scenic Ala Bel Pass and then back again. However, this gave me another chance to enjoy the superb sheets of *Trollius altaicus* that coated the slopes and grassy flats along with broad brushstrokes of millions of pink *Primula algida*, pale blue forget-me-nots and yellow buttercups.

I wanted to have a look at the Otmok Pass and the day we chose to go up was the day all of the shepherds decided to move their flocks over the mountains so we had to push our way through numerous big herds of livestock. The route up, although very scenic with superb views across the Central Tien Shan, was rather lacking in colour save for some good patches of *Nepeta sp.* But as we descended some way interesting rocky outcrops appeared and these got progressively more flowery until I stopped at one excellent steppic slope with the crags above crowded with *Ferula* and *Eremurus fuscus* (which had now taken over from *tianshanicus* as the default very common foxtail lily). The slopes had wonderful mats of red-marked yellow *Scutellaria przewalskii*, the fine slender *Eremostachys fetisowii* and spreading plants of white flowered *Astragalus nuciferus*. Choughs were circling over head and I'd seen Snowfinch on the way down too. The last stop before lunch was to look at the pretty slender bellflower *Campanula alberti* which grew on the rocks.

We had lunch in a little cafe and then drove back up and over the pass and onto Bishkek via the high Too Ashu Pass arriving by late afternoon. There were lots of fine flowers on the way but that is tomorrow's story.

In 2013 the tour was a shorter version of the current tour and in fact started on 'Day 9' hence the diversion to Bishkek!

Day 9 13th June Tor-Ashuu Pass to Suusamyr

The group arrived slightly early at the decidedly unsociable hour of 5am and we drove straight back to the hotel and went to bed for some much needed sleep. At midday we went for a tasty lunch at an Uighur restaurant (with an extensive menu) before slowly exiting the city and driving across the flat plain beneath the cloud-capped Tien Shan. Turning off we began to climb and stopped for a short time in an area of steppe with fine plants of pink *Salvia sclarea* and purple spikes of *Salvia nemorosa* as well as wiry *Convolvulus subhirsutum*, deep purple *Dodartia orientalis* and tall branched *Verbascum songaricum*. Rose-coloured Starlings appeared by a collection of roadside buildings where they were nesting under the asbestos roofing, oblivious to the health

implications. A little further on and we saw some mauve-blue tufts and these were the delicate *Campanula alberti*, which looked very effective against the dark purple-brown rock they sprouted from. *Eremurus fuscus* was common all the way up becoming fresher as we gained height and passed bushes festooned with creamy flowered *Clematis alpina* ssp *sibirica*.

Reaching around three thousand metres the turf was studded with thousands of *Trollius dzungaricus* and we stopped at one population also finding a lovely group of *Cortusa brotheri* nestled beneath a rock, a pretty violet *Viola tianshanicus*, *Myosotis* sp and edelweiss. Choughs were probing in the turf as we continued up driving through the tunnel and exiting in a world of mist. This cleared after a while and we could see the vast swathes of alpine turf with countless orangey *Trollius altaicus*, purple *Phlomis oreophila*, glaucous leaved *Ligularia heterophylla* and white spikes of *Pedicularis dolichorrhiza*. Its cousin *Pedicularis amoena* was lower down and we stopped by some yurts and introduced ourselves to the bemused locals before setting off for a slope speckled with cerise. These were the hundreds of *Paeonia hybrida* that stretched along the valley for at least a kilometre and although they had passed their peak a few days ago there were still some pristine flowers and the overall spectacle was superb. To add to the colour Common Rosefinches were perched on the abundant *Caragana pleiophylla* bushes and there were superb stands of *Cortusa matthioli*, patches of *Pedicularis rhinanthoides* by the stream, big stands of (almost in flower) *Aconitum leucostonum* and the odd purple-red *Aquilegia atrovinosa*. From here we drove to our accommodation tucked away in the steppe with many *Eremostachys speciosus* and pink alliums and which consisted of converted shipping containers complete with en suite bathrooms!

Day 10 14th June Ala Bel & Otmok Passes

It had rained on and off all night and in the morning grey clouds hung over the mountains with evidence of fresh snow above three thousand metres. However, it was showing some signs of improving as we drove out across the wide green landscape peppered with yurts and various livestock. There were a couple of short stops for good flowers with first a colony of large *Dactylorhiza umbrosa*, which also grew with much *Polygala hybrida* and a few pretty pale pink *Primula serrata*, whilst on drier patches were big plants of stemless *Astragalus macronyx*. Citrine Wagtails and Common Rosefinches were quite common as we progressed to a slope with big bushy plants of purple-flowered *Astragalus* sp. From here we carried on to the Otmok Pass climbing up through a wintery landscape of fresh snow and meeting a number of big flocks of sheep coming down the mountain. Cresting the pass the valley below was much clearer and brighter and we descended to a flower-rich area and spent some time on the slopes where there was a fine array of steppe plants as Grey-necked Buntings hopped about the rocks and Isabelline Wheatears flew up the track. There was *Ixiolirion tartaricum* including a pink form, the curious blackish-red borage *Lindelofia stylosa*, a lovely reddish-pink *Onobrychis* sp and a big drift of *Phlomis oreophila*. On the rocky slopes were a few pink *Cousinia fetisowii* and *Pseudosedum longidentatum* but star of the show was the superb display of *Scutellaria przewalskii* that covered

the slopes with perfect clumps of red-tipped yellow flowers. Chough were wheeling about as we progressed to some fine *Eremostachys fetisowii* and then a stony area with abundant *Linaria bungei* which was quite variable in colour from golden-brown to maroon. At the base of the slope were the sprawling plants of *Astragalus nuciferus*.

After lunch we back tracked and returned to the pass seeing Rock Thrush on the way and then stopping for some good dwarf alpine forms of *Dracocephalum nutans* alongside *Chorispora macropoda*. Another bare stony bank had plenty of pretty pink *Chorispora bungeana* as a Black Kite flew across harassed by Ravens. Some areas of turf had a pinkish haze and this was caused by the many thousands of *Primula algida*.

Now climbing up to the Ala Bel Pass the turf was coloured by drifts of forget-me-nots and stitchworts and then by countless thousands of *Trollius altaicus* that literally coloured the steppe orange. We stopped in an accessible patch which also had plenty of *Allium hymenorhiza* and some *Anemone narcissiflora* ssp *protracta* the latter combining beautifully with the trollius. The weather was changing and as we continued up it was obvious we wouldn't be able to see much although it was still possible to make out the pink haze of a million *Primula algida*. There was still plenty to see on the way down with stops for *Eremostachys speciosa*, *Papaver crocea* and *Ligularia heterophylla*, before a fantastic drift of pale pink *Pedicularis rhinanthoides* rounded off proceedings save for photos of yurt construction and little stalls selling kimiz and dried yogurt balls. Back at the accommodation the weather gradually improved and the grey gave way to blue and by evening there was some beautiful light across the mountains and crystal clear views.

Day 11 15th June To Kochkor

It was a gorgeous clear sunny morning with the Tien Shan running the length of the horizon and the air crystal clear as we drove east moving through the familiar grasslands with Rosefinches, Hoopoes, Rose-coloured Starlings, Sparrowhawk, Cuckoos and Citrine Wagtails alongside the road and in the small poplar lined villages we passed through. After an hour we entered a different rockier environment as the hills closed in to form a gorge with the powerful Jungal River running through it. Bushes were draped in the creamy flowers of *Clematis alpina* ssp *sibirica* and in the adjacent grassy area were *Ixiolirion tartaricum* and the lovely *Dianthus crinitus* with its finely divided petals. A dapper male Grey Wagtail flew past and then as we progressed Brown Dipper was along the river and a Rock Nuthatch on a boulder. Gravelly slopes had the lovely red flowered and still unknown prostrate *Lotus sp* and another area had more the same as well as a *Chesneya sp*, lovely flowery plants of *Arnebia guttata* with their purple blotched yellow flowers as well as the bushy *Scutellaria adenostegia*. The geology of the gorge was very interesting with various stages of deposition and weathering on offer including some superb and immense colourful screes that clung to the slopes above the river. A particularly stunning collection of colourful hills and eroded slopes brought us to a halt and then there were the interesting

graveyards with very ornate mini-mausoleums with domes, towers and decorative exteriors and we were to see many more of these unique cemeteries during the day.

We had lunch at our guide's grandmother's house a huge heap of plov with mini-doughnuts, jams, honey and tea. Afterwards we continued east with Bee-eaters swooping across the road and here and there huge flocks of Rooks. We stopped a few times in the steppe first for the bushy white flowered *Clematis songaricus* then deep purple *Dodartia orientalis* and *Thermopsis turkestanica*. The latter turned out to be very abundant as we progressed towards the Kyzart Pass with large drifts in the meadows. Below the pass there were extensive stands of *Ligularia macrophylla* just breaking into flower alongside abundant *Lindelofia stylosa* in the drier areas. The ligularia was in fact the dominant plant on the damper turf as we climbed with Linnets flying alongside whereas on the other side of the pass the steppe was entirely dominated by clumps of a tall grass with prominent dead white stems, which actually made quite dramatic scene. Lower down in stony areas were large numbers of *Acantholimon alatavicum* with hundreds of pink cushions and a few white flowered shrubby *Convolvulus sp.*

Looming up above the first village below the pass were more striking rock formations before we trundled into Kochkor.

The local football pitch close to our guesthouse was being carefully hand-watered!

Day 12 16th June Song-Kul

The large alpine lake of Song-Kul lays at over three thousand metres nestled among the mountains south-west of Kochkor. The first part of the drive in was fairly uneventful plantwise, but there were fine views of the valley and numerous Citrine Wagtails. However, once we began to climb the turf quickly became flower-filled and we stopped first in an area studded with many *Trollius dzungaricus*. Among these were numerous other species with *Leontopodium ochroleucum*, *Aster alpinus*, *Anemone narcissiflora* ssp *protracta*, *Ligularia heterophylla*, two species of alliums, the handsome lousewort *Pedicularis pubiflora* and *Morina parviflora*. A Himalayan Griffon flew in quite close and we had a great view as it circled above and White-winged Snowfinches and Plain Mountain Finch flew up from the road as we climbed higher. The upper turf had thousands of darkest red *Allium atrosanguineum* as well as hundreds of *Tulipa heterophylla* and *Tulipa dasystemon*, many *Primula algida*, tufts of white-flowered *Eritrichium villosum* and the pale yellow of *Chorispora macropoda*. However, arguably the most remarkable plant up here grew closer to the snow patch, the singularly coloured *Trollius lilacinus* with the freshest flowers a lovely ice-blue. Wandering up the road we looked around some rocky outcrops and found small mats of lilac-flowered *Oxytropis chionobia* and *Lonicera semenovii* whilst in the crevices was the delicate *Androsace septentrionalis*. A second showier species *Androsace lehmanniana* grew with more *Oxytropis chionobia* on a larger outcrop and in the surrounding turf were many *Oxygraphis*

glacialis. Looking down the road there was a big view of the silver disc of the lake and surrounding mountains with a scattering of yurts.

Lunch was beside another rock outcrop which proved to be very productive with trailing mats of *Dracocephalum paulsenii*, white *Androsace sericea* our third species and a pretty little *Thalictrum sp* wedged in the shady crevices. Driving on the roadsides had much pink *Chorispora bungeana* mingled with yellow *songarica*, lots more *Androsace sericea* and then stopping to look at a handsome Caspian Plover I noticed many pretty little *Viola tianshanica* along the road edge. A stop by the river outlet of the lake was good for cushion forming *Astragalus sp* and a pretty little *Eritrichium sp* in both blue and white forms. From here we turned away from the lake and climbed another pass with fine granitic scenery all around and a deep gorge plunging away to the left. From the pass there was a superb view down the valley with patches of spruce forest clinging to the slopes. The descent passed many lovely flowers including *Cortusa brotheri*, *Doronicum turkestanica* and then the yellow of *Corydalis gortschakovii*. Alongside the river were three Red-fronted Serins then a Mistle Thrush flew across and there were a few Black-eared Kites on the way as we drove the remaining couple of hours to Naryn passing fine stands of *Iris spuria*, but with brooding storm clouds ahead it seemed prudent not to stop.

Day 13 17th June Tash Rabat

The overnight rain had stopped by the time we left and the weather improved as we drove south towards the border with China much of it along the new smooth road constructed by the same country. The long ridge of the At-Bashi Mountains lay ahead some parts with evidence of fresh snow, others with impending rain and grey clouds, but the area around Tash Rabat was clear and becoming increasingly sunny. There were numerous Black Kites, three Black Vultures, a Booted Eagle, many Citrine Wagtails and two Yellow-breasted Tits as we drove and then after crossing a large featureless plain we entered the track to the caravanserai and there were several Shore Larks and a Ruddy Shelduck. We stopped first near some cliffs which had some nice clumps of pretty *Paraquilegia anemonoides* as well as a small *Rhodiola sp* and a leafy *Allium sp*. Himalayan Griffons were almost constantly about riding the thermals, joined at one time by a juvenile Lammergeier. In the turf higher up were a few *Pulsatilla campanella* and clumps of *Stellera chamaejasme*, whilst the marshy turf around the river had a good scattering of *Primula serrata*.

We drove onto the striking stone-built caravanserai where White-winged Snowfinches were hopping about like sparrows and nesting in the walls and there was also the odd plant of *Chorispora bungeana* growing among the stones too. After a look inside we had lunch out of the cool wind although it was by now very sunny and it stayed this way all the way back to Naryn too. We stopped for fine shows of starry *Ligularia narynensis* growing on stony flats and then for a longer time in a little valley where we found many new plants such as *Linum olgae*, *Leontopodium fedtschenkoanum*, *Pedicularis sp*, an *Onosma sp* and then some superb displays of *Clematis alpina ssp*

sibirica scrambling over the roses near a small waterfall. Near the falls were clumps of *Cortusa matthioli* and on the orange-lichen encrusted rocks were many *Eremurus fuscus* making quite a dramatic picture against the blue sky and walking back down there were many more fine *Ligularia narynensis*. Our final stop was for a big population of a mystery fritillary (probably *Fritillaria cirrhosa*) but they had finished at least ten days ago.

Day 14 18th June To Tamga via Fairy Canyon

It was quite a shock in the morning when we went outside to see snow across the hills close to the town and this only grew in magnitude as we drove north. The countryside was blanketed in several inches of unseasonal snowfall and this got deeper as we climbed towards the Dolon Pass where there was nigh on a foot of snow in places. Understandably the botany went out the window, but the birding was startling as many smaller species had clearly abandoned the uplands and were congregating along and on the road with hundreds of Shorelarks, many Plain Mountain Finches, Rose-coloured Starlings, Wheatears and various pipits.

By the time we had descended to Kochkor the snow had fizzled out but the hills were still white as far as we could see. After lunch we drove towards Issyk-Kul crossing a tract of dry semi-desert where bushes of *Caragana bongardiana* were flowering along with berry laden shrubs of *Ephedra intermedia* and examining the stony ground we found a number of the unusual succulent *Orostachys thyrsiflora* and a Brown Hare bounded off across the stony ground. Ruddy Shelduck were plentiful along the reservoir before the main lake and in places alongside the latter were a few Whooper Swans whilst Lesser Grey Shrikes could be seen on perches by the roadside. We drove straight on to Fairy Tale Canyon a remarkable natural features of convoluted multicoloured clay hills and inclined strata. Within the muddled landforms were some interesting flowers with pretty mauve-pink *Limonium kaschgaricum*, *Scutellaria przewalskii*, *Lagochilus seversianus*, *Rosularia sp* and the dark spikes of parasitic *Cynomorium coccineum*.

Day 15 19th June Barskoon

Our destination today lay at just under four thousands metres so given the amount of snow around our optimism was a little stretched, but it turned out to be a superb day and one with a dramatic change in the weather, which in truth things began to improve almost as soon as we arrived in the Barskoon Valley where no fewer than six Hoopoes were perched in a line on an overhead wire. There were fine stands of *Iris spuria* ssp *sogdiana* and then passing fine flowery shrubs of *Rosa alberti* higher up among the first Tien Shan Spruce there were a few *Iris ruthenica*. Large flocks of Plain Mountain Finch accompanied us up to a second iris, *Iris loczyi* these still with snow around the flowers and around these clumps were many good *Callianthemum alatavicum*, *Erysimum humillimum* and a few *Pulsatilla campanella*. Surprisingly this area of the mountains had

had little snow and this was starting to disappear even when we reached nearly three thousand eight hundred metres where there was a fine stand of *Primula nivalis* ssp *farinosa*. Sadly the flowers had been badly frosted by the snow and here the *Desideria flabellata* were still in bud this year. However, things picked up again when we reached the broad plateau studded with half frozen lakes which was largely clear of snow. Taking a minor side track we made our way across the tundra to a point and then walked across the flowery landscape for an hour and a half finding many fine clumps of *Smelovskia calycina*, tight domes of *Sibbaldia tetrandra*, hundreds of bright yellow *Ranunculus albertii*, little cushions of *Oxytropis chionobia* and then near recently departed snow were superb drifts of hundreds of icy-blue *Trollius lilacinus*. Walking further there was some superb *Allium semenowii* near the larger lake too as Redshanks complained at our presence. A cold wind was blowing across the very scenic plateau so we opted to drive back to a more sheltered place with some old buildings for lunch. While we ate in the sunshine a gorgeous Guldenstadt's Redstart was perching on the boulders nearby keeping an eye on us and we had great views of this lovely bird.

Driving back down the switchbacks we stopped and walked a section of the road, dipping into sections of rocky slopes and scree to look for plants finding lovely mats of *Saussurea gnaphalodes* and the white-flowered *Corydalis fedtschenkoana* with very finely divided leaves. There was some ground to cover so we drove on towards Karakol seeing fine stands of *Salvia nemorosa* and *Linaria vulgaris* by the roadside as we went.

Day 16 20th June Jeti-Oguz

A crystal clear morning with sharp views of the snowy peaks as we drove first west and then turned south towards the dramatic sandstone formations of Jeti Oguz where we stopped and took a walk onto the adjacent slopes. On the slopes were dense meadows and walking up and around we were able to access the upper slope where there were some fine stands of *Dictamnus albus*. In the meadows are a few *Codonopsis clematidea* with their exquisitely marked inner bells as well as *Leontopodium fedtschenkoana*, *Polygala hybrida*, a few small blue *Allium caesium* and bushes of *Berberis sphaerocarpa* laden with red fruits. Black-eared Kites circled around and there were Rock Buntings and Crag Martins around the rock formations.

There was a slight delay owing to a logistical mix up – say no more – and then we continued into the spruce forest where we stopped for the gorgeous wine-red flowers of *Aquilegia atrovinosa*. Among the scrub were also *Polygonatum roseum*, *Orthilia secunda*, *Pyrola rotundifolia* and a very fresh Small Tortoiseshell. We climbed out onto an area of pasture and while we waited for lunch explored the forest finding many *Cortusa brotheri*, *Iris ruthenica* and then a few delicate little Coral Root Orchids *Coralrhiza trifida* sprouting from the deep moss.

Following lunch we drove a bit further up until the road got too rough and then walked along the track finding *Doronicum turkestanica* and some fine *Aconitum leucostomum* as Hume's Warblers

zipped about the spruce. Driving back down there were drifts of *Pedicularis rhinanthoides* and then among the woods the lovely *Lathyrus gmelinii* with white flowers that aged to golden-brown, along with big stands of *Aconitum leucostomum* and a fine population of *Codonopsis clematidea* on a bank with clear views inside the bells.

The forest gave way to steppe and in one area there was abundant bluish *Thymus sp* growing with an *Aster sp*, big bushes of *Clematis songaricus* and branched inflorescences of *Verbascum songaricum* all with a superb mountain background. The same could be said of our last stop along the main road for the abundant *Salvia nemorosa*, *Echium vulgare* and *Linaria vulgaris* that lined the road.

Day 17 21st June Chon Ashu Pass

What a final day in the mountains this proved to be. The day began and ended with pure blue skies and scarcely a fluff of cloud all day long. We drove out past a patchwork of fields pink with sainfoin or yellow with mustard or green with whatever and then turned towards the mountains climbing slowly to an area of scrub and meadows. Here were stands of *Veratrum album* var *lobelianum*, *Aconitum leucostomum*, *Polemonium caucasicum*, *Campanula glomerata* and *Trollius dzungaricus*, whilst the roadside banks were studded with hundreds of reddish-orange *Hieracium aurantiacum*. We continued into a rocky area with lots of fine *Papaver croceum* and then on to a broader valley where a wide braided river ran through with the Tien Shan in the background. It looked an ideal place for Ibisbill one of the world's most beautiful waders and although my initial search didn't find any as we drove on we flushed one from near the roadside. It had obviously been feeding in the turf and only flew a few metres before strutting about calling loudly and we got outrageously good views.

The road began to climb and Red-fronted Serins flew alongside and settled on a boulder. At one bend further up we stopped for a good stand of *Rhodiola linearifolia* as Alpine Choughs drifted across the extensive turf and bizarre stands of fastigiated *Caragana jubata* above. We drove straight on to the pass at 3820 metres and enjoyed magnificent views in both directions of clear mountains. However, up here there wasn't much in the way of flora so we backtracked a bit and then explored some stony slopes and were treated to a feast of alpinines with big buns of *Chorispora bungeana*, a few pale blue *Comastoma falcatum*, lots of *Dracocephalum imperbe*, big domes of *Sibbaldia tetrandra*, yellow *Saxifraga macrocalyx* (with red runners) and two Alpine Accentors that came in close to see what we were up to. There followed an attractive alpine *Silene sp*, superb little clumps of *Leontopodium ochroleucum*, clumps of yellow *Saxifraga hirculus* and then wonderful clumps and drifts of *Aster alpinus* and big mats of *Androsace lehmanniana*. However, the best was yet to come as we descended to wide snow patches with big drifts of *Primula nivalis* and then emerging from neat holes in the snow (which was the stuff that fell three days ago) were many *Trollius lilacinus* which was a stunning photo opportunity. Added to all of this were the pristine Yellow-legged Tortoiseshells that were gliding about the slopes thriving in the warm windless air.

The morning was going to be hard to beat, but our wandering along another section of roadside and slope had its highlights with pretty pink *Allium ambylophyllum* (?), masses of *Erysimum humillimum*, a different pink *Chorispora* sp, fine *Callianthemum alatavicum*, lovely pink *Taraxacum lilacinum*, scree-dwelling *Cerastium lithospermifolium*, both yellow and purple colour forms of *Viola altaica*, *Lloydia serotina* and then a slope with hundreds of yellow *Allium semenowii* mixed with *Primula algida*. Squeaking marmots called out as we crossed the slope and descended to the car for the drive back well and truly satisfied with a glorious day in the Tien Shan. There was a Brown Dipper flying along the river on the way back and then later on as we left the house we had eaten dinner in a Sparrowhawk swooped across with a young Common Myna in its grasp.

Day 18 22nd June To Bishkek via Burana Tower

Our final day saw us driving around the northern shore of Issy-Kul on another sunny warm day, passing through the familiar 'lowland' rural landscapes with haymaking in full swing. Hoopoes, Lesser Grey Shrikes and Rose-coloured Starlings coloured the landscape further before we reached the large petroglyph site where various boulders had ibex and Marco Polo Sheep carvings etched onto their surface as well as three Turkic balbals (carved figures used as grave markers). Isabelline Wheatears were clearly nesting in the area as several birds with beaks full of food were seen and there were a few *Sophora alopecuroides*.

We moved through large tracts of dry steppe and then descended into a drier canyon with the odd Roller flying across before stopping for lunch. I had hoped to see *Eremurus tianshanicus* a bit further on but the only population in flower this year was totally inaccessible on a cliff. However, we did stop for a superb stand of *Alcea nudiflora* growing along a field edge along with a purple spike of *Orobanche amoena* and a small *Achillea* sp. The latter's much bigger cousin *Achillea filipendulina* was in dramatic effect at the Burana Tower where big stands lined the road along with dense drifts of pretty pink *Xeranthemum annuum*. We had a wander around the site with the half restored tower, balbal collection and various other ruins before completing our drive into Bishkek and arriving in good time to get ready for tomorrow morning's very early departure!

Day 19 23rd June Onward flights

The flight to Istanbul arrived early there and allowed plenty of time for connections.

Systematic List Number 1

Flora

Cupressaceae

- Juniperus communis* Alpine slopes
Juniperus seravshanica Upright tree mid altitudes
Juniperus turkestanica Upright tree, higher altitudes

Pinaceae

- Larix sp* Kyrgyz-Ata
Picea schrenkiana A main component of forests, typical slender spruce

Ephedraceae

- Ephedra intermedia* Issy-Kul, some smothered in orange-red berries, blue stems

Apiaceae

- Angelica archangelica* Jetti Oghuz
Angelica brevicaulis Alpine species, compact but typical broad green umbels, Chon Ashu
Eryngium bungei Steppe below Sary-Chelek, Toktogul reservoir
Eryngium campestre Roadsides, steppe
Ferula foetida Abundant below Tor Ashu 2012, but monocarpic so none 2013 – expect many 2014!
Ferula sp Several species seen but not identified
Ferula tenuisecta Locally dominant fennel, common at Sary-Chelek, also steppe west of Otmok, etc. Beware irritating sap!
Heracleum sp Kyrgyz-Ata, Karakol
Pleurospermum sp? Dwarf species in scree at Chon Ashu

Asteraceae

- Achillea filipendulina* Tall yellow species common in grassy steppe and roadsides, greyish, flat pinnate leaves
Achillea sp Smaller species, yellow flowers, narrower leaves
Aster alpinus Alpine turf, Barskoon, Song-Kul, excellent at Chon Ashu
Aster spp Steppe species seen
Centaurea turkestanica Handsome pale yellow cornflower at Sary-Chelek
Cousinia fetisowii West of Okmok on rocky steppe, broad capitula, pink, stem not winged
Doronicum turkestanicum Song-Kul, (Ala Archa 2012)
Erigeron acer Ala Bel
Hieracium aurantiacum Bright orange red, abundant in shorter meadows at Chonashu
Inula macrophylla Large leaved tall species with much branched infl., steppe around Toktogul res.
Leontopodium fedtschenkoanum Taller with no black in subsidiary clusters, lanceolate leaves along stems, south of Naryn
Leontopodium ochroleucum Short with obvious black tips to subsidiary clusters in capitula, alpine turf, very common at Song-Kul, but widespread

<i>Ligularia heterophylla</i>	Tor Ashu, Ala Bel, greyish leaves, stout infl.
<i>Ligularia macrophylla</i>	Starting to flower on west side of Kyzart Pass, also Naryn, huge glaucous leaves, Jeti Oghuz, Ala Archa
<i>Ligularia spp</i>	Several other species seen in both dry and wet habitats
<i>Ligularia thomsonii</i>	Tall green leaved, cordate leaf bases, corymbose, wooded areas at Dashman, Sary-Chelek
<i>Saussurea elegans</i>	Pretty lilac species at Fairy Canyon
<i>Saussurea gnaphthalodes</i>	Tidy mats at Barskoon, woolly centred
<i>Tragopogon dubius</i>	Pink washed yellow form west of Otmok, typical yellow form and many big seedheads widespread
<i>Taraxacum lilacinum</i>	Pretty pink daisy, stony roadsides in alpine zone Chon Ashu
<i>Waldheimia sp</i>	White flowered species at Song-Kul. Not 2013.
<i>Xeranthemum annuum</i>	Common roadside flower near Bishkek, Burana

Balsamaceae

<i>Impatiens parviflora</i>	Small white flowered species abundant at Dashman, Sary-Chelek
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Berberidaceae

<i>Berberis sphaerocarpa</i>	Barskoon valley, Jeti Oghuz, Ala Archa, Sary-Chelek
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Betulaceae

<i>Betula pendula</i>	Along rivers and in mixed forest
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Boraginaceae

<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	Steppe west of Osh, Sary-Chelek
<i>Arnebia guttata</i>	Dry slopes in lower areas
<i>Cynoglossum ambile</i>	Sary-Chelek
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Roadsides
<i>Eritrichium sp</i>	Song-Kul, white or blue dwarf species in stony ground
<i>Eritrichium villosum</i>	White flowered, hairy leaves and stems, leafy stems, upright tufts below Song-Kul, also Barskoon. Can be blue
<i>Heliotropum rotundifolium</i>	Steppe
<i>Lappula barbata</i>	Steppe near Bishkek
<i>Lindelofia macrostyla</i>	Handsome species with cymes of pretty blue bells, banks, roadsides in steppe Toktogul, east of Osh
<i>Lindelofia stylosa</i>	Dark reddish-purple borage, slender flowers, roadsides
<i>Myosotis asiatica?</i>	Locally abundant in alpine turf, grasslands
<i>Onosma sp</i>	Grassy banks south of Naryn, pale yellow

Brassicaceae

<i>Chorispora bungeana</i>	Pretty stemless pink species, gravelly places and on rocks, Song-Kul, Tash Rabat, Barskoon, sensational at Chonashu Pass
<i>Chorispora macropoda</i>	Yellow flowered species below Song-Kul, dense heads of yellow flowers
<i>Chorispora songarica</i>	Another yellow flowered species but with looser heads and larger flowers, gravelly roadsides, Song-Kul

<i>Chorispora</i> sp	Large pink flowers, entire leaves stony slopes and among <i>Allium semenovii</i> on Chon Ashu
<i>Desideria flabellata</i>	Impressive brassica with dense heads of lilac flowers in moraine at Barskoon. In bud 2013.
<i>Draba oreades</i>	Tight cushions with yellow flowers, Chon Ashu
<i>Erysimum humillimum</i>	Gravelly areas in alpine zone, narrow leaves, Chonashu Pass, Taldyk Pass
<i>Isatis glauca</i>	Probably this species along roadsides, steppe
<i>Smelovskia calycina</i>	Spherical white heads, common at Barskoon, Taldyk Pass, Song-Kul

Campanulaceae

<i>Asyneuma</i> sp	Sary-Chelek
<i>Campanula alberti</i>	Rocks west of Okmok and gorge below Tor Ashuu, slender stems, narrow petals, lilac
<i>Campanula glomerata</i>	Jeti Oghuz, Chonashu, Ala Archa, Sary-Chelek; dense heads of dark blue-purple
<i>Codonopsis clematidea</i>	Jeti Oguz, near Naryn, Kyrgyz-Ata, handsome pale blue bells with stunning insides

Caprifoliaceae

<i>Lonicera semenovii</i>	Song-Kul, pale yellow flowers on rocks, also Barskoon
<i>Lonicera</i> sp	Large shrub with yellow flowers at Ala Archa 2012
<i>Lonicera tartarica</i>	White and pink flowered large shrub, south of Osh, Kyrgyz-Ata
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Kyrgyz-Ata

Caryophyllaceae

<i>Acanthophyllum pungens</i>	Fine shrubby species, dense cymes of small lilac flowers south of Sary-Chelek
<i>Cerastium lithospermifolium</i>	Dwarf scree species, Chon Ashu
<i>Cerastium</i> spp	Various species seen
<i>Dianthus crinitus</i>	Pretty species with finely divided fimbriate petals, near Sussamyr, Fairy Tale Canyon
<i>Silene alba</i>	Roadsides
<i>Silene</i> sp	Dwarf alpine species at Chon Ashu, dark veined calyces, reduced cream flowers
<i>Silene</i> sp 2	Slender species, white flowers, west of Otmok

Cistaceae

<i>Helianthemum</i> sp	East of Chaek on dry banks, steppe
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Convolvulaceae

<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Roadsides
<i>Convolvulus lineatus</i>	Small rosette forming species, silvery entire lanceolate leaves, pinkish flowers, stony roadsides, steppe
<i>Convolvulus pseudocantabricus</i>	Certainly akin to <i>cantabrica</i> , so probably this on the rocks en route to Bishkek, steppe below Sary-Chelek, Toktogul res.

<i>Convolvulus tragacanthoides</i>	Stony slopes east of Kyzart Pass, shrubby, silvery leaves, white flowers with pink reverse
<i>Convolvulus subhirsutus/pseudocantabrica</i>	Pink, wiry stems, bushy, steppe in gorge below Tor Ashuu
Crassulaceae	
<i>Orostachys thyrsiflora</i>	Peculiar little succulent rosettes in semi-desert near Issyk-Kul.
<i>Pseudosedum longidentatum</i>	Scattered in mountains, like a lanky sedum, pink flowers
<i>Rhodiola linearifolia</i>	Handsome species with flat heads of red-orange flowers. Alpine zone at Chonashu
<i>Rhodiola litwinowii</i>	Yellowish to orangey heads, below Song-Kul
<i>Rhodiola sp 2</i>	Small species with few flowered heads of yellowish flowers, rocks at Tash Rabat
<i>Rosularia sp 1</i>	White
Cuscutaceae	
<i>Cuscuta sp</i>	Widespread parasite
Cynomoriaceae	
<i>Cynomorium coccinea</i>	Weird brown, columnar parasite growing from saline ground and sandy places around Isyk-Kul
Elaeagnaceae	
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Planted along roadsides, sweet scent, native south of Osh, Issyk-Kul
Ericaceae	
<i>Orthilia secunda</i>	Jeti Oguz
<i>Pyrola rotundifolia</i>	Jeti Oguz
Euphorbiaceae	
<i>Euphorbia lamprocarpa</i>	Fine tall species at Dashman/Arslanbob
<i>Euphorbia talastavica</i>	Maybe this at Sary-Chelek
Fabaceae	
	Many unidentified species were seen mainly <i>Astragalus</i> and <i>Hedysarum</i> .
<i>Astragalus alopecias</i>	Fine species in steppe
<i>Astragalus macronyx/chlorodontus</i>	Possibly this acaulescent species west of Otmok Pass, below Ala Bel in steppe; yellow flowers
<i>Astragalus nuciferus</i>	Fine large sprawling species, long leafy stems with white flowers, west of Otmok Pass
<i>Astragalus sieversianus</i>	Prominent oval cotton-wool ball seed heads, Arslanbob
<i>Astragalus spp</i>	Many species seen, all unknown
<i>Caragana bongardiana</i>	More upright bush with larger yellow flowers, south of Naryn, semi-desert near Issyk-Kul
<i>Caragana jubata</i>	Probably this species at around 2800m at Song Kul, Tash Rabat, pale pink flowers, densely spiny shrub with fastigiated stems

<i>Caragana pleiophylla</i>	Locally dominant shrub between Suusaymr and Ala-bel Pass, flattened spreading habit, yellow flowers densely arranged on stems
<i>Chesneya sp</i>	Growing with <i>Lotus sp</i>
<i>Hedysarum chaitocarpum</i>	Showy species with large pink flowers, below Sary-Chelek
<i>Hedysarum neglectum</i>	Tall slender pink species in meadows e.g. Ala Archa
<i>Hedysarum sp</i>	Widespread steppe species, also widely grown fodder crop species
<i>Hedysarum sp</i>	Lovely showy species on slopes west of Otmok
<i>Lathyrus gmelinii</i>	Handsome species with white flowers that turn orange-brown with age, broad pinnate leaves, wooded area at Jeti Oguz
<i>Lathyrus sp</i>	Sary-Chelek
<i>Lotus sp</i>	Handsome prostrate spreader with reddish-pink flowers, between Suusamy and Kochor
<i>Onobrychis sp</i>	Pretty prostrate species with palest lilac flowers, Taldyk Pass
<i>Oxytropis chionobia</i>	Pretty lilac flowers in mats on rocks at Song-Kul
<i>Oxytropis sp</i>	Gravel roadside, Otmok
<i>Sophora alopecuroides (?)</i>	East of Suusamy
<i>Thermopsis turkestanica</i>	Abundant along roadsides, damp pasture
Gentianaceae	
<i>Comastoma falcatum</i>	Pale blue, high turf, Chon Ashu
<i>Gentiana olivieri</i>	Kyrgyz-Ata
<i>Gentiana karelinii</i>	Small annual blue species, scattered on passes throughout
Geraniaceae	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Roadsides, steppe
<i>Geranium collinum</i>	The common mauve species, alpine turf especially, also damp pasture. Variable with palest pink form abundant at Chon Ashu
<i>Geranium tuberosum</i>	South of Naryn
Hypericaceae	
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Arslanbob
Juglanaceae	
<i>Juglans regia</i>	Magnificent walnut forest at Dashman, also Sary-Chelek
Lamiaceae	
<i>Dracocephalum imperbe</i>	Long-tubed mauve flowers, crenulated leaves, often on rocks at altitude, Chonashu, Ala Archa
<i>Dracocephalum integrifolium</i>	Lilac flowered shrublet, south of Naryn
<i>Dracocephalum nutans</i>	Compact alpine form with dense heads of mauve flowers, Otmok Pass, taller forms lower down.
<i>Dracocephalum paulsenii</i>	Lovely alpine with dense heads and crenate leaves, crevices, roadsides at Song-Kul
<i>Eremostachys fetisowii</i>	Handsome species, yellow and orange flowers in distant verticillasters, west of Otmok Pass

<i>Eremostachys speciosa</i>	Common and widespread, impressive golden yellow species, steppe, alpine turf, roadsides
<i>Lagochilus platycalyx</i>	Pronounced calyx, smallish white flowers, steppe
<i>Lagochilus seravshanicus</i>	Characteristic spiny calyx, flowers white with reddish stripes internally. Dissect leaves. Steppe
<i>Marrubium anisodon</i>	Steppe south of Sary-Chelek
<i>Otostegia olgae</i>	Unusual bushy species, pronounced white calyx, white flowers, dense verticillasters, steppe banks
<i>Perovskia abrotanoides</i>	loosely branched with purple flowers, steppe west of Osh
<i>Perovskia scrophulariifolia</i>	Common shrub on dry areas east of Osh
<i>Phlomis oreophilus</i>	The common purplish species in alpine turf, meadows
<i>Phlomis sp</i>	Lanceolate leaves, pink flowers, steppe below Sary-chelek
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Arslanbob
<i>Salvia nemorosa</i>	Common around Issyk-Kul, roadsides, tall with deep blue-purple spikes. Syn: <i>deserta</i>
<i>Salvia sclarea</i>	Very common in steppe, roadsides in the south both pink and white forms
<i>Scutellaria adenostegia</i>	A small subshrub in rocky steppe near Suusamyr
<i>Scutellaria przewalskii</i>	Prostrate with incised leaves, in steppe e.g. near Naryn, superb mats west of Otmok
<i>Thymus sp</i>	Common in steppe below Sary-Chelek, Toktogul res.
<i>Thymus sp 2</i>	West of Otmok pass, pink, creeping
<i>Thymus sp 3</i>	Bluish flowers in round heads, low bushy plants, locally common in dry steppe en route to Jeti Oguz.

Linaceae

<i>Linum altaicum</i>	Largish flowers blue flax, scattered, Song Kul, Ala Archa
<i>Linum corymbulosum</i>	Small yellow flowers, steppe south of Sary Chelek
<i>Linum olgae</i>	Jeti Oghuz, Ala Archa, meadows - sticky glandular inflorescence, pink-lilac
<i>Linum sp</i>	Tiny yellow flowered species, steppe below Sary-Chelek

Malvaceae

<i>Alcea nudiflora</i>	Large white hollyhock; steppe, widespread
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Morinaceae

<i>Morina parviflora</i>	Below Song-Kul
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Onagraceae

<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Roadsides in uplands, damp valleys
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Orobanchaceae

<i>Orobanche amoena</i>	
<i>Pedicularis amoena</i>	Common pink species
<i>Pedicularis dolichorrhiza</i>	Tall creamy-white species, widespread in turf
<i>Pedicularis oederi</i>	Mountain turf, creamy-yellow with reddish tip

<i>Pedicularis pubiflora</i>	Pale yellow flowers, held upright, with hairs on calyx, leaves linear, once pinnate in dense whorls, turf below Song-Kul
<i>Pedicularis rhinanthoides</i>	Jeti Oghuz, south of Tor Ashu short with wide pale pink flowers, wet areas
<i>Pedicularis spp</i>	Various other unknowns seen
Paeoniaceae	
<i>Paeonia hybrida</i>	Below Tor Ashu, deep pink
Papaveraceae	
<i>Corydalis fedtschenkoana</i>	Finely pinnatisect leaves, white flowers, coarse scree on Barskoon, Chon Ashu
<i>Corydalis gortschakovii</i>	Tall yellow species on descent from Song-Kul, ferny leaves, deeply dissect bracts.
<i>Fumaria parviflora</i>	Scattered
<i>Glaucium squamigerum</i>	Widespread in gravelly areas, long rough seedpods
<i>Papaver croceum</i>	Widespread in gravelly areas, yellow to orange
<i>Papaver pavoninum</i>	Lovely species with deep purple ring inside red flower, Sary-Chelek
Plantaginaceae	
<i>Dodartia orientalis</i>	Deep purple wide lipped flowers, leafless stems, roadsides e.g Chaek
<i>Linaria bungei</i>	Attractive species with purplish or golden-brown flowers with darker veins, west of Otmok and growing around cabins at Suusamyr
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	Roadsides
<i>Plantago media</i>	Showy (for the genus) white inflorescence, broad ribbed leaves
Plumbaginaceae	
<i>Acantholimon alatavicum</i>	Large population on stony slopes east of Kyzart Pass, spiny domes with pink flowers
<i>Limonium kaschgaricum</i>	Fairy Tale Canyon, delicate pink calyces in cymes with small white flowers
<i>Limonium sp</i>	Small white calyced species, east of Kyzart Pass
Polemoniaceae	
<i>Polemonium caucasicum</i>	Pretty blue herb, good stands at Jeti Ortuz and Chonashu
Polygalaceae	
<i>Polygala hybrida</i>	Damp areas
Polygonaceae	
<i>Atraphaxis sp</i>	Small shrub with cream flowers, south of Osh
<i>Polygonum bistorta</i>	Familiar short to tall white species, meadows
<i>Polygonum undulatum</i>	Very common below Tor Ashu and Ala-Bel
<i>Rheum sp</i>	A small rhubarb at Tash Rabat

Rheum turkestanica

Maybe this

Primulaceae

Androsace lehmanniana

Pretty mat forming species, white flowers, leaves with long-ciliate margin, Song-Kul rocks

Androsace septrionalis

Small rosettes of lanceolate leaves, long stemmed small white flowers, rocks, gravels, Song-Kul

Androsace sericea

Gravelly areas, Song-Kul, Dolon Pass

Androsace spp

Various other unknowns seen especially at Song-Kul, cushion forming cream species at Chonashu

Cortusa brotheri

widespread

Cortusa matthioli

Various localities

Primula algida

Abundant in mountain turf

Primula minkwitzsiae

Pretty pink chasmophyte, a few among boulders at Ala Archa

Primula nivalis ssp farinosa

A few below Tor Ashu on north side, superb at Barskoon

Primula nutans

Damp pastures at Issyk-Kul

Primula serrata

Tallish, slender pale pink primula, pronounced bracteoles, marshy places, below Ala-Bel, near Naryn

Ranunculaceae

Aconitum leucostomum

Abundant at Jeti Oghuz

Anemone narcissiflora ssp protracta

Quite common in mountains, typical white anemone

Aquilegia atrovinosa

Handsome wide-red species, Jeti-Otuz, Chonashu, etc

Aquilegia vicaria

Lovely pale blue species, tufa springs near Arslanbob

Clematis alpina ssp sibirica

Large creamy sepals, near Naryn, Kyrgyz-Ata, Suusamyr

Clematis songarica

Abundant roadside steppic species with masses of small white flowers

Consolida rugulosum

Delicate white species in dry steppe south of Sary-Chelek

Delphinium semibarbatum

Lovely pale yellow species, locally common in steppe east around Toktogul

Oxygraphis glacialis

Abundant at Barskoon, also Song-Kul

Paeonia anomala

Hundreds below Tor Ashu –slightly over but still impressive

Paraquilegia anemonoides

On limestone cliffs at Tash Rabat, Ala Archa

Pulsatilla campanella

Common in turf at Tash Rabat, Barskoon, Taldyk Pass, Song-Kul

Ranunculus albertii

Abundant in bare places on tundra at Barskoon, coarse palmate leaves. Also Chonashu, Taldyk Pass, Song-Kul

Ranunculus rufisepalus

Common in scree at Barskoon, delicate deeply dissect leaves

Ranunculus polyanthemos?

Tall leafy stemmed species, deeply dissect leaves; abundant at Dashman, Sary-Chelek

Trollius altaicus

Orange species, locally abundant below Tor Ashu and Ala-Bel passes, Ala Archa, Sary-Chelek

Trollius dzungaricus

Locally abundant in mountains, golden yellow, Tor Ashu, Dolon, Song-Kul, etc

Trollius lilacinus

Gorgeous ice-blue species by snowmelt at Song-Kul (and Tash Rabat), big drifts at Barskoon

<i>Trollius sp</i>	North of Naryn, in wet flushes, tall with large flowers, also abundant at Chonashu and Karakol area, Kyrgyz-Ata
Rosaceae	
<i>Alchemilla tianshanica</i>	Damp mountain turf
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Kyrgyz-Ata, Sary-Chelek
<i>Exochorda tianshanica</i>	
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Suusaymr
<i>Potentilla asiatica</i>	Widespread <i>recta</i> type
<i>Potentilla bifurca</i>	Stony steppe
<i>Potentilla nervosa</i>	Possibly this grey leaved species at Ala Bel, also Taldyk.
<i>Potentilla spp</i>	Various seen
<i>Rosa albertii</i>	Common white rose
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Arslanbob, Sary-Chelek
<i>Rosa kokanica</i> (?)	Yellow rose, scattered, common at Ala Archa
<i>Rosa sp</i>	Smaller yellow flowered species, small pinnate leaves, south of Osh, Kyrgyz-Ata
<i>Sibbaldia tetrandra</i>	Tight cushions, tiny yellowish flowers at Barskoon, Chon Ashu
<i>Sorbus tianshanica</i>	Fine large rowan with large cymes of white flowers, scattered and widespread in uplands
<i>Sorbus tomentosa</i>	Kyrgyz-Ata
Rutaceae	
<i>Dictamnus albus</i>	Good stands at Jeti-Otuz, Arslanbob, Sary-Chelek; aromatic pinkish-white flowers in tall spikes, large pinnate leaves
<i>Haplophyllum perforatum</i>	Steppe west of Osh
Salicaceae	
<i>Populus nigra</i>	Very widespread
<i>Populus sp</i>	Very widespread
<i>Salix spp</i>	Riversides
Saxifragaceae	
<i>Saxifraga macrocalyx</i>	Yellow species with glandular hairs on sempervivum-like leaf rosettes and red runners. Song-Kul, Barskoon
<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>	Chon Ashu, rosettes or tight clumps, yellow with prominent orange dots inside
<i>Saxifraga sibirica</i>	Scattered, white
<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	Tight mats with purple flowers, Barskoon
Scrophulariaceae	
<i>Lagotis integrifolia</i>	Large, white flowers, turf below Song-Kul
<i>Lagotis sp</i>	Lilac flowers, procumbent and stoloniferous, Barskoon
<i>Verbascum songaricum</i>	Widespread in steppe habitats, branched infl. greyish leaves
Solanaceae	
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	Widespread

Tamaricaceae

Tamarix sp

Thymeleaceae

Stellera chamaejasme

Tash Rabat, south of Naryn, in grassy or scrubby steppe

Valerianaceae

Valeriana dioscoridis

Song-Kul, south of Naryn

Verbenaceae

????

