

Central Asia: Birding along the Silk Road

Ref.No:

TOUR DATE: May 02 – May 23, 2025

Name:

John Sterling USA

Tour:

CENTRAL ASIA: Birding along the Silk Road

Leader:

Erik Jansen

Arrival Airport

Tashkent International Airport (ALA)

Departure Airport:

Astana International Airport (TSE)

Main Tour Focus:

Birds, Landscapes, Culture & Mammals

Classification:

COMFORT – throughout a COMFORT classified trip we use the best accommodations available & include extra service/client.



White-tailed Rubythroat by Machiel Valkenburg

ITINERARY

Day 0, May 02 | For the persons coming in early we have pre-booked a room at the Navruz Hotel in Tashkent to rest up before the departure.

Day 1, May 03 | Upon arrival at Tashkent airport, you will be greeted by your team leader, who will be your guide throughout your Central Asian adventure. Our journey commences with a drive to Samarkand, during which we will engage in birding en-route, seeking the first glimpses of Azure Tits and Pied Wheatears. In the afternoon, a guided cultural excursion awaits as we explore the historic landmarks of Samarkand. Our hotel, strategically situated with a spectacular view, is near the iconic Registan Square. Night: Comfortable Tourist Hotel Samarqand / B-L-D.

Day 2, May 04 | We start the day with an early departure for the Takhtakaracha Pass, where our quest is to spot the elusive White-throated Robin and the rare Hume's Lark. Later in the afternoon, we return to Samarkand for further cultural explorations, delving into the rich historical tapestry of this fascinating city. Night: Comfortable Tourist Hotel Samarqand / B-L-D.

Day 3, May 05 | Our day commences with boarding the high-speed train to Bukhara. In the afternoon, we immerse ourselves in the exploration of the historical UNESCO center of Bukhara, uncovering its rich cultural heritage. Night: As-Salam Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 4, May 06 | This day is dedicated to one of the most iconic birds of Central Asia, the Pander's Ground Jay. We embark on an early departure from Bukhara to locate this species in the deserts west of the city, returning in the late afternoon. The remainder of the day is planned for a leisurely guided walk in the city. Night: As-Salam Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 5, May 07 | In the morning, we conclude our exploration of the charming town of Bukhara before embarking on a high-speed train journey back to Tashkent. Depending on preferences, we can opt for a final cultural excursion or plan a birding expedition to visit several captivating lakes south of the city. The aim is to spot sought-after species like Marbled Teal, White-tailed Lapwing, and Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. Night: Navruz Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 6, May 08 | Our final day in Uzbekistan is spent in the Chimgan Hills near Beldersay, where our goal is to spot the Yellow-breasted Azure Tit and Rufous-naped Tit. In the evening, we take some time to rest and enjoy a final walk in Tashkent. Night: Navruz Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 7, May 09 | We depart from Tashkent and fly to Almaty in Kazakhstan. If time allows, we will visit Kaskelen National Park for Meadow Bunting before transferring to a comfortable tourist hotel in Almaty. Night: Comfortable Tourist Hotel Almaty / B-L-D

Day 8, May 10 | We dedicate two full days to birding in the Sogety Valley and Charyn Canyon region, focusing on species like Pallas's Sandgrouse and desert finches. Here we also visit the impressive Charyn Canyon and hope to connect with cute Asian Desert Warblers. Night: Hunting Lodges / B-L-D.

Day 9-12, May 11-14 | We cross into Kyrgyzstan for a three-night stay in Karakol near Lake Issyk-Kul. Over the next two full days, we explore the mountains around the city in search of Himalayan gems such as White-tailed Rubythroats and White-browed Tit-warblers. Night: Matsunoki Guesthouse / B-L-D.

Day 13, May 15 | We retrace our steps, returning to Almaty as we cross back into Kazakhstan. Our journey includes a visit to the Sogety Valley one last time and possibly Kokpek Pass for any possible missed species. We anticipate arriving around 5 pm back at the hotel in Almaty. Night: Comfortable Tourist Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 14, May 16 | Our Taukum Desert adventure begins with an early departure from Almaty. Our first stop is planned at Sorbulak Lake, where we focus on waders and other waterbirds such as Terek Sandpiper and Temminck's Stints. In the afternoon, we explore the artesian wells in Taukum, concentrating on the massive migration taking place. Night: Private RBT Yurt Camp / B-L-D.