Shrubby species east of Osh, lilac-purple flowers, leaves ovate with scalloped margin

Violaceae

Viola altaica

Tor Ashu Pass, Chon Ashu

Viola biflora

Yellow species at Barskoon, Ala Archa

Viola tianshanica

Delicate little violet with strongly lined lip and distinctive ovate-lanceolate leaves, Tor Ashu, Song-Kul, Chon Ashu, bare ground among turf at 3000m

Zygophyllaceae

Peganum harmala

Common and widespread in steppe

Zygophyllum atriplicoides

Shrub with large winged fruits, steppe near Osh, Jalalabad

Zygophyllum sp

Fleshy leaves, greyish bell flowers with prominent orange stamens, road side bank near Chaek

Amaryllidaceae

Ixiolirion tartaricum

Steppe, e.g. near Naryn

Colchicaceae

Colchicum kesselringianum

Taldyk Pass

Convallariaceae

Polygonatum roseum

Jeti Oguz, pink flowers

Iridaceae

Iris alberti

Fine mauve 'pogon' species with prominent brown and white barring on upper falls, in meadows above Sary-Chelek

Iris halophila

Syn: *spuria ssp sogdiana* Widespread, roadsides, wet places

Iris loczyi

Barskoon, Song-Kul

Iris ruthenica

Deep-blue and white good population above Sary-Chelek, Barskoon

Liliaceae

Allium ambylophyllum

Common in meadows, pink

Allium atosanguineum

Locally abundant in mountain turf, dark purple sheaths

Allium barsczewskii

Deep pink species, possibly this south of Osh

<i>Allium caeruleum</i>	Jeti Oghuz
<i>Allium caesium</i>	Pretty blue species, near Sary-Chelek
<i>Allium fedtschenkoanum</i>	Yellow to reddish, tall onion, Ala Bel
<i>Allium platyspathum</i>	Dwarf forms at Barskoon and Chon Ashu, leaves horizontally flat, smallish pink heads
<i>Allium semenowii</i>	Dwarf yellow species at Barskoon
<i>Allium severtzovoides/suworowii</i>	Possibly this species at Sary-Chelek, medium sized pink heads
<i>Allium spp</i>	Several species seen
<i>Allium trachyscordum</i>	Pink. Kara-Bulak Gorge below Too Ashu pass
<i>Fritillaria walujewii</i>	Attractive reddish-pink bells, below Taldyk Pass. Substantial population in seed south of Naryn.
<i>Lloydia serotina</i>	Barskoon, Chon Ashu
<i>Tulipa dasystemon</i>	A small yellow tulip Barskoon, Taldyk Pass, Song-Kul
<i>Tulipa heterophylla</i>	Curious nodding bell-like flowers Song-Kul in alpine turf
<i>Tulipa kaufmanniana</i>	Sary-Chelek

Melanthiaceae

<i>Veratrum lobelianum</i>	Best en route to Chonashu, tall branched spikes with greenish flowers
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Orchidaceae

<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Turf on Tor Ashu
<i>Dactylorhiza sp.</i>	On the way to Chon Ashu, smaller than <i>umbrosa</i> purplish leaves.
<i>Dactylorhiza umbrosa</i>	Marshy places

Xanthorrhoeaceae

<i>Eremurus fuscus</i>	Abundant and widespread in mid altitudes, yellowish-green to orangey flowers
<i>Eremurus robustus</i>	Colossal species, to over two metres tall with long dense spikes with white to pinkish flat flowers. Arslanbob, Dashman, south of Osh.
<i>Eremurus sogdianus</i>	Delicate species, white flowers with prominent orange stamens, huge numbers en route to Arslanbob, in seed elsewhere
<i>Eremurus tianshanicus</i>	Widespread in various steppe habitats, huge populations near Arslanbob, Sary-Chelek and elsewhere, tall slender spires crowded with flat-faced white flowers

Systematic List Number 1

Birds

The following have been recorded on the last two visits to Kyrgyzstan, but no doubt more remains to be seen.

Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Scattered
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Widespread, but not overly common, various nest occupied
Pochard	<i>Aythya farina</i>	Issyk-Kul
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Widespread in wetlands, upland lakes
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Issyk-Kul
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>	Issyk-Kul
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Widespread, Tash Rabat, Song-kul, near Sary-Chelek,
Black Vulture	<i>Aegypius monarchus</i>	Near Tash Rabat
Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	Widespread in mountains
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Possibly overlooked in favour of the previous species
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Widespread in wetlands
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus pallidus</i>	Male near Sussaymr 2012
Black-eared Kite	<i>Milvus ?</i>	Widespread
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Occasional in more wooded mountain areas
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	Widespread and common
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Occasional
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Occasional in mountains e.g . Tash Rabat
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	Scattered
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Widespread
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Heard in dense vegetation a few times
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	Scattered in marshes
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	
Caspian Plover	<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	Song-Kul
Ibisbill	<i>Ibidorhyncha struthersii</i>	Very close views at Chonashu
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Song-Kul
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Issyk-Kul
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Feral birds everywhere
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Scattered - near villages
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Widespread but scarce in towns
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Quite common
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Widespread
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Widespread
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	Occasional
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Very common

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	Quite common between Osh and Jalalabad
Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	Common – very common in dry areas
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Common
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	Arslanbob
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Scattered and widespread
Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Common in high areas
Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	Common in rugged areas
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Widespread
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	Common in central Tien Shan
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Scattered by freshwater streams
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Freshwater streams and rivers
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>	Larger rivers than the former, widespread
Altai Accentor	<i>Prunella ocularis</i>	High altitude scree, Chonashu
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Singing at Arslanbob
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	Below Tor Ashu
Guldenstadt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogastus</i>	A real stunner, seen well at Barskoon both years
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Scattered in rocky uplands
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Arslanbob
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	Nemrut and Catak
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	Widespread
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Common especially higher montane areas
Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	Rocky areas, good views
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	Occasional in rocky areas
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Arslanbob
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Song-Kul woods
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Heard
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Reedbeds
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	Common and vocal in reedbeds
Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	One at Issyk-Kul in scrub
Hume's Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Mountain scrub
Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	Spruce forest
Severzov's Tit-warbler	<i>Leptopoeile sophiae</i>	Point blank views at Ala-Archa, seen infrequently but must be more common in low juniper scrub
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Arslanbob
Turkestan Tit	<i>Parus turkestanica</i>	Arslanbob
Yellow-breasted Tit	<i>Parus</i>	Near Naryn
Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	Scattered
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Heard

Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	Common and widespread
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	Widespread
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Woods
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Abundant
Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	Chonashu pass
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	Widespread
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Very common
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Very common
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus (corone) cornix</i>	Abundant
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Seen a couple of times
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Abundant
Rose-coloured Starling	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	Near Bishkek
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Ubiquitous around towns
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	One near Ercis
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	Common and widespread
Snow Finch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	Frequent in high areas
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Arslanbob
Plain Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	Song-Kul
Red-fronted Serin	<i>Carduelis</i>	Song-Kul
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Widespread
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	Common around Sim-er
Red-mantled Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rhodochlamys</i>	A male at Ala-Archa 2012
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	Between Bitlis circuit, between Tatvan and Van
Bunting sp	<i>Emberiza sp</i>	En route to Bishkek
Grey-necked Bunting	<i>Emberiza buchanani</i>	
Red-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	Common and widespread
Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Common and widespread