Day 15, May 17 | We explore the famous Taukum Desert with a focus on Macqueen's Bustard and Caspian Plover. Later on, we visit Topar Lake and Zheltorangly Forest for the many Central Asian treasures. We overnight once again in a comfortable Central Asian Yurt camp with a professional cook. Night: Private RBT Yurt Camp / B-L-D.

Day 16, May 18 | We spend our final morning birding in the Taukum Desert before returning to Almaty. On the way back, we visit the Sorbulak Lake site one time more. Night: Comfortable Tourist Hotel Almaty / B-L-D.

Day 17, May 19 | We board our morning/noon domestic flight to Astana. After arrival in the capital, we drive to Korgalzhyn village and bird en-route, coming across many Red-footed Falcons, Black Larks, and Short-eared Owls. Night: Bibinuur Guesthouse / B-L-D.

Day 18-19, May 20-21 | A very early morning start sees us birding Korgalzhyn NP where Black Lark, White-winged Lark, Sociable Lapwing, and many other highlights are found. We return in the evening back to the village of Korgalzhyn. Night: Goldman Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 20, May 22 | Our final day in Kazakhstan is spent birding the lakes on the west side of the village. We return in the afternoon back to Astana where we enjoy a city tour followed by a grand dinner in an authentic local restaurant serving typical Central Asian meals. Night: Goldman Hotel / B-L-D.

Day 21, May 23 | A private airport transfer is arranged towards the Astana International Airport. Here our tour ends. Night: On aircraft / no meals.

PRICING

No:	21 DAYS 21 NIGHTS BIRDING PACKAGE	PRICE (PER SINGLE PERSON)	
		Twin	Single
1		7.500 USD	8.750 USD

PRICING DETAILS

TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Accommodation in twin rooms in excellent quality hotels, starting on day 1.
- When off the beaten track we stay in basic lodges or guesthouses.
- The full board scheduled meals in restaurants of extended picnic lunches in the field according to the itinerary.
- Single room throughout for tour leader.
- Mineral water (distributed by need).
- Domestic flight Almaty – Nur-Sultan.
- International flight Tashkent – Almaty
- High-speed train Samarkand – Bukhara
- High-speed train Bukhara – Tashkent.
- Local guiding service throughout (ornithological & cultural).
- Sightseeing in Samarkand, Bukhara and Astana.
- Transport throughout by Mercedes Sprinter.
- Translator services.
- Airport transfers.
- Visa Support. (if needed)

TOUR PRICE EXCLUDES:

- International air.
- Tips.
- Personal Expenses.
- Sightseeing in Almaty and Tashkent.
- Extra rooming in Tashkent and Astana. Before or after the tour.
- Meals during transfer to Central Asia.
- Deviation from the original route.
- Alcoholic drinks.
- Single room accommodation.
- Travel insurance and health insurance.



Black Lark by Machiel Valkenburg



TERMS & CONDITIONS

Passport, Visa and Health Requirements

All participants are responsible for and must-have, a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the end of the tour. Also, participants must obtain any necessary visas and vaccination certificates required for the journey. Because of changing requirements, and the fact that the tour details are published so far in advance, Rubythroat Birding Tours does not always specify the requirements. Participants will be advised of visa requirements in sufficient time. As Rubythroat Birding Tours is not medically qualified, it is the participants' absolute responsibility to seek medical advice regarding vaccinations and medication. Any medical information supplied in my brochure, or subsequent correspondence, must be considered as a guide only.

Restrictions on Participation

The tours of Rubythroat Birding Tours do not typically entail strenuous activity but, if this cannot be avoided, it will be made clear in the tour details. Nevertheless, participants must be able to complete moderate walks of several miles a day, sometimes on uneven or slippery surfaces, to meet the schedule of the tour. If you have any health problems or physical limitations, you are required to advise Rubythroat Birding Tours before booking. To cater to the needs of all levels of birdwatcher, the tours of Rubythroat Birding Tours sometimes involve long days in the field and travelling long distances. Subject to the itinerary of the trip, however, Rubythroat Birding Tours can usually arrange for a half or a full day's rest for those who wish to opt-out at any time. Small groups do, of course, call for consideration from all to ensure that everybody enjoys the tour. Your cooperation in not participating in any antisocial behaviour, such as smoking in the bus, is therefore expected. Rubythroat Birding Tours reserves the right, to send participants home at their own expense. Any person who will not acceptably conduct themselves during a tour.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule. If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee in the form of the deposit will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another RBT tour that will operate within the next 12 months. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